Important Information for 17-Month Extension OPT Applicants

OPT Extension applications must be received by USCIS prior to the current OPT end date.

While the 17-month extension application is pending, the 12-month OPT is automatically extended for 180 days or until the I-765 is approved or denied, whichever comes earlier. The start date on the 17-month extension EAD card will be the day after the 12-month OPT expires.

1. Preparing the I-765 application packet

1. Sign your new I-20
2. Mail a COPY (not the original) of your new I-20 along with your I-765 application.
3. Review all your documents and the OPT Application quick checklist below:

Quick Checklist:

☐ Form I-765 (EAD application)
☐ Check or money order for $380 payable to U.S. Department of Homeland Security
☐ 2 photos (taken within the past 30 days, white background, 2” x 2” – see Photo guidelines at http://travel.state.gov/pdf/Photo-Quality-Requirements.pdf
☐ Print lightly in pencil on back of photos SEVIS ID#, full name, and date of birth
☐ Photocopy of new I-20 with OPT recommendation (NOT original)
☐ Photocopy of passport biographical information, showing passport expiration date
☐ Photocopy of front and back of I-94
☐ Copy of University diploma or copy of official transcript with degree conferral
☐ USCIS E-notification (optional) – receive an e-mail and/or a text message that your application has been accepted, if you file Form G-1145, available at www.uscis.gov and clip it to the first page of your application.
☐ Make copies of application materials submitted to USCIS and keep for your records

* Fees are subject to change. Form I-765 fee can be found under “Forms” and “I-765” at www.uscis.gov

Regular U.S. Postal Delivery:
(Certified Mail/Return Receipt recommended)

U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS)
Attn: I-765 Unit
California Service Center
P.O. Box 21281
Phoenix, AZ 85036

Express Mail Delivery:
(e.g. Federal Express)

U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services
(USCIS) Attn: I-765 Unit
1820 E. Skyharbor Circle S, Suite 100
Phoenix, AZ 85034

4. Application should be filed with USCIS Service Center with according to your current address of residence.

See www.uscis.gov

2. Reminders

Tracking your OPT application
You will receive a Notice of Action Form I-797 from USCIS. This form will have a tracking number or WAC number, which you can use to check the status of your application online at https://egov.uscis.gov/cris/Dashboard.do

EAD (Employment Authorization Document)
If approved for the OPT Extension, you will be mailed the EAD card at the address on your I-765 application. Note: USCIS mail cannot be forwarded by the U.S. Post Office to another address. Please remember that you are required to obtain your EAD before beginning employment. Please be sure to submit a copy of your EAD card to SISS.

3. Reporting Responsibility for OPT Extension Applicants

Federal regulations require that all OPT applicants report to their sponsoring schools the following information:

Periods of Unemployment
Students authorized for 29 months of OPT cannot have more than a total of 120 days of unemployment without jeopardizing their status.

Reminder: Eligible OPT employment is a minimum of 20 hours per week.
Unpaid Employment: Students on a STEM extension are allowed to volunteer, incidental to their status. This means that volunteer work is allowed but does not count as employment for the purpose of maintaining F-1 status.

General Student Reporting Requirements
All students are required to report the following information to SISS within 10 days of any change during their OPT:

- Legal name
- Residential or mailing address
- E-mail address (permanent, non-UCD)
- Employer name and address
- Employment status

6th Month & 12th Month Reporting Requirement
The student must report to SISS every 6 months starting from the date the 17-month extension begins and ending when the student's F-1 status ends, student changes educational levels at the same school, student transfers to another school or program or the 17-month extension ends, whichever is first.

According to federal regulations, you must report the following information every 6th and 12th month of your 17-month OPT extension period:

- Full Name
- SEVIS ID number
- Current mailing and residential address
- Name and address of the current employer
- Date you began working for the current employer

Employer Reporting Requirements
The Employer must report to the student’s DSO (i.e. International Student Advisor at SISS) within 48 hours after the OPT student has been terminated from, or otherwise leaves, his or her employment prior to the end of the authorized period of OPT.

Employer Reporting Requirements
The Employer must report to the student’s DSO (i.e. International Student Advisor at SISS) within 48 hours after the OPT student has been terminated from, or otherwise leaves, his or her employment prior to the end of the authorized period of OPT.

Travel Advisory
While on OPT, you're still considered to be maintaining your F-1 status, so you may travel abroad and re-enter the U.S.

Remember that time spent outside the U.S. during your OPT period will be considered unemployment unless you are traveling on business or your employer has authorized your leave. If you travel while employed either during a period of leave authorized by your employer or as part of your employment, SISS suggest obtaining a verification letter from the employer that specifies the purpose and the dates of your trip.

After completing your program and after getting your EAD:
- a valid passport (SISS recommends that your passport be valid for 6 months at the time of re-entry)
- a valid F-1 visa (unless eligible for automatic revalidation of an expired visa)
- a SEVIS I-20, endorsed for travel by the International Student Advisor within the last 6 months
- an Employment Authorization Document (EAD)
- an employment offer or verification letter

Note: Consult with your International Student Advisor if you are planning to travel outside the U.S. during your OPT.