

Published monthly by International Student & Scholar Services (ISSS), the International Services Newsletter brings you updates on immigration rules and regulations, university services and programs, and conveys opportunities for campus and community involvement.

April 2008



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Highlights of the New Optional Practical Training Rules:



17-MONTH OPT EXTENSION:

Optional Practical Training (OPT) can be extended beyond the normal 12 months to 29 months for STEM degree holding F-1 students who are currently participating in a 12 month period of OPT.

STEM: Students who have obtained a degree in the Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) fields. Only students in the following major s are eligible:

- Actuarial Science.
- Computer Science Applications.
- Engineering.
- Engineering Technologies.
- Biological and Biomedical Sciences.
- Mathematics and Statistics.
- Military Technologies.
- Physical Sciences.
- Science Technologies.
- Medical Scientist (MS, PhD).

STEM Students currently on OPT wishing to apply for the 17 month extension must do so within 90 days of their current OPT end date. Only STEM students who work for a company enrolled in the E-Verify program are eligible to apply.

PROCESS:

STEM students applying for the 17 month extension:

1. Email ISSS@gsu.edu to confirm if you have a major code that allows for the extension.

2. Submit a new form I-765 along with:

- Proof of degree in one of the STEM categories above from a U.S. School for which your current period of OPT is based
- Name of employer
- Employer's E-Verify identification number
- Copy of initial OPT application
- Copy of current EAD card

3. Students who get approved for the additional 17 months of OPT will be required to report to Georgia State within 10 days :

- Any change in address
- Any change in name
- Any interruption or loss of employment
- Any change in employer name or address
- Report to your F-1 advisor every 6 months from the date of the approval

H-1B Cap Gap:

All F-1 students who are currently on OPT, have timely filed for an H-1B, and have a USCIS issued I-797C receipt from immigration will automatically have their status and OPT work permission extended until the effective H1-B start date. No application is required.

LIMITED PERIODS OF UNEMPLOYMENT:

Employment will be required to remain in status while on OPT after graduation. Students will be limited to 90 days of unemployment during the one-year OPT period. Students who receive the 17-month extension are allowed an additional 30 days, for a total of 120 days of unemployment.

OFFICE HOURS

MONDAY—FRIDAY
8:30AM—5:15 PM

Walk-In Advisement Hours

Monday
10AM—12PM
1:30AM—4PM

Tuesday
1:30PM—4PM

Wednesday
10AM—12PM
1:30AM—4PM

Thursday
1:30PM—4PM

Friday
10AM—12PM
1:30AM—4PM

Website:
www.gsu.edu/iss

International Student & Scholar Services



international student and scholar updates

REPORTING REQUIREMENTS FOR ALL STUDENTS:

All students on OPT will be required to report their employer's address and any changes in employment to the university. This applies to students currently on OPT and those who will be on OPT in the future. To report your employer's address, email ISSS at iss@gsu.edu as soon as you know it. If you change jobs or your employer's address changes, email ISSS with the new information.

All students on OPT are also required to provide their current address to the university. Make sure that you keep your home address updated in GoSolar at all times. If you change your name, update it in GoSolar. You have access to your GSU email and GoSolar account for one year after graduation.

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Frequently Asked Questions:

Q: Can I apply for 29 months at one time?

A: No, you can only apply for the extension after first being granted an initial 12 months of OPT. To obtain the full 29 months of OPT time requires submitting another application within the last 90 days of your first OPT.

Q: Can I change my major to become eligible for the extension?

A: An F-1 student may change their major and request a new I-20 from ISSS, please be aware this may cause delays in completing your degree. An F-1 student *currently* on OPT cannot change their major in order to be eligible for the extension.

Q: What is E-Verify?

A: E-Verify is a free internet-based system operated by United States Immigration and Citizenship Services in partnership with the Social Security Administration, which determines new employee's eligibility to work. Understand very few companies are currently participating in the E-Verify program.

Q: What should I do if my employer is not enrolled in E-Verify?

A: Speak with your employer about enrolling in E-verify and direct them to the USCIS website for more information.

Q: What should I do if I am not a STEM student and did not file for the H1-B?

A: Students will have 60 days after their OPT end date to either depart the United States, obtain admission to a new F-1 SEVIS-approved school, or file an application for a change of status.

Q: Do I have to report my employer's address if I'm not working?

A: Yes. If you are not working, email iss@gsu.edu and tell us that. When you find a job, email us with the address.

Q: Are the reporting requirements different for students in the initial 12-month period and in the 17-month extension period of OPT?

A: Yes. Students in the extension period will need to talk with an ISSS advisor before their extension period begins about the different rules that apply to them.



VIRTUAL CAREER FAIR FOR INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

Many international students studying in the United States find the search for jobs and internships to be challenging. University Career Services of Georgia State University is pleased to announce that our international students now have the opportunity to connect with interested employers through a virtual career fair just for international students. Sponsored by the National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE), the NACE International Students Virtual Career Fair is FREE and open to international students at schools that hold NACE membership who:

- wish to return to their home country for full-time or internship/co-op opportunities.
- are currently pursuing one-year Optional Practical Training (OPT) and/or long-term opportunities in the United States.
- are currently pursuing summer Curricular Practical Training (CPT) internships in the United States.

The fair opens to students on February 18 and runs through May 16. Through the fair, you'll have access to interested employers and their full-time, internship, and co-op opportunities.

REGISTER TODAY!

Go to http://www.gsu.edu/career/news_and_announcements.html and click on the "NACE International Student Virtual Career Fair" button. Then, select "Student Registration" and follow instructions!



TRAVEL CLEARANCE DAY

Making travel plans for summer 2008 and need your I-20 or DS-2019 stamped for travel by an ISSS advisor? Then don't miss the new TRAVEL CLEARANCE DAY on Wednesday,

April 16th, in 248 Sparks Hall (the Map Room). Just stop in ANY-TIME between 9 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. Just bring your Travel Clearance Form and I-20/DS-2019 then enjoy snacks with friends and the ISSS staff while your I-20 is processed on the spot!

Don't forget that April 21st is the deadline to apply for OPT. Be sure to attend an Employment Workshop and see an advisor in ISSS before that deadline if you are finishing your degree in May. Also, remember to tie up all loose ends before you graduation. To help you we have put together a graduation checklist on our website. Check it out at <http://www.gsu.edu/es/23050.html>