

## OPTIONAL PRACTICAL TRAINING

### 24-Month STEM OPT

#### Students on F-1 Visa – SEVIS Process

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On May 10, 2016 the Department of Homeland Security started issuing 24-month long STEM OPT extensions. The following application explains who can apply for this extension and how. Please note that the new rules allow up to 2 STEM extensions, at different degree levels, as well as use of a previous STEM degree as long as it was awarded within the previous 10 years.

#### Who Can Apply

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You are eligible to apply for the 24-month STEM extension if:

- 1) You are an F-1 student currently on your 12-month initial OPT who has maintained your F-1 status,
- 2) You have a STEM degree designated by the STEM Designed Degree Program List (<https://www.ice.gov/sites/default/files/documents/Document/2016/stem-list.pdf>), OR you have a STEM degree issued within the last 10 years that you have not yet applied for the STEM OPT with and you are currently working in a field relevant to that degree
- 3) You are working for an E-verified employer
- 4) You have not applied for more than 1 STEM extension

In order to maintain F-1 status you must:

- 1) Keep your passport valid at all times,
- 2) Refrain from unauthorized employment.
- 3) Not exceed more than 90 days of unemployment during your original 12 months of OPT

#### When to Apply

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The application for post-completion OPT can be submitted up to 90 days prior to the completion of your current 12 months of OPT. While your application is pending you can keep working while you wait for the new STEM extension, even if your current 12 month OPT has expired. It is best to apply for OPT early to receive your EAD work permit in a timely manner. **You cannot apply for STEM OPT after your current 12 months of OPT is completed.**

## How to Apply

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Application for the Employment Authorization Document (EAD) should be submitted by certified or tracking enabled mail to the USCIS Eastern Adjudication Service Center whose lockbox is in Dallas, TX (unless your mailing address is west of the Mississippi River then contact the International House for more information).

Make sure to follow these step-by-step instructions.

1. Complete the WPI request for OPT recommendation (attached).
2. Complete form I-765 application form.
3. Complete form I-983 with your employer and submit with your application to International House
4. Address in the US.

**The local US Postal Service will not deliver US government mail if they are not completely certain that the individual lives at the address.** The address you supply must be a valid address that you will have for at least four months and your name must be on the mailbox. Also note that the local US Postal Service will not forward US government mail. If you move subsequent to your filing the application and do not notify the Service Center, the card will be returned to the USCIS office by the post office. It is your responsibility to notify the USCIS in the event of an address change. **If you are unsure of your future address or think you will be moving, please use the International House address at 28 Trowbridge Road, Worcester MA 01609, most students do this**

4. **Note:** on the I-765 form #20 must be completed (c) (3) (C), the code for 24-month STEM extensions

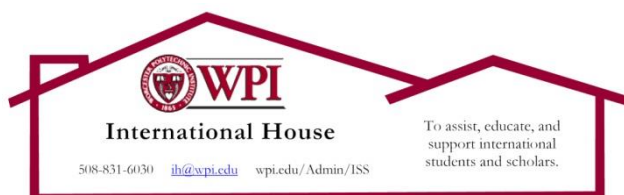
### What to Bring:

For your application you must have:

1. Completed I-765 Form, preferably typed, printed, and signed with a blue pen
2. Completed I-983 Form, signed by you and your employer
3. All previously issued I-20's
4. Passport
5. I-94 (downloaded from <https://i94.cbp.dhs.gov/I94/#/home>)
6. EAD card from previous employment
7. Diploma and/or transcript
8. \$410.00 fee, check or money order payable to the **Department of Homeland Security (DO NOT abbreviate the name)**. They will **NOT** accept cash.
9. Two (2) full-frontal passport/visa photos (2 inch by 2 inch square). **Do not use the same photo as your passport or visa photo as these will be rejected.** Ideally the photo should be less than 30 days old. Photos for the card should be purchased from a professional photographer. A list of local photographers is available at the International House.
10. If you are mailing in your paperwork, a self-addressed stamped USPS/FedEx/or UPS envelope to return-mail your application packet to you OR if you are coming in person for an appointment a \$10.00 mailing fee to cover the cost of certified mailing postage and processing.

(For tips on mailing in your packet check the "Out of Town OPT Checklist" on the Forms page)

The Office of International Students and Scholars will review your application, make all necessary copies, issue a SEVIS I-20 Form with the OPT recommendation, and mail it **BACK TO YOU**, you will have to sign the new I-20 and then mail the application to the US Citizenship and Immigration Services (we will provide the address). Your Receipt Notice and EAD card will be returned to you at the address you put on the I-765 form.



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## Post-Completion Optional Practical Training Request Form

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### PLEASE PRINT OR TYPE

LAST Name: \_\_\_\_\_ FIRST Name: \_\_\_\_\_

SEVIS number: \_\_\_\_\_ Major/Department: \_\_\_\_\_

Degree being used for OPT: BS \_\_\_\_\_ MS \_\_\_\_\_ Ph.D. \_\_\_\_\_ Is this your current degree? \_\_\_\_\_

If no, what date was the degree awarded? \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_ Which university? \_\_\_\_\_

Have you applied for STEM OPT before? If yes, Start date: \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_ End date: \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_

Non-WPI Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone #: \_\_\_\_\_

Job title AND describe how your degree related to your current job:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

### Employment must be directly related to your major area of study.

New OPT start date: \_\_\_\_\_ Ending date: \_\_\_\_\_  
mm/dd/yyyy mm/dd/yyyy

OPT Company Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Company EIN (Employer Id Number for Federal Tax purposes): \_\_\_\_\_

Supervisor name, email, telephone number:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

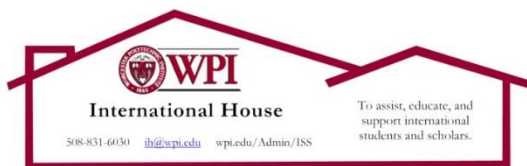
Company Address: \_\_\_\_\_

State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code: \_\_\_\_\_

**Please be aware that it is YOUR RESPONSIBILITY to inform the International House of ANY CHANGES in your employment situation, and submit evaluations from the I-983 at 12 and 24 month employment dates.**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Student Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date



## OPTIONAL PRACTICAL TRAINING

### Information for WPI Students on Optional Practical Training

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While on Optional Practical Training (OPT) you remain in F-1 non-immigrant status and you must have a valid I-20 form and a valid I-94 card with the D/S notation.

**If traveling while on OPT** you must have: 1) valid passport, 2) valid F-1 visa for your return, 3) recently signed I-20 form, 4) your Employment Authorization Document (EAD Card), and 5) proof of employment/offer letter in order for you to re-enter the US in your F-1 OPT status. If your visa has expired, you can apply for a new F-1 visa from a US Consulate abroad with the same documentation as mentioned above.

#### Reporting Requirements

While on your 24-months of post-completion OPT you are required to report the following information to the International House. ([ih@wpi.edu](mailto:ih@wpi.edu))

- Any change of address
- Name and address of your OPT employer, and any change in employment such as change of employer, interruption of employment, etc.
- We have the OPT Information Update Form on our website which you can fill out and return with all the required information to fulfill your reporting requirements.
- You will have to confirm your address and employment information every 6 months including checks at 6, 12, 18, and 24 months. **It is your responsibility to contact the International House with this information: [ih@wpi.edu](mailto:ih@wpi.edu).** The report is due to the International House within 10 business days of each reporting date.
- You will also have to submit the I-983 evaluations forms signed by you and your employer at 12 and 24 months (page 5 of the I-983). **It is your responsibility to contact the International House with this information: [ih@wpi.edu](mailto:ih@wpi.edu).** The report is due to the International House within 10 business days of each reporting date.
- If you leave your job, or if you transition to H-1B before the end of your STEM OPT, please fill out the final evaluation from the I-983 form and return to the International House within 10 business days.

#### Limited Periods of Unemployment to Maintain Status

- During post-completion of OPT, F-1 status is dependent upon employment.
- Students may not have accrued an aggregate of more than 90 days of unemployment during their first 12-months of initial OPT, once a student's 24-month OPT begins, the student has an additional 60 days of unemployment. Student must still check in with the International House at noted intervals, even if unemployed.

**By signing below, you acknowledge that you have read the above information, including your reporting requirements to the International House. Please keep a copy of this for your files and to serve as a reminder.**

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Student Signature

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Date