

This information is issued to F-1 International Students at Northwestern University as guidance. This guidance is not immigration regulation and is not intended to create or confer any rights or legal obligations to either F-1 International Students at Northwestern University nor Employers of F-1 International Students. This document is subject to revisions without warning. The International Office at Northwestern University cannot guarantee approval of a 17-month extension nor advise students or employers, with certainty, on how the 17-month extension may affect international travel or future applications made by the student or on the student's behalf with the U.S. Department of Homeland Security or the U.S. Department of State.

Eligibility Requirements

- You must have earned a degree in a field included on the [STEM Designated Degree Program List](#); **and**
- You must currently be on a period of post-completion OPT based on a STEM degree; **and**
- You must have a valid EAD card; **and**
- You must be working for an employer that is enrolled in the Department of Homeland Security's [E-Verify](#) program

H1B Cap-Gap Relief

Duration of status and work authorization will automatically be extended for a student on post-completion OPT who is the beneficiary of a timely-filed H-1B petition requesting change of status and an employment start date of October 1 for the following fiscal year. Your employment authorization will be automatically extended beyond the end date on your EAD until the application is either rejected or denied or, if approved, until October 1. This provision applies to all students on post-completion OPT, either during the initial 12 months for all students or during the 17-month extended period for STEM degree students. If you have questions about the H1B Cap-Gap provision, please contact your employer or your employer's attorney.

STEM Degree Field

In order to be eligible for the 17-month extension of Optional Practical Training, the degree that was the basis for your current period of post-completion OPT must be a bachelor's, master's, or doctoral degree in one of the degree programs on the current STEM Designated Degree Program List, published on the SEVP Web site at www.ice.gov/sevis.

The International Office will evaluate your eligibility for the 17-month extension by ensuring that the CIP code associated with your degree at Northwestern University, as listed in [CAESAR](#), is on the [STEM Designated Degree Program List](#). To find out if your degree program is on the STEM Designated Degree Program List, please see the Northwestern University STEM Designated Degrees list.

E-Verify

E-Verify is a database operated by the Department of Homeland Security in partnership with the Social Security Administration. It allows participating employers to electronically verify the employment eligibility of newly-hired employees. E-Verify is currently voluntary in most states. For more information visit www.dhs.gov/e-verify.

Application Timeline

Your application for the 17-month OPT extension must be received by the USCIS prior to the expiration of your current EAD card.

Starting and Ending Dates

The start date of the 17-month OPT extension begins on the day after the expiration of the initial post-completion OPT employment authorization and ends 17 months thereafter, regardless of the date the actual extension is approved.

Automatic Extension of Employment Authorization While 17-month Extension Application is Pending

Employment authorization is automatically extended while a timely-filed 17-month extension application is pending. While the application is pending, international travel is not recommended since you will not have a valid EAD card in your possession.

New EAD Card Issued for 17-month Extension

You will receive a new EAD card once the 17-month extension has been approved by the USCIS.

Limitations on Unemployment

Students approved for the 17-month OPT extension may not accrue more than 120 days of unemployment during the total 29-month period of OPT. Employment during the 17-month extended period must be **paid** and must be related to the field of study in order to qualify. Self-employment and volunteer positions will not qualify as valid employment for OPT purposes during the special 17-month OPT extension.

17-Month Extension Available Once in a Lifetime

The special 17-month extension of OPT is only available to each student one time. A student who is approved for a 17-month OPT extension can never apply for it again.

Reporting Requirements During the 17-month Extension

Reporting requirements are very strict during the 17-month OPT extension. Failure to meet these reporting requirements will result in the termination of your F-1 status and EAD card.

1. You must report your change of residential address, legal name, employer name, employer address, and/or loss of employment to the International Office within 10 days of the change by submitting the Post Completion OPT Employer and Personal U.S. Address Updates Survey at:

http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx?sm=Fs2Oc2uAJGLsvPLj_2f416DQ_3d_3d

2. Every 6 months, you are required to submit the above survey, even if there has been no change.
3. Your employer is required to report to the International Office within 48 hours in the event of your termination or departure from your job by e-mailing intoff@northwestern.edu.

Northwestern University STEM Designated Degrees

The following Northwestern University degrees appear on the [STEM Designated Degree Program List](#). The list below is subject to change without warning and is to be used only as a reference. The International Office will continue to monitor the [STEM Designated Degree Program List](#) for additions. If your degree does not appear on the list below but you believe that it is a STEM degree type, the International Office will evaluate your eligibility for the 17-month extension by verifying that the CIP code associated with your degree at Northwestern University, as listed in [CAESAR](#), is on the [STEM Designated Degree Program List](#). Contact your international student advisor for details.

NU Degree Name	CIP Code	CIP Code Description
Astronomy	40.0201	Astronomy
Biological Sciences	26.0101	Biology/Biological Sciences, G
Biological Sciences IBIS	26.0101	Biology/Biological Sciences, G
Biomedical Engineering	14.0501	Biomedical/Medical Engineering
Biotechnology	26.1201	Biotechnology
Chemical & Materials Eng	14.0101	Engineering, General
Chemical Engineering	14.0701	Chemical Engineering
Chemistry	40.0501	Chemistry, General
Civil Engineering	14.0801	Civil Engineering, General
Computational Biology & Bioinformatics	26.1103	Bioinformatics
Computer Information Systems	11.0401	Information Science/Studies
Computer Info Systems: MS	11.0401	Information Science/Studies
Computing and Info Systems	11.0401	Information Science/Studies
Computer Studies	11.0101	Computer and Information Science
Earth & Planetary Sciences	40.0601	Geology/Earth Science, General
Electrical & Computer Eng	14.1001	Electrical, Electronics and Co
Electrical Eng & Computer Science	14.1001	Electrical, Electronics and Co
Electrical Engineering	14.1001	Electrical, Electronics and Co
Engineering Sciences	14.1301	Engineering Science
Environmental Engineering	14.0101	Engineering, General
Epidemiology/Biostatistics: MD/MS	26.1102	Biostatistics
Epidemiology/Biostatistics: MS	26.1102	Biostatistics
Geological Sciences	40.0601	Geology/Earth Science, General
Industrial Eng & Mgmt Sciences	14.3501	Industrial Engineering
Industrial Engineering	14.3501	Industrial Engineering
Information Systems	11.0101	Computer and Information Science
Master of Biotechnology	26.1201	Biotechnology
Master of Management & Manufacturing	15.1501	Engineering/Industrial Management
Masters in Information Tech	11.0401	Information Science/Studies
Masters of Engineering Mgmt	15.1501	Engineering/Industrial Management
Mathematics	27.0101	Mathematics, General
Mechanical Engineering	14.1901	Mechanical Engineering
Medical Engineering	14.0501	Biomedical/Medical Engineering
Medical Humanities & Bioethics	26.0806	Human/Medical Genetics
Physics	40.0801	Physics, General
Statistics	27.0501	Statistics, General
Theoretical & Applied Mechanics	14.1101	Engineering Mechanics
Urban & Regional Planning	14.0101	Engineering, General

Reporting Requirement

As per 8 C.F.R. 214.2 (f)(10)(ii)(C) (4) an employer of an F-1 student approved for a 17-month extension of Optional Practical Training must agree to report the termination or departure of an OPT employee to the DSO at the student's school if the termination or departure is prior to the end of the authorized period of OPT.

To report this information to the International Office at Northwestern University, e-mail intoff@northwestern.edu with a subject line "OPT Student Termination/Departure." Provide the following information:

- Business/Employer Name and Address
- Your name, address, phone number, and E-mail address
- OPT employee's full name and date of birth
- Date of termination or departure

By signing below, you certify that you or your business/employer will comply with this reporting requirement and that you have made a copy of this for your reference. Return the original signed form to the student. The student is required to submit this form to The International Office at Northwestern University in order to be eligible to apply for the 17-month extension.

Business/Employer Name

Your Name (please print) Title

Signature Date