

Optional Practical Training (OPT) 17-Month STEM Extension Tutorial

F-1 International Students

Berkeley International Office (BIO)
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<http://internationaloffice.berkeley.edu>

STEM 17 Month Transition

- This tutorial refers ONLY to those students who are continuing a the 17-Month STEM Extension
- USCIS will no longer accept 17-Month Extension applications as of May 10, 2016
- See the next slide for information for students transitioning from 17-24 Month STEM OPT

Special Cases: STEM 17 to 24 Month Transition

- Students with *pending* or *approved* 17-month STEM Extensions may be eligible to transition to a 24 Month STEM request. These students fall into 2 categories:
 - **RFE Transition to 24 Month Application:** Your 17-Month application is *still pending* with USCIS after May 10, 2016.
 - **7-Month Extension:** You have an *approved* 17-month Extension EAD that expires ON or AFTER October 7, 2016 (17-month EADS expiring prior to October 7, 2016 do NOT qualify for the additional 7-Month Extension.)

See the [BIO 24-Month STEM website](#) and [Transition](#) page for more information

The OPT 17 STEM Extension I-20

You will use the following information when completing the Form I-765 (part of your application materials):

Page 1 of I-20: Program of Study Section: Your SEVIS degree name and "CIP" Code (*circled*)

Page 1 of I-20

PROGRAM OF STUDY		
EDUCATION LEVEL BACHELOR'S	MAJOR 1 Computer Science 11.0701	MAJOR 2 None 00.0000
NORMAL PROGRAM LENGTH 24 Months	PROGRAM ENGLISH PROFICIENCY Required	ENGLISH PROFICIENCY NOTES Student is proficient
PROGRAM START DATE 23 AUGUST 2012	PROGRAM END DATE 19 DECEMBER 2014	

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Department of Homeland Security
U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement

I-20, Certificate of Eligibility for Nonimmigrant Student Status
OMB NO. 1653-0038

SEVIS ID: N000*	(F-1)	NAME:
EMPLOYMENT AUTHORIZATION		
EMPLOYMENT STATUS APPROVED - FULL TIME	TYPE POST-COMPLETION OPT	
EMPLOYMENT START DATE 22 DECEMBER 2014	EMPLOYMENT END DATE 21 DECEMBER 2015	
EMPLOYER NAME	EMPLOYER LOCATION San Francisco, CA 94103	

The student has met the 1 full academic year requirement

COMMENTS
Student will pursue work related to COMPUTER SCIENCE. If adjudication date is later, please adjust the dates to indicate adjudication date as start date and 12 months later as end date not to exceed 14 months.

EMPLOYMENT STATUS REQUESTED	TYPE STEM OPT
EMPLOYMENT START DATE 22 DECEMBER 2015	EMPLOYMENT END DATE 22 MAY 2017
EMPLOYER NAME	EMPLOYER LOCATION San Francisco, CA 94103
COMMENTS Student will continue to pursue work related to COMPUTER SCIENCE for an e-verify employer.	

CHANGE OF STATUS/CAP-GAP EXTENSION

REQUESTED VISA TYPE	REQUEST/PETITION STATUS	RECEIPT NUMBER	BENEFIT START DATE/REQUEST DATE
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EVENT HISTORY	
EVENT NAME Registration	EVENT DATE 29 AUGUST 2012

OTHER AUTHORIZATIONS		
AUTHORIZATION	START DATE	END DATE
OPT Approve for Post-Completion OPT	22 DECEMBER 2014	21 DECEMBER 2015
OPT Recommendation for STEM OPT	22 DECEMBER 2015	22 MAY 2017

TRAVEL ENDORSEMENT			
This page when properly endorsed, may be used for reentry of the student to attend the same school after a temporary absence from the United States. Each certification signature is valid for one year.			
SCHOOL OFFICIAL Advisor Name	TITLE DSO	SIGNATURE Advisor Signature	DATE ISSUED MM/DD/YYYY
			PLACE ISSUED Berkeley, CA
		X	
		X	
		X	

What are CIP Codes? Classification of Instructions Programs (CIP) codes are published by the National Center for Education Statistics (NES) & are used by SEVIS to designate a student's major. Your CIP code determines whether your major has been designated as a STEM degree.

Page 2 of I-20: STEM Recommendation & Employer Name

OPT STEM applications must be received by USCIS **no later than 30 days after this date**. Please see an advisor at BIO if there are concerns that the application will not arrive on time.

The new travel endorsement is valid 6 months. However, traveling while your OPT STEM Extension application is pending is NOT allowed if your 12 month OPT has expired. You must have a valid EAD card to re-enter the US along with supporting documents

Step 3: Receiving the EAD

1. **I-797 Notice of Action from USCIS**
2. **If there is a problem...**
3. **The Employment Authorization Document (EAD)**
4. **Maintaining Status while on OPT STEM Extension**
5. **Answers to your Frequently Asked Questions**

I-797, Notice of Action

The Receipt Notice of Action (I-797)

You should receive the notice by mail within 2-4 weeks after mailing the OPT STEM application to USCIS. If you do not receive your I-797 within 6 weeks of mailing your application, contact an advisor at Berkeley International Office.

Important points:

- The I-797 Notice of Action is a very important document. If you lose the receipt, there is no way to replace it.
- The I-797 is necessary if you want to inquire about the status of your OPT STEM application

Receipt Number

This is your application case number at the USCIS. Check the status of your case on the USCIS web site at <https://www.uscis.gov>

Received Date


This is the date when the USCIS begins processing the application. (It may not be the actual the application was received, but it is when the case was entered into the system.)

Address Information

Verify the name and address on the I-765 receipt notice. If it is incorrect, contact BIO immediately.

Contacting USCIS

If you have any problems or questions with the application, please contact a BIO advisor before calling the USCIS Customer Service.

Department of Homeland Security U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services		Form I-797C, Notice of Action	
THIS NOTICE DOES NOT GRANT ANY IMMIGRATION STATUS OR BENEFIT.			
NOTICE TYPE Receipt		NOTICE DATE April 13, 2012	
CASE TYPE I-765, Application for Employment Authorization		USCIS ALIEN NUMBER	
RECEIPT NUMBER WAC...	RECEIVED DATE April 11, 2012	PAGE 1 of 1	
Your Name Mailing Address Listed on your I-765 Berkeley, CA		DATE OF BIRTH December 19, 1982	
		PAYMENT INFORMATION: Application/Petition Fee: \$380.00 Biometrics Fee: \$0.00 Total Amount Received: \$380.00 Total Balance Due: \$0.00	
APPLICANT/PETITIONER NAME AND MAILING ADDRESS			
<p>The above application/petition has been received by our office and is in process.</p> <p>Please verify your personal information listed above and immediately notify the USCIS National Customer Service Center at the phone number listed below if there are any changes.</p> <p>Please note that if a priority date is printed on this notice, the priority does not reflect earlier retained priority dates.</p> <p>If you have questions about possible immigration benefits and services, filing information, or USCIS forms, please call the USCIS National Customer Service Center (NCSC) at 1-800-375-5283. If you are hearing impaired, please call the NCSC TDD at 1-800-767-1833. Please also refer to the USCIS website: www.uscis.gov.</p> <p>If you have any questions or comments regarding this notice or the status of your case, please contact our customer service number.</p> <p>You will be notified separately about any other case you may have filed.</p>			

If there is a problem with your application...

- If there is a problem with your application, the USCIS will send you a notice by mail called the “**Request for Evidence (RFE)**.” An RFE does not mean that your application has been rejected. It simply means that you need to send in additional documents before your EAD can be issued.
- Getting an RFE will delay the processing of your application for OPT STEM usually by about one month.
- In some cases, if too many items are missing from your application, the USCIS will return the entire application to you. If this happens, you must make the corrections and send the application before the end date of your 12-month EAD.

To avoid delays, review your application materials for completeness and sign all the forms before mailing them to the USCIS.

U.S. Department of Homeland Security U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services		Notice of Action
App #	Application/Petition I-129F Petition for Alien Fiancé(e)	
Receipt #	Applicant/Petitioner	
LIN-	Beneficiary	
Notice Date JUNE 23, 2006	Page 1 of 3	
		Request for Evidence
<small>IMPORTANT: WHEN YOU HAVE COMPLIED WITH THE INSTRUCTIONS ON THIS FORM, RESUBMIT THIS NOTICE ON TOP OF ALL REQUESTED DOCUMENTS AND/OR INFORMATION TO THE ADDRESS BELOW. THIS OFFICE HAS RETAINED YOUR PETITION/APPLICATION WITH SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS.</small>		<small>THE INFORMATION REQUESTED BELOW MUST BE RECEIVED BY THIS OFFICE NO LATER THAN EIGHTY-FOUR (84) DAYS FROM THE DATE OF THIS NOTICE. IF YOU DO NOT PROVIDE THE REQUESTED DOCUMENTATION WITHIN THE TIME ALLOTTED, YOUR APPLICATION WILL BE CONSIDERED ABANDONED PURSUANT TO 8 C.F.R. 103.2(b)(11) AND, AS SUCH, WILL BE DENIED.</small>
CSC DIV V		
RETURN THIS NOTICE ON TOP OF THE REQUESTED INFORMATION LISTED ON THE ATTACHED SHEET.		
Note: You are given until SEPTEMBER 23, 2006 in which to submit the information requested.		
Pursuant to 8 C.F.R. 103.2(b)(11) failure to submit <u>ALL</u> evidence requested at <u>one time</u> may result in the denial of your petition.		
For more information, visit our website at WWW.USCIS.gov		
Or call us at 1-800-375-5283		
Telephone service for the hearing impaired: 1-800-767-1833		
<small>You will be notified separately about any other applications or petitions you filed. Save a photocopy of this notice. Please enclose a copy of it if you write to us about this case, or if you file another application based on this decision. Our address is:</small>		
U.S. CITIZENSHIP AND IMMIGRATION SERVICES CALIFORNIA SERVICE CENTER P.O. BOX 10590 LAGUNA NIGUEL, CA 92607-0590 (949) 831-8427		Bar Code Label Here
<small>Form I-797 (1/00)</small>		<small>Please see additional information on the back.</small>

The Employment Authorization Document (EAD)

Average processing time at USCIS is 90 days/3 months.
While waiting, keep these things in mind.

- Your F-1 status & employment authorization will be **automatically extended** for up to 180 days while your OPT STEM application is pending. You may work during this time.
- You must have a valid EAD for re-entry to the U.S. If your 12-month EAD has expired, you may not travel outside the U.S.
- You may change or add employers as long as the new employer also participates in E-Verify. For reporting information, see Frequently Asked Questions.
- You must work at least 20 hours per week in your field of study while on your OPT STEM Extension.
- You may accumulate up to 120 days of unemployment on OPT STEM inclusive of any time used during 12-month OPT.
- If you decide to return to school as a full-time student, you must request a transfer or a change of level from Berkeley International Office within 60 days of your EAD expiration date.



Step 4: Maintain your F-1 Status

1. Report your address and employer information
2. Frequently Asked Questions about *Employment*
3. Frequently Asked Questions about *Travel & Re-entry*

Reporting your Information

While on OPT STEM, you must **validate** your information **every six months** and update Berkeley International Office **within 10 days** of any changes to the following information:

- Your Name
- Your Residential Address
- Your Phone & Email Address
- Employer Information
- Start Date of Employment
- Date of departure from the U.S. if you leave prior to OPT STEM end date and want to end your OPT.

**Validate &
Report Changes to**
<https://io.berkeley.edu/ssu>

We recommend saving the website page showing your updated information.

In order to access the ssu.berkeley.edu website, you will need your UCB Student ID# and SEVIS # (found on your I-20 & starts with N00...).

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

About Employment

What is considered full-time employment on the 17-month OPT STEM Extension? Students must work at least 20 hours per week for an E-Verify employer in a position directly related to the STEM degree.

Does volunteer work count as employment? Yes, immigration has stated that paid and unpaid employment related to the student's degree meets the requirement for maintaining status on OPT STE

I have two part-time jobs. One of the employers is enrolled in E-Verify but the other is not. Is this allowed? The student may work multiple jobs, but all the employers must be enrolled in E-Verify.

How many days of unemployment am I allowed while on the 17-month STEM Extension? Students who receive a 17-month OPT STEM extension are given an additional 30 days of unemployment for a total of 120 days over their entire post-completion OPT period.

What counts as unemployment? Each day during the period when OPT authorization begins and ends that the student does not have qualifying employment counts as a day of unemployment.

Can I continue to work while my 17-month STEM Extension OPT is pending? If a student's EAD expires while the STEM Extension application is pending, the student is authorized to work until USCIS makes a decision about the application, but not more than 180 days from the date the student's initial OPT EAD expires.

What documents should I present to my employer once my 12-month OPT expires and my OPT STEM is pending?

The student should present the employer with the expired EAD card and the form I-20 recommending the student for STEM Extension.

Can I switch employers while my OPT STEM application is pending? Yes. However, if the 17-month extension period has started, the employer must also be an E-Verify employer. The student must report the change in employment to Berkeley International Office. The advisor must update the student's employer information in SEVIS and the student should submit an amended Form I-765 to the appropriate USCIS Service Center, providing the new employer's E-Verify number and a copy of the USCIS receipt notice for the first Form I-765. A brief letter explaining the submission should also be included. There is no fee associated with submitting the amended Form I-765.

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

About Travel & Re-entry

Can I travel outside the US during my approved OPT period?

Yes. However, if the student whose approved period of OPT has started travels outside of the US while unemployed, the time spent outside the United States will count as unemployment against the 90/120-day limits.

*If a student travels while employed either during a period of leave authorized by an employer or as part of their employment, the time spent outside the US will not count as unemployment.

Can I travel outside the US while my 17-month STEM Extension OPT is pending?

Travel is NOT allowed after the 12 month OPT has expired and while the STEM Extension EAD is pending.

Travel is permitted if you have a valid 12 month EAD card for re-entry along with the documents listed below. See [Travel and OPT](#) for a complete list of documents you will need for travel.

Can I renew my visa while on OPT STEM?

Yes, you are eligible to renew your visa while on OPT STEM. Remember, that you are still applying for an F-1 non-immigrant visa which means you must demonstrate ties to your home country. See [Applying for a Visa](#) for a complete list of documents and advice on renewing the visa during OPT STEM and feel free to discuss your concerns with an advisor.

What documents do I need to re-enter the U.S?

If you are eligible for travel, you will need:

- A valid passport with unexpired F-1 visa stamp (if applicable)
- Form I-20, signed on page 3 by an International Student Advisor at Berkeley International Office within the last 6 months
- Unexpired EAD Card
- Proof of employment (or employment offer)

Berkeley

INTERNATIONAL OFFICE

<http://InternationalOffice.berkeley.edu>

internationaloffice@berkeley.edu

510-642-2818

Advising Hours: Monday-Friday

10am-12pm and 1:30pm-4pm