

## **17 MONTH EXTENSION OF OPTIONAL PRACTICAL TRAINING**

On April 8th, 2008, USCIS published a new rule regarding a 17 month extension of Optional Practical Training for F-1 students.

**Q:** What is the new rule?

**A:** Certain students who are currently participating in their 12 months of post-completion OPT will be allowed to file for an additional 17 months of OPT.

**Q:** Who is eligible for this extension?

**A:** To qualify you must:

- Be approved for your initial period of 12 months of post-completion OPT.
- Have a Bachelor's, Master's or PhD degree in a STEM field (Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics)
- Be currently working in a position directly related to the degree obtained and for an employer who participates in the USCIS E-Verify system. E-Verify information can be found in the FAQs at [www.uscis.gov](http://www.uscis.gov)
- Not have previously obtained the 17 month extension based on a prior degree.

**Q:** What STEM fields qualify?

**A:** Actuarial Science, Computer Science Application, (except Data Entry/Microcomputer Applications) Engineering and Engineering Technologies, Biological and Biomedical Sciences, Mathematics and Statistics, Military Technologies, Physical Sciences, Science Technologies and Medical Scientist (MS, PhD level only).

### **The Georgia Tech programs that qualify as STEM programs are:**

Aerospace Engineering, Algorithms, Combinatorics, & Optimization, Applied Biology, Applied Mathematics, Applied Physics, Applied Physiology, Biochemistry, Bioengineering, Bioinformatics, Biology, Biomedical Engineering, Chemical and Biomolecular Engineering, Chemical Engineering, Chemistry, Civil Engineering, Computer Engineering, Computer Science, Electrical & Computer Engineering, Electrical Engineering, Engineering Sci & Mechanics, Environmental Engineering, Industrial Engineering, Materials Science & Engr, Mathematics, Mechanical Engineering, Nuclear & Radiological Engineering, Nuclear Engineering, Operations Research, Physics, Polymer & Fiber Engineering, Polymers, Robotics, Statistics, Textile & Fiber Engineering, Textile Engineering.

**Q:** When should I apply?

**A:** You must apply before your current EAD expires. As long as your application is received by USCIS before this date, you will be allowed to remain in the US and continue employment for 180 days or until a decision is made on your application.

**Q:** How can I apply?

**A:** In order to request the I-20 for the 17 month extension, please click [here](#).

After requesting the OPT extension from OIE, you will receive a new I-20 reflecting this. You will then file an I-765 application with the \$340 filing fee to USCIS. For instructions on what to include in the application, click [here](#).

**Q:** What must the student do after being granted the 17 month extension?

**A:** The student must report to the DSO within 10 days any change in:

Legal name;

Residential or mailing address;

Email address;

Employer name;

Employer address;

Interruption of employment.

The student must also report to the DSO the information above every six months even if there have been no changes.

OIE is currently developing a way for F-1 students to report this information. Information on how to satisfy these reporting requirements will be posted on the OIE website.

Additionally, you may not accrue more than 120 days of unemployment during the combined 12-month and 17 month OPT periods.

**Q:** My employer does not know what E-Verify is, what should I do?

**A:** Information about E-Verify can be found at:

[http://www.dhs.gov/ximgtn/programs/gc\\_1185221678150.shtm](http://www.dhs.gov/ximgtn/programs/gc_1185221678150.shtm)