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Overview of STEM OPT Rule Implementation in SEVIS

The Student and Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS) Release 6.26 deploys on May 13, 2016; three days after the new science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) optional practical training (OPT) regulations take effect. While SEVIS will not contain functionality for all of the new provisions of the rule, it will update the functionality that allows designated school officials (DSOs) to recommend STEM extensions for eligible students. SEVIS Release 6.26 will implement the following modifications:

- Change the length of STEM OPT from 17 months to 24 months.
- Display the link to recommend a STEM extension for anyone on post-completion OPT, making it possible to recommend STEM OPT based on a prior degree.
- Allow DSOs to convert 17-month STEM recommendations to 24-month recommendations. This will be based on a U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) request for evidence (RFE), if the OPT request is in Requested or Pending status in SEVIS. DSOs will access this function from the same page where STEM extensions are recommended.
- Allow DSOs to recommend seven-month extensions of already approved 17-month STEM extensions for eligible students. DSOs will access this function from the same page where STEM extensions are recommended.

SEVIS Release 6.26 will not include separate fields to capture information about prior degrees or a DSO's receipt of a student's Form I-983, "Training Plan for STEM OPT Students." The Student and Exchange Visitor Program (SEVP) has worked with USCIS to coordinate handling of transition cases. The chart below presents three distinct situations that apply to students affected by the rule and outlines the actions DSOs and students should take.



Student Scenario	Required Actions
<p>New 24-month STEM OPT requests</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DSOs will be able to use the current functionality to recommend extensions of OPT. SEVIS will automatically calculate the 24-month OPT end date. • For cases where the filing deadline is close to May 10, 2016, DSOs can file the STEM extension under the existing 17-month rules. USCIS will send RFEs for STEM extensions that are pending on May 10, 2016. DSOs will be able to convert the case after USCIS issues the RFE. • DSOs must enter the following information into the “<i>Explain how employment is related to student’s course of study</i>” field: <i>I have reviewed the Form I-983. It is completed, signed, and addresses all program requirements.</i> • If the recommendation is based on a prior degree, DSOs must enter the following information into the “<i>Explain how employment is related to student’s course of study</i>” field: <i>Extension based on prior STEM degree: (Enter information on qualifying major, qualifying degree level, Classification of Instructional Program (CIP) code, date of degree, school awarding degree, school location, awarding school code, if available, and class of admission at time of degree.)</i> <p>Note: New applications received by USCIS on May 10, 2016 must meet the new requirements.</p>
<p>17-month STEM extensions pending on May 10, 2016</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • USCIS will issue an RFE asking for a Form I-20, “Certificate for Eligibility for Nonimmigrant Student Status,” with the 24-month STEM recommendation. • After receiving the RFE, the DSO should convert the OPT recommendation from a 17-month to a 24-month STEM recommendation using the functionality in the SEVIS Release 6.26 deployed on May 13, 2016. • DSOs must enter the following information into the “<i>Explain how employment is related to student’s course of study</i>” field: <i>I have reviewed the Form I-983. It is completed, signed, and addresses all program requirements.</i> <p>Note: A completed Form I-983 and a USCIS-issued RFE are required before converting the recommendation from a 17-month OPT extension to a 24-month OPT extension.</p>



Student Scenario	Required Actions
<p>17-month extensions of OPT approved before May 10, 2016</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The filing period is May 10, 2016 through August 8, 2016. Some students do not have the full application period. Students must have at least 150 days of approved STEM OPT left on the day that USCIS receives their Form I-765, "Application for Employment Authorization." Once the functionality is available, DSOs must recommend the seven-month extension in SEVIS. DSOs must enter the following information into the "Explain how employment is related to student's course of study" field: <i>I have reviewed the Form I-983. It is completed, signed, and addresses all program requirements.</i> <hr/> <p>Special instructions for students whose filing deadline for the seven-month STEM extension is before May 23, 2016:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students should file the Form I-765 with USCIS without the Form I-20, but include a statement that indicates the following: <i>Due to new regulations, I must apply for the seven-month extension of my STEM OPT before SEVIS supports it. I will provide a Form I-20 with the extension recommendation after USCIS requests it.</i> <p>Note: These applications cannot arrive at USCIS before May 10, 2016.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students should wait to send the Form I-20 to USCIS until after USCIS requests it.

Over the coming months, SEVP will develop the functionality needed to fully implement the new regulations.

Convert Requested or Pending 17-month STEM OPT Recommendation

Before converting a 17-month extension of STEM OPT that is in Requested or Pending status, a DSO must receive a completed Form I-983 from the student.



Students with requested or pending 17-month STEM OPT are required to complete the Form I-983.



To convert the recommendation from a 17-month extension to a 24-month extension:

1. Navigate to the *Student Information* page.
2. Click **OPT Request** under the Employment/Training section of the Actions menu. The *OPT Employment* page opens.

Prior to recommending Optional Practical Training (OPT), you must ensure that the training complies with the rules governing OPT. You must also ensure that the student is aware of his/her obligation to report changes in employment information (to include periods of unemployment) and changes in his/her address. The school must continue to maintain records on the student for the full period of OPT. The details of these rules can be found in the Code of Federal Regulations, Title 8, Sections 214.2(f)(10) to (f)(13) and 214.2(m)(14). The CFR has been amended and the sections relevant to OPT are available at www.ice.gov/sevis (the SEVP Website).

OPT Employment

STEM - FULL TIME	Status	Receipt Number	View	RFE
	PENDING	XYZ123456987		

OPT AUTHORIZATION DATES

OPT Dates	Start	End
DSO Recommended	06/11/2016	11/11/2017
USCIS Approved		
Actual		

Employers

Employer Name	Start	End	Actions
SEVP Applied Labs	06/11/2017	06/11/2019	Edit Delete

RFE link displays if in Requested or Pending status

POST-COMPLETION - FULL TIME	Status	Receipt Number	View
Active	APPROVED	XYZ123456789	

OPT AUTHORIZATION DATES

OPT Dates	Start	End
DSO Recommended	06/11/2015	06/10/2016
USCIS Approved	06/11/2015	06/10/2016
Actual	06/11/2015	06/10/2016

Employers

Employer Name	Start	End	Actions
SEVP Applied Labs	07/01/2015	06/10/2016	Edit Delete

Return Print I-20

3. Click the **RFE** button. The *OPT STEM Extension RFE* window opens.



Note: The **RFE** button displays only if the STEM extension is in Requested or Pending status as of May 13, 2016.



OPT STEM Extension RFE

This function is to be used to help a student respond to a request for evidence (RFE) from USCIS to convert a student's pending STEM OPT extension from 17 months to 24 months. DO NOT submit until USCIS sends the RFE.

By clicking Submit, you attest that the student has provided the required Form I-983 which you have determined is complete, signed, and addresses all program requirements. Once you click submit, the current record will automatically update with the new employment dates and your attestation.

[Cancel](#) [Submit](#)

(ALT Text: OPT STEM Extension RFE attestation window.)

4. Click either **Cancel** or **Submit**:

- **Cancel:** Returns the user to the *OPT Employment* page without converting the recommendation.
- **Submit:** Converts the recommendation and returns the user to the *OPT Employment* page.

Prior to recommending Optional Practical Training (OPT), you must ensure that the training complies with the rules governing OPT. You must also ensure that the student is aware of his/her obligation to report changes in employment information (to include periods of unemployment) and changes in his/her address. The school must continue to maintain records on the student for the full period of OPT. The details of these rules can be found in the Code of Federal Regulations, Title 8, Sections 214.2(f)(10) to (f)(13) and 214.2(m)(14). The CFR has been amended and the sections relevant to OPT are available at www.ice.gov/sevis (the SEVP Website).

OPT Employment

Successful Submission. You can print an updated Form I-20 for the student. Success message and reminder to print Form I-20

STEM - FULL TIME	Status	Receipt Number	View
	PENDING	XYZ123456987	

OPT AUTHORIZATION DATES			Employers				Add Employer
OPT Dates	Start	End	Employer Name	Start	End	Actions	
DSO Recommended	06/11/2016	06/11/2018	SEVP Applied Labs	06/11/2017	06/11/2019	Edit Delete	
USCIS Approved							
Actual							

Changed end date

POST-COMPLETION - FULL TIME	Status	Receipt Number	View
Active	APPROVED	XYZ123456789	

OPT AUTHORIZATION DATES			Employers				Add Employer
OPT Dates	Start	End	Employer Name	Start	End	Actions	
DSO Recommended	06/11/2015	06/10/2016	SEVP Applied Labs	07/01/2015	06/10/2016	Edit Delete	
USCIS Approved	06/11/2015	06/10/2016					
Actual	06/11/2015	06/10/2016					

[Return](#)
[Print I-20](#)



(**ALT Text:** *OPT Employment* page after conversion of the STEM OPT request, which displays the Successful Submission message and the DSO Recommended End Date reflects the 24-month period for STEM.)

5. Click **Print I-20**.

EMPLOYMENT AUTHORIZATIONS				
AUTHORIZATION TYPE	FULL/PART-TIME	STATUS	START DATE	END DATE
POST-COMPLETION OPT	FULL TIME	APPROVED	11 JUNE 2015	10 JUNE 2016
STEM OPT	FULL TIME	PENDING	11 JUNE 2016	11 JUNE 2018

EMPLOYER INFORMATION			
TYPE	AUTHORIZATION DATES		
POST-COMPLETION OPT	11 JUNE 2015 - 10 JUNE 2016		
EMPLOYER NAME	START DATE	END DATE	CITY & STATE
SEVP Applied Labs	01 JULY 2015	10 JUNE 2016	ARLINGTON, VA

TYPE	AUTHORIZATION DATES		
STEM OPT	11 JUNE 2016 - 11 JUNE 2018		
EMPLOYER NAME	START DATE	END DATE	CITY & STATE
SEVP Applied Labs	11 JUNE 2017	11 JUNE 2019	ARLINGTON, VA

Changed end date

(**ALT Text:** Converted STEM OPT Request, as printed on the Form I-20.)

Note:

- STEM OPT End Date changes in the Form I-20’s Employment Information section.
- SEVIS Event History displays the DSO’s attestation.

Enter the date range and click the button to filter by event date				
Expand All	Search: <input type="text"/>	From: <input type="text"/>	To: <input type="text"/>	Filter
Event Name	Event Date	Resulting Status	Performed By	
OPT STEM Extension Conversion from 17 to 24 months	04/19/2016 22:23:04	ACTIVE	Helene Robertson	
Field Changed	Old Value	New Value		
OPT Employment Date	11-NOV-17	11-JUN-18		
OPT Comment		As the submitting P/DSO I have determined that the Form I-983 provided by the student is complete, signed, and addresses all program requirements.		

Recommend Seven-month Extension of Approved STEM OPT

Before recommending the seven-month extension of STEM OPT, a DSO must receive a completed Form I-983 from the student.



Students on approved 17-month STEM OPT are not required to apply for the seven-month extension. They can choose to complete the rest of their approved STEM OPT under the STEM OPT rules in effect prior to May 10, 2016.



To recommend the seven-month extension of approved STEM OPT:

1. Navigate to the *Student Information* page.
2. Click **OPT Request** under the Employment/Training section of the Actions menu. The *OPT Employment* page opens.

Prior to recommending Optional Practical Training (OPT), you must ensure that the training complies with the rules governing OPT. You must also ensure that the student is aware of his/her obligation to report changes in employment information (to include periods of unemployment) and changes in his/her address. The school must continue to maintain records on the student for the full period of OPT. The details of these rules can be found in the Code of Federal Regulations, Title 8, Sections 214.2(f)(10) to (f)(13) and 214.2(m)(14). The CFR has been amended and the sections relevant to OPT are available at www.ice.gov/sevis (the SEVP Website).

OPT Employment

STEM - FULL TIME Active	Status APPROVED	Receipt Number XYZ2345678901	View	Extend
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OPT AUTHORIZATION DATES			Employers				Add Employer
OPT Dates	Start	End	Employer Name	Start	End	Actions	
DSO Recommended	06/16/2015	11/15/2016	SEVP Applied Lab	06/16/2015	11/15/2016	Edit Delete	
USCIS Approved	06/16/2015	11/15/2016					
Actual	06/16/2015	11/16/2016					

[Return](#) [Print I-20](#)

Remember this date for the next page.

(**ALT Text:** *OPT Employment* page indicating the button to extend STEM OPT. The OPT Actual End Date is called out to remember the date, as it will be needed on the next page.)



- SEVIS calculates the Start and End Date for the seven-month extension. The DSO cannot change these dates.
- SEVIS does not display the OPT Actual Start and End Dates on the *Extend OPT Employer* page.

3. Click **Extend**. The *Extend OPT Employer* page opens.



Extend OPT Employer

SEVP School for Advanced SEVIS Studies
Kate YaoFour

Required fields are marked with an asterisk (*).

Prior to recommending a 24-month extension for Optional Practical Training (OPT), you must ensure the student earned a STEM designated bachelors, masters, or doctorate degree within the last 10 years from an institution that is currently SEVP certified. The STEM Designated Degree Program List is available at www.ice.gov/sevis (the SEVP Website). These students are also subject to the requirements found in the Code of Federal Regulations, Title 8, Sections 214.2(f)(10) to (f)(13). Your school must continue to maintain records on the student for the full period of the extension, including Form I-983 or successor form. The details of these rules can be found in the Code of Federal Regulations, Title 8, Sections 214.2(f)(10) to (f)(13). The CFR has been amended and the sections relevant to OPT are available at www.ice.gov/sevis (the SEVP Website).

Explain how employment is related to student's course of study *

Max 1000 characters (1000 remaining)

Employer Information

Employer Name * **Employer EIN * Highly Recommended** -

Job Title **Start Date *** / / **End Date** / /

Full Time / Part Time *

Full Time: more than 20 hours/week

Part Time: 20 or less hours/week

Employer Address *

Supervisor Information

Last Name * **First Name ***

Telephone Number * - - ext. **Email Address ***

4. Enter information about the student's position:

Field Name	What Should Be Entered
* Explain how employment is related to the student's course of study	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Describe how the job relates to the student's major area of study. The student should be able to provide this explanation. DSOs must note in this field they have seen the Form I-983 by entering text, "I have reviewed the Form I-983. It is complete, signed, and addresses all program requirements." If this STEM extension is based on a prior STEM degree, the DSO will also enter the following information in this field, "Extension based on prior STEM degree: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Degree name Degree level



Field Name	What Should Be Entered
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Degree CIP code ○ Date degree awarded ○ Name of school that awarded degree ○ Location of school that awarded degree ○ SEVIS code of school awarded degree, if available ○ Class of admission at time of degree” <p>Note: These remarks do not appear on the Form I-20.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● This is a required field.
Employer Information	
* Employer Name	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Enter the business name of the employer. ● This is a required field.
* Employer EIN	<p>Enter the Employer Identification Number (EIN) for the student’s employer. The Internal Revenue Service (IRS) issues EINs to employers for tax reasons.</p> <p>Note: This field is required for STEM OPT, even though Highly Recommended appears to the right of it.</p>
Job Title	Enter the student’s job title.
* Start Date	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Enter the date the student began or will begin the job. ● If the student will continue work for the same post-completion-OPT employer, enter the start date for the STEM OPT. <p>Note: SEVIS will not allow you to enter any date earlier than the start of STEM OPT authorization.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● This is a required field.
End Date	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Enter the date the student will stop working for the employer, if known. ● Leave this field blank, if the end date is not known. <p>Note: The date entered here will not affect the overall SEVIS-calculated STEM extension end date.</p>
* Full Time/Part Time	By default, this field is pre-populated as full-time. It is not editable.
* Employer Address	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Click the Add Employer Address button. The <i>Address</i> modal opens. ● Enter the employer address following SEVP guidance on entering U.S. addresses.



Field Name	What Should Be Entered
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This field validates when Address Doctor is working. Enter the Employer’s site address as shown in Section 5 of the Form I-983. This is a required field.
Supervisor Information	
* Last Name	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enter the last name of the student’s supervisor, as shown in Section 5 of the Form I-983. This is a required field for STEM OPT.
* First Name	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enter the first name of the student’s supervisor, as shown in Section 5 of the Form I-983. This is a required field for STEM OPT.
* Telephone	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enter the telephone number for the student’s supervisor, as shown in Section 5 of the Form I-983. This is a required field for STEM OPT.
* Email	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enter the email address for the student’s supervisor, as shown in Section 5 of the Form I-983. This is a required field for STEM OPT.

5. Click either **Extend OPT Employer** or **Cancel**.

- **Extend OPT Employer:** Submits the recommendation. The *Update Successful* page opens.

Update Successful

Submitted change(s) require adjudication. Please print I-20 and send it with the appropriate documentation to the Service Center.

- Click either **Return to Employment List** or **Print I-20**.
 - **Return to Employment List:** Returns the user to the *OPT Employment* page without generating a Form I-20.
 - **Print I-20:** Generates a Form I-20. The recommendation for the seven-month STEM extension prints on page two.



SEVIS ID: N0004659632 (F-1)		NAME: James Smith		
EMPLOYMENT AUTHORIZATIONS				
AUTHORIZATION TYPE	FULL/PART-TIME	STATUS	START DATE	END DATE
STEM OPT	FULL TIME	APPROVED	16 JUNE 2015	16 NOVEMBER 2016
STEM OPT	FULL TIME	REQUESTED	17 NOVEMBER 2016	17 JUNE 2017
EMPLOYER INFORMATION				
TYPE		AUTHORIZATION DATES		
STEM OPT		16 JUNE 2015 - 16 NOVEMBER 2016		
EMPLOYER NAME	START DATE	END DATE	CITY & STATE	
SEVP Applied Lab	16 JUNE 2015	15 NOVEMBER 2016	ARLINGTON, VA	
TYPE		AUTHORIZATION DATES		
STEM OPT		17 NOVEMBER 2016 - 17 JUNE 2017		
EMPLOYER NAME	START DATE	END DATE	CITY & STATE	
SEVP Applied Lab	17 NOVEMBER 2016	17 JUNE 2017	ARLINGTON, VA	

7-month extension of STEM OPT

- **Cancel:** Returns the user to the *OPT Employment* page without recommending the OPT extension.

Note: The *OPT Employment* page should display the recommendation.

F-1 Student **Smith, James** | SEVP School for Advanced SEVIS Studies - SEVP School for Advanced SEVIS Studies | Status: **ACTIVE**
 Start Date: 09/15/2009 | End Date: 06/15/2014 | SEVIS ID: N0004659632

Prior to recommending Optional Practical Training (OPT), you must ensure that the training complies with the rules governing OPT. You must also ensure that the student is aware of his/her obligation to report changes in employment information (to include periods of unemployment) and changes in his/her address. The school must continue to maintain records on the student for the full period of OPT. The details of these rules can be found in the Code of Federal Regulations, Title 8, Sections 214.2(f)(10) to (f)(13) and 214.2(m)(14). The CFR has been amended and the sections relevant to OPT are available at www.ice.gov/sevis (the SEVP Website).

OPT Employment

STEM - FULL TIME	Status: REQUESTED	Receipt Number	7-month STEM Extension	View	Cancel Request
OPT AUTHORIZATION DATES			Employers		
OPT Dates	Start	End	Employer Name	Start	End
DSO Recommended	11/17/2016	06/17/2017	SEVP Applied Lab	11/17/2016	06/17/2017
USCIS Approved					
Actual					

STEM - FULL TIME	Status: APPROVED	Receipt Number: XYZ2345678901	Approved 17-month STEM OPT	View
OPT AUTHORIZATION DATES			Employers	
OPT Dates	Start	End	Employer Name	Start
DSO Recommended	06/16/2015	11/15/2016	SEVP Applied Lab	06/16/2015
USCIS Approved	06/16/2015	11/15/2016		
Actual	06/16/2015	11/16/2016		

[Return](#) [Print I-20](#)



Available Resources



The following resources are available to assist with the transition:

- [STEM OPT Hub](#) on Study in the States
- USCIS's [Optional Practical Training Extension for STEM Students \(STEM OPT\)](#) page
- [SEVIS Release 6.26 Planning Guide](#)
- [Planning Tool: Seven-month Extension of Approved STEM OPT](#)
- [Planning Tool: 24-Month Extension of OPT \(STEM\)](#)

Icon Guide

See the [SEVIS Help Icons](#) on the SEVIS Help Hub for a quick-reference of the icons used in this user guide.

Document Revision History

Date	Revision Summary
April 29, 2016	Initial Release