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Student and Exchange Visitor Program

03/11/2016

SEVP unveils online STEM OPT Hub



On Friday, the U.S. Department of Homeland Security [published amended regulations](#) on optional practical training (OPT) for certain international students with science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) degrees from U.S. institutions of higher education. The amended regulations will go into effect May 10. Under the new regulations, certain students can apply to have a STEM OPT extension of 24 months. The new regulations also enhance federal oversight of the training program.

In order to help school officials, students and employers understand the new regulations, the Student and Exchange Visitor Program (SEVP) unveiled a [STEM OPT Hub](#) Friday on the Study in the States website.

The STEM OPT Hub includes resources titled Transition Plan and Training Plan, as well as a series of frequently asked questions to walk stakeholders through the amended regulations. Topics are also organized by intended audience on Web pages geared to employers, students and school officials.

The [Transition Plan](#) section outlines what international students can expect during the next few months and highlights two categories of eligible F-1 students:

- [Students with STEM OPT Applications Pending on May 10, 2016.](#)
- [Students with Existing 17-Month STEM OPT EADs on May 10, 2016.](#)

It also explains which international students are ineligible to benefit from the 24-month STEM OPT extension.

As part of the amended regulations, employers must develop a formal training plan that clearly identifies the STEM OPT student's learning objectives and the employer's commitments to helping the student achieve those goals. To capture this requirement, DHS introduced [the Form I-983, "Training Plan for STEM OPT Students."](#) The Training Plan section on the STEM OPT Hub provides an overview of this new requirement for employers and STEM OPT students.

AILA Doc. No. 16031466. (Posted 3/14/16)

STEM OPT students and their employers are subject to the terms of the Form I-983, effective as of the start date requested for STEM OPT, as indicated on the form. Student trainees may participate in entrepreneurial ventures; however, they may not fill out their own Form I-983, Sections 3 to 6, nor act as their own employer for the purposes of the form. The international student's most recent designated school official will keep the form on file as part of the student's official records.

The new STEM OPT regulations can be found in the [Federal Register](#). The STEM OPT Hub can be accessed [here](#) on Study in the States.

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