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STUDENT AND EXCHANGE VISITOR PROGRAM

SEVIS Workarounds for STEM Optional Practical Training (OPT) Rule

April 29, 2016

Before we start,

A QUICK ORIENTATION

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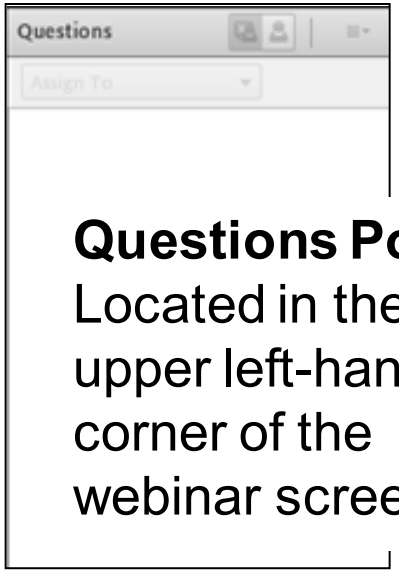
Communications

- Use the Questions Pod to let us know if you are having audio or other technical issues
- Type your questions in the Questions Pod as they occur to you

There will be a Q&A session at the end of each topic, where we will answer your questions, but you may submit questions at any time.



Questions Pod: Located in the upper left-hand corner of the webinar screen.

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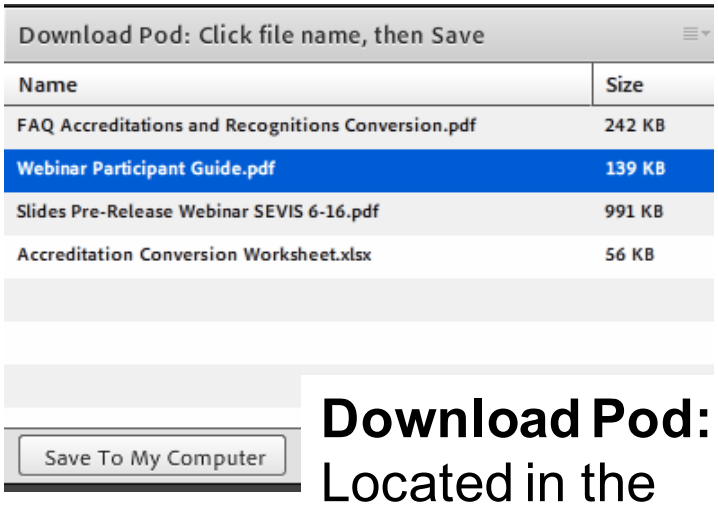

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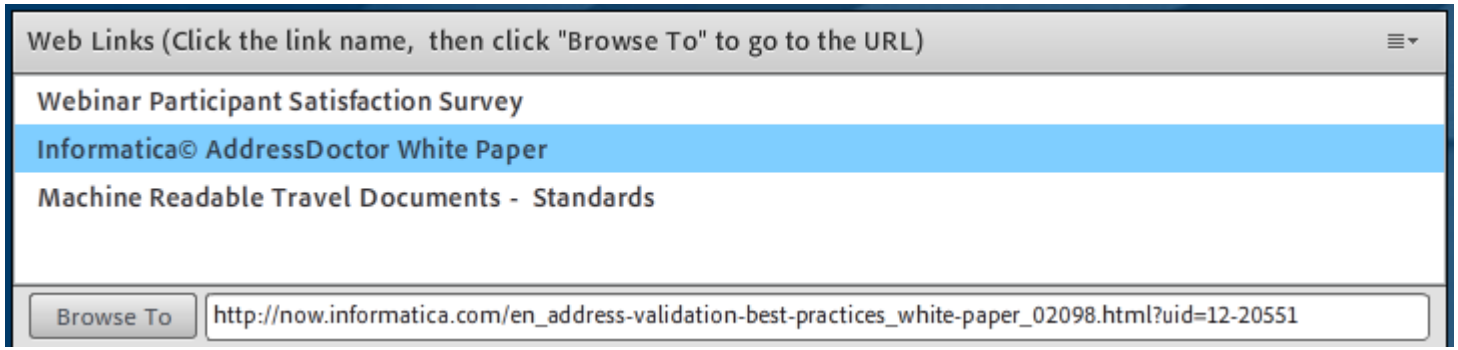
Documents Available to Download Today

- Webinar Slides
- Screenshots for the May 2016 SEVIS Release
- User Guide: 24- Month STEM Extension
- Job Aid: STEM Rule Implementation in SEVIS
- Planning Tool: 7-Month STEM OPT
- Planning Tool: 24-Month STEM OPT

Also look on the *SEVIS Help Hub* on *Study in the States* for these materials.

Web Links Pod



Web Links Pod:
Located at the bottom of the webinar screen.

How to access web links:

1. Select link – this displays the URL.
2. Click **Browse To**- this navigates to the web site.

Web Links Available Today

- Webinar Satisfaction Survey
- STEM OPT Hub
- U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) page on STEM OPT
- SEVIS Help Hub: STEM Rule Implementation in SEVIS page

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STUDENT AND EXCHANGE VISITOR PROGRAM

SEVIS Workarounds for STEM Optional Practical Training (OPT) Rule

April 29, 2016

Presenters

- **Ann Balough**, Lead, SEVIS Program Development and Management Section and SEVIS Business Project Manager
- **Katherine Westerlund**, Chief, SEVP Policy Unit
- **Cheryl Afflerbach**, Portfolio Manager, USCIS, Service Center Operations
- **Jared Allen,** SEVIS Webinar Facilitator

Webinar Agenda

- General overview of planned SEVIS updates for the science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) OPT provisions
- Closer look at SEVIS Release 6.26 and workarounds for transition cases:
  - Recommend new 24-month STEM OPT
  - Convert pending 17-month STEM OPT recommendations
  - Recommend 7-month extension of approved STEM OPT
- Available tools, resources, and upcoming webinars
- Q&A

Disclaimer

- Webinar is intended for DSOs
- Webinar focuses on SEVIS functionality being released in May 2016
- May not be able to answer questions about future functionality or policy determinations
- Will not address case-specific OPT questions

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OVERVIEW OF PLANNED SEVIS CHANGES FOR STEM OPT

Ann Balough and Katie Westerlund

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Effective Dates

Regulatory Requirement	SEVIS Change
Takes effect on May 10, 2016.	• May 13, 2016 Release focuses on ability to generate documentation needed for STEM • More changes to come in future releases

Timing of May 13, 2016 Release

- Already had a release scheduled to improve SEVIS data sharing with other government systems
- Could not reschedule that release
- Could not deploy two releases within three days

Change: Longer Period of STEM

Regulatory Requirement	SEVIS Change
17-month STEM OPT becomes 24-month period.	• Quick, easy change • SEVIS will calculate STEM OPT validity period of 24 months • Effective May 13, 2016 • Demonstration and a closer look at this follows

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Change: Form I-983, Training Plan for STEM OPT Student

Regulatory Requirement	SEVIS Change
Collect Form I-983, Training Plan for STEM OPT Students.	**Short Term** Not able to add this for May 13, 2016 Release. **Workaround:** Enter comment into the "Explain how employment is related to student's course of study" field: *I have reviewed the Form I-983. It is completed, signed, and addresses all program requirements.*

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Change: Form I-983, Training Plan for STEM OPT Student

Regulatory Requirement	SEVIS Change
Collect Form I-983, Training Plan for STEM OPT Students. (continued)	**Mid Term** Add check box/attestation for receipt of Form I-983. **Longer Term** Capture Form I-983 information electronically.

Change: Prior Degree

Regulatory Requirement	SEVIS Change
Allow STEM Extension based on prior degree.	**Short Term** • Unable to add fields in SEVIS to collect this information by May 13, 2016 • Display link to extend on all records with post-completion OPT

Change: Prior Degree

Regulatory Requirement	SEVIS Change
Allow STEM Extension based on prior degree. (continued)	**Workaround:** Enter comment into the "Explain how employment is related to student's course of study" field: *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.)*

Change: Prior Degree

Regulatory Requirement	SEVIS Change
Allow STEM Extension based on prior degree. (continued)	**Long Term** Determine how best to capture and display information on prior degree.

Change: Second Period of STEM OPT

Regulatory Requirement	SEVIS Change
Allow student to have a second period of STEM OPT at higher level.	In the May 13, 2016 Release, DSOs can recommend second period of STEM OPT.

Long Term

Cap number of STEM extensions at two per student.

Change: Student Validation Reporting

Regulatory Requirement	SEVIS Change
6-month interval validation reporting.	• Extend existing 6-month validations to cover the entire 24-month period of STEM OPT • SEVIS release in late summer/early fall 2016

Change: Student Progress Evaluations

Regulatory Requirement

- Student and employer self-evaluations due:
  - 12 months after STEM OPT authorization starts
  - When leave employer
  - When complete STEM OPT (final evaluation)
- System Termination for failure to complete 12-month self-evaluation

SEVIS Change

Not able to add this to the May 13, 2016 Release.

Mid Term

- Determine how to capture and display this information
- Determine if/when to terminate, if student fails to comply

Change: Change of Employer

Regulatory Requirement	SEVIS Change
Student must provide DSO with a completed Form I-983 for new employer within 10 days of start date with employer.	**Short Term** Use workaround language to capture receipt of Form I-983. **Longer Term** Need to determine how best to implement the 10-day deadline.

Change: Increased Period of Unemployment

Regulatory Requirement	SEVIS Change
Number of days of unemployment increased from 120 to 150.	**Short Term** • Not able to add this to the May 13, 2016 Release • Modify System termination job to allow 150 days of unemployment **Note:** System termination job is NOT currently running.

Change: Increased Period of Unemployment

Regulatory Requirement	SEVIS Change
Number of days of unemployment increased from 120 to 150. (continued)	**Long Term** Create unemployment counter to count aggregate days of unemployment.

Change: Increased Filing Deadline

Regulatory Requirement	SEVIS Change
Filing deadline based on the date the DSO recommended STEM OPT increased from 30 to 60 days.	• No modification of SEVIS required • USCIS will determine whether student has met the deadline

Change: Conversion of Pending 17-Month OPT Requests

Regulatory Requirement

In response to USCIS Request For Evidence (RFE), DSOs must generate a Form I-20 with a 24-month recommendation for STEM OPT.

SEVIS Change

- Effective May 13, 2016
- DSOs will be able to convert a 17-month STEM OPT request, if the status of the request in SEVIS is:
  - Requested
  - Pending
- More detailed discussion of this follows

Change: 7-Month Extension of Approved 17-Month OPT

Regulatory Requirement

- DSOs can recommend a 7-month extension of approved STEM OPT, if student has at least 150 days left on STEM OPT
- Filing period: May 10 through August 8, 2016

SEVIS Change

- Effective May 13, 2016
- Link to Extend STEM OPT will display on records with:
  - Approved STEM OPT
  - STEM OPT expiration dates on or after October 7, 2016
- More detailed discussion of this follows

Change: 7-Month Extension of Approved 17-Month OPT

Regulatory Requirement	SEVIS Change
Student Portal	Not able to add this for May 13, 2016 Release. **<u>Long Term</u>** Create a portal that is a SEVIS subsystem.

MAY 13, 2016 RELEASE AND WORKAROUNDS FOR TRANSITION CASES

Ann Balough and Cheryl Afflerbach

Demonstration: 24-month STEM Extension

24-Month Extensions for STEM OPT

- DSOs will be able to recommend 24-month STEM OPT extensions
- SEVIS will calculate the start and end dates
- DSOs ***must*** have the Form I-983 before recommending 24-month STEM OPT

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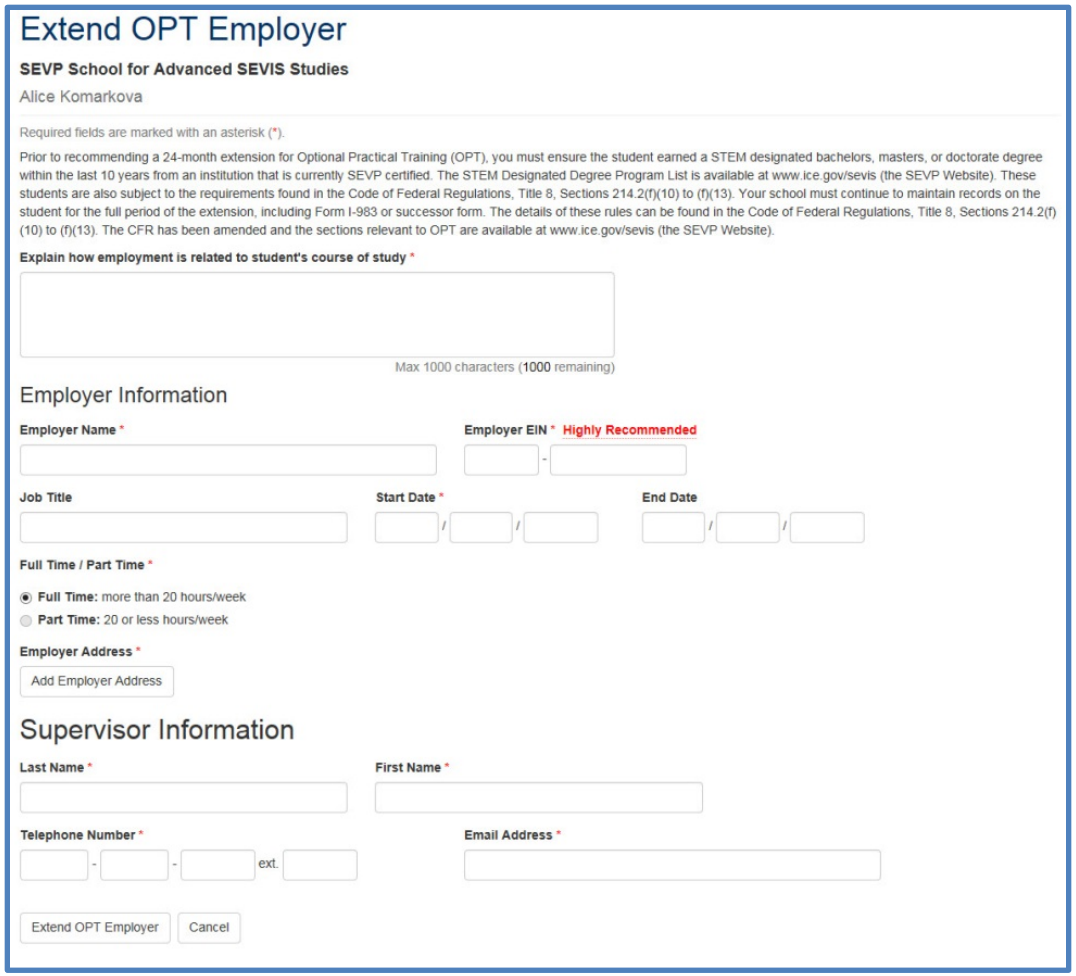
24-Month Extensions for STEM OPT



Extend OPT Employer

SEVP School for Advanced SEVIS Studies

Alice Komarkova

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 *

Add Employer Address

Supervisor Information

Last Name * **First Name** *

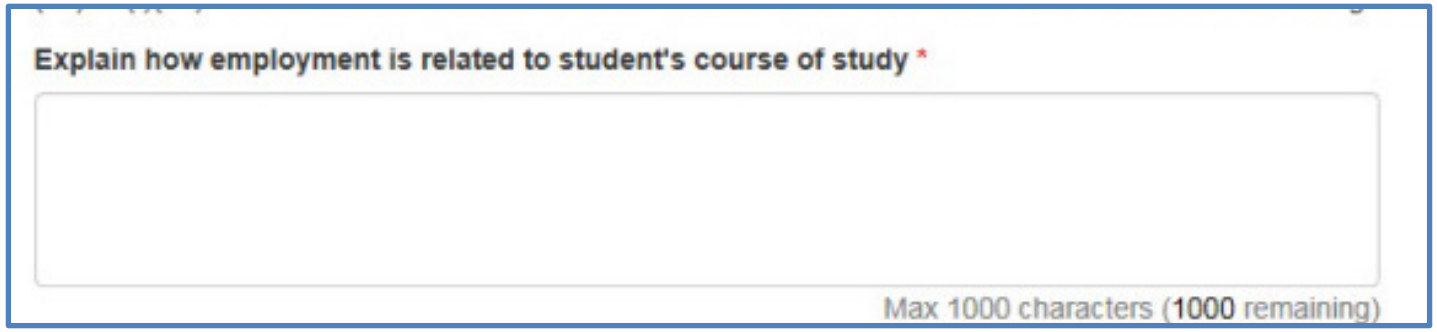
Telephone Number * **Email Address** *

ext.

Extend OPT Employer Cancel

- Mostly the same
- No Self-Employment checkbox
- Required:
  - Employer Identification Number (EIN)
  - Supervisor Name
  - Supervisor Contact Information

Explanation of Relationship to Course of Study



- ~~Describe how position relates to student's course of study (refer to Form I-983, Section 5, Student Role)~~ per pre-webinar conversation with USCIS as of 4/29/2016 – not required for STEM cases since information is on the I-983
- Provide workaround text for Form I-983 and prior degree (see next slide)
- Does NOT print on Form I-20

Workaround Language: Form I-983

I have reviewed the Form I-983. It is completed, signed, and addresses all program requirements.

Workaround Language: Prior Degree

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
- Class of admission at time of degree

STEM Recommendation Based on Prior Degree

Highly recommend sending transcripts with Form I-765.

Employer Information

- EIN is required for STEM OPT (available on the Form I-983)
- Employer Address – enter site location from the Form I-983, Section 5
- Supervisor Information required for STEM OPT:
  - Name
  - Telephone number
  - Email address

  (available on the Form I-983, Section 5)

Conversion of Pending 17-Month STEM OPT Recommendations

- Wait for RFE from USCIS before converting the case
- USCIS will identify pending cases
- SEVIS displays link to convert 17-month STEM recommendations in Requested or Pending status

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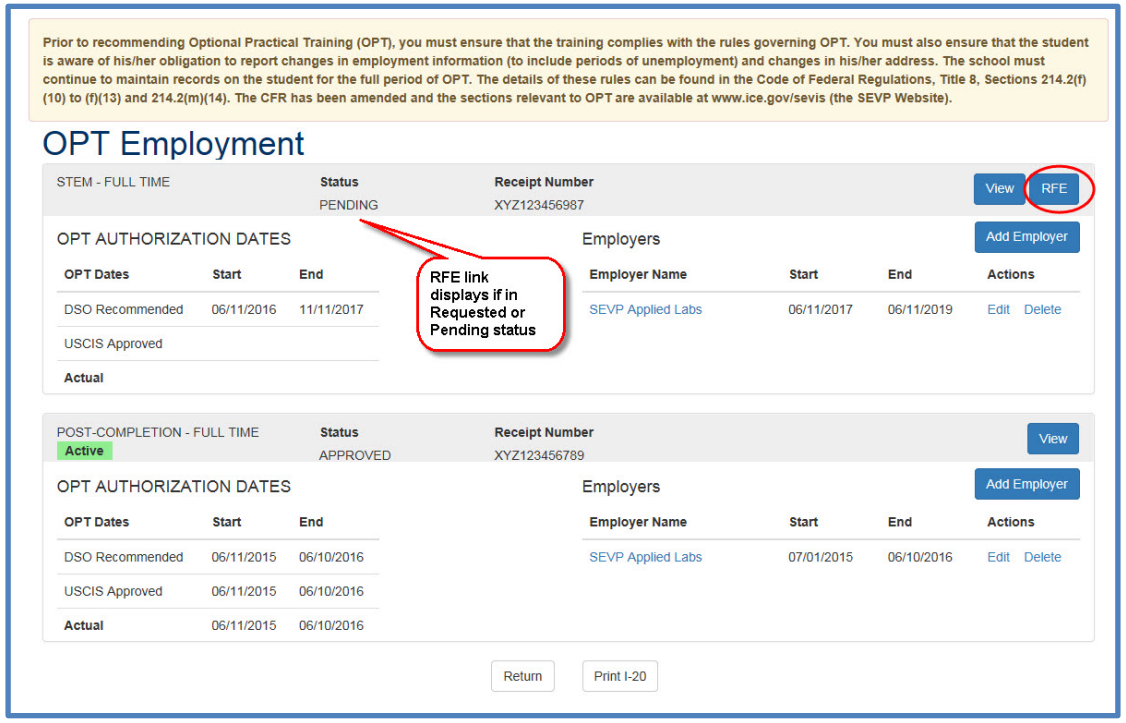
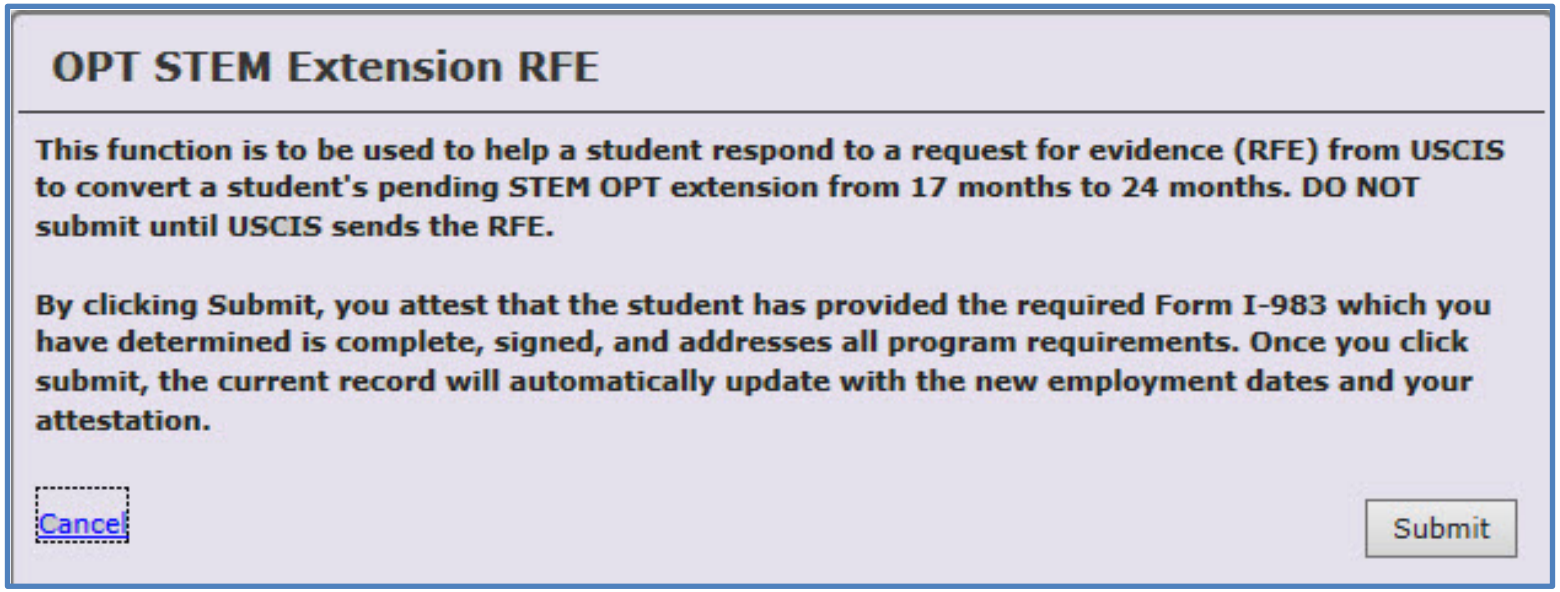
Convert Requested/Pending 17-Month STEM OPT Extension



SEVIS displays link for RFE for students with STEM OPT extensions in Requested or Pending status on May 13, 2016.

Convert Requested/Pending 17-Month STEM OPT Extension - Attestation



DSO must agree to the attestation by clicking **Submit**.

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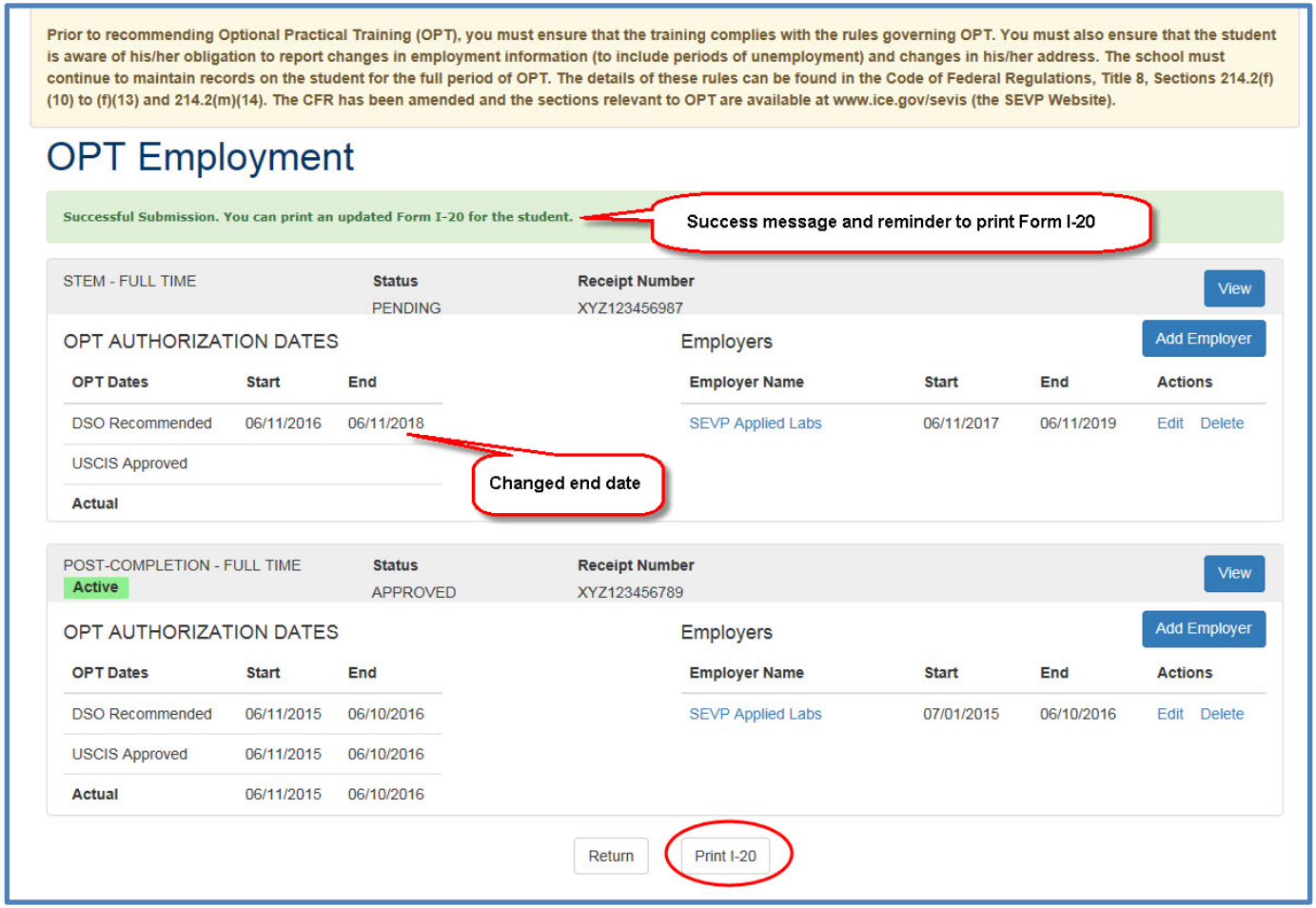
Conversion of STEM OPT Request: Successful Submission



Conversion of STEM OPT Request: As It Appears on the Form 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

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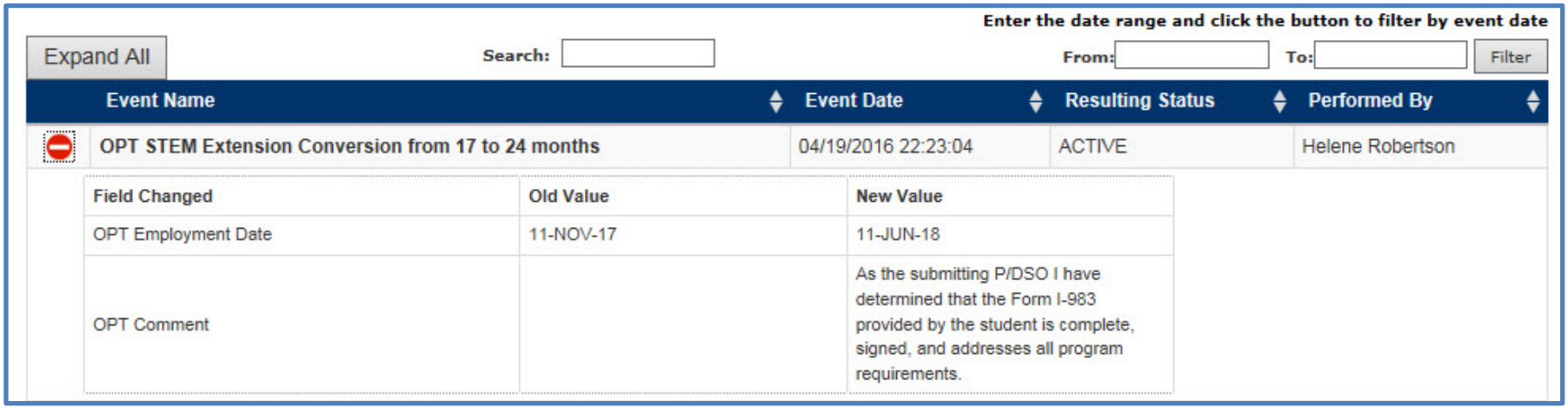
Conversion of STEM OPT Request: As It Appears in Event History



Enter the date range and click the button to filter by event date

Expand All | Search: | From: | To: | 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.

7-Month Extension of Approved STEM OPT

- Link to extend STEM OPT displays only on records with STEM OPT end dates on or after October 7, 2016
- DSO must receive Form I-983 ***before*** recommending the 7-month extension in SEVIS
- Student must:
  - File Form I-765 with USCIS before the deadline
  - Must send Form I-20 with the 7-month recommendation

(exception to this rule discussed on next slide)

7-Month Extension of Approved STEM OPT Special Case

Special Case	USCIS
Special filing instructions for people who must file Form I-765, Application for Employment Authorization, with USCIS ***before*** May 23, 2016.	• File Form I-765 with filing fee, but ***without*** the Form I-20 recommending extension • USCIS will send an RFE for the Form I-20 • Student must meet regulatory filing deadline • Students with filing deadline of May 23, 2016 or later ***must*** have Form I-20 with the recommendation

Required Statement from Students Who Must File ON or BETWEEN May 10-22, 2016

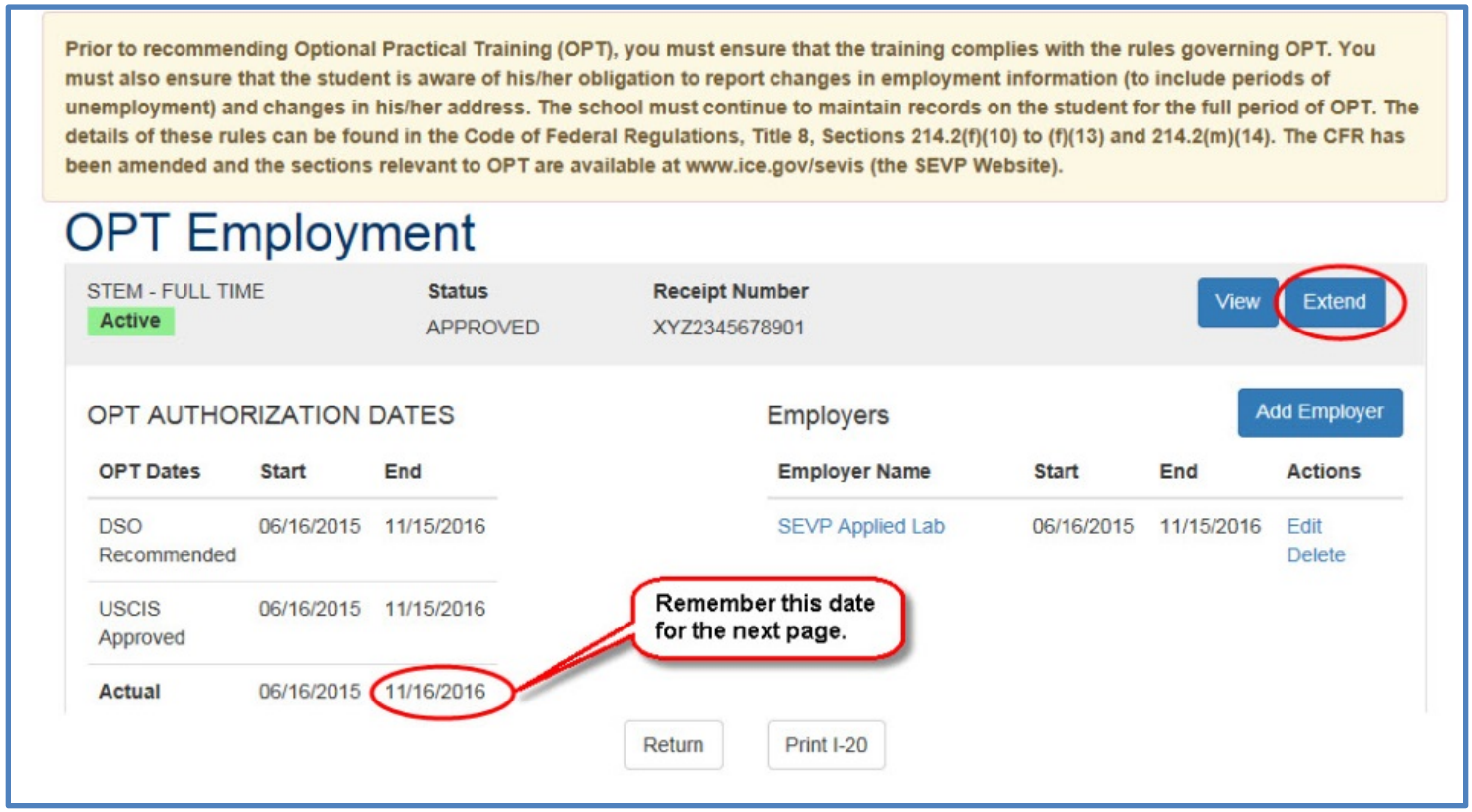
In cover letter, indicate:

"Due to new regulations, I must apply for the seven-month extension of my STEM OPT before SEVIS supports it. I will send a Form I-20 with the extension recommendation after USCIS requests it."

Potential Effect on USCIS Workload

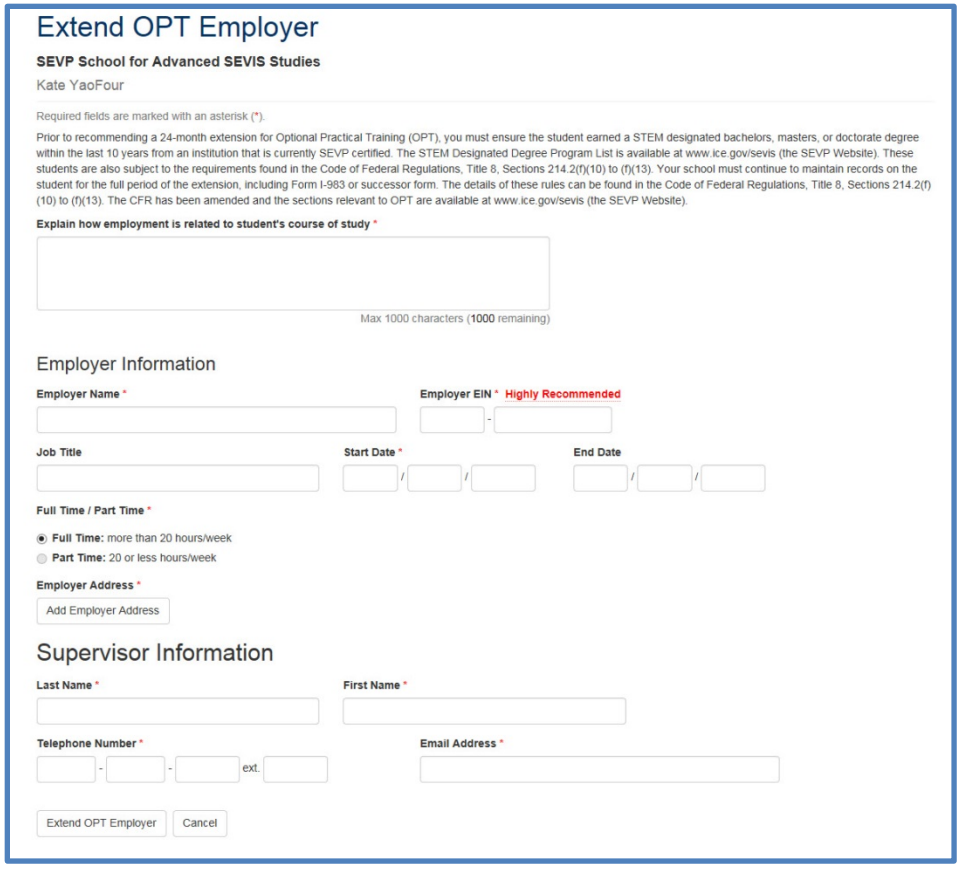
Total Number of…	Students Who…
24,861	• Are eligible for 7-month extension (as of April 28, 2016)
114	• Must file on or before May 22, 2016
9,458	• Do not have the full application period available to them (must file with USCIS **before** August 8, 2016)

7-Month Extension of Approved STEM OPT



SEVIS displays link to extend STEM OPT for students with STEM Actual OPT End Date of October 7, 2016 or later.

Recommend 7-Month Extension of STEM OPT



Extend OPT Employer

SEVP School for Advanced SEVIS Studies

Kate YaoFour

Required fields are marked with an asterisk (*).

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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 *

Add Employer Address

Supervisor Information

Last Name * **First Name ***

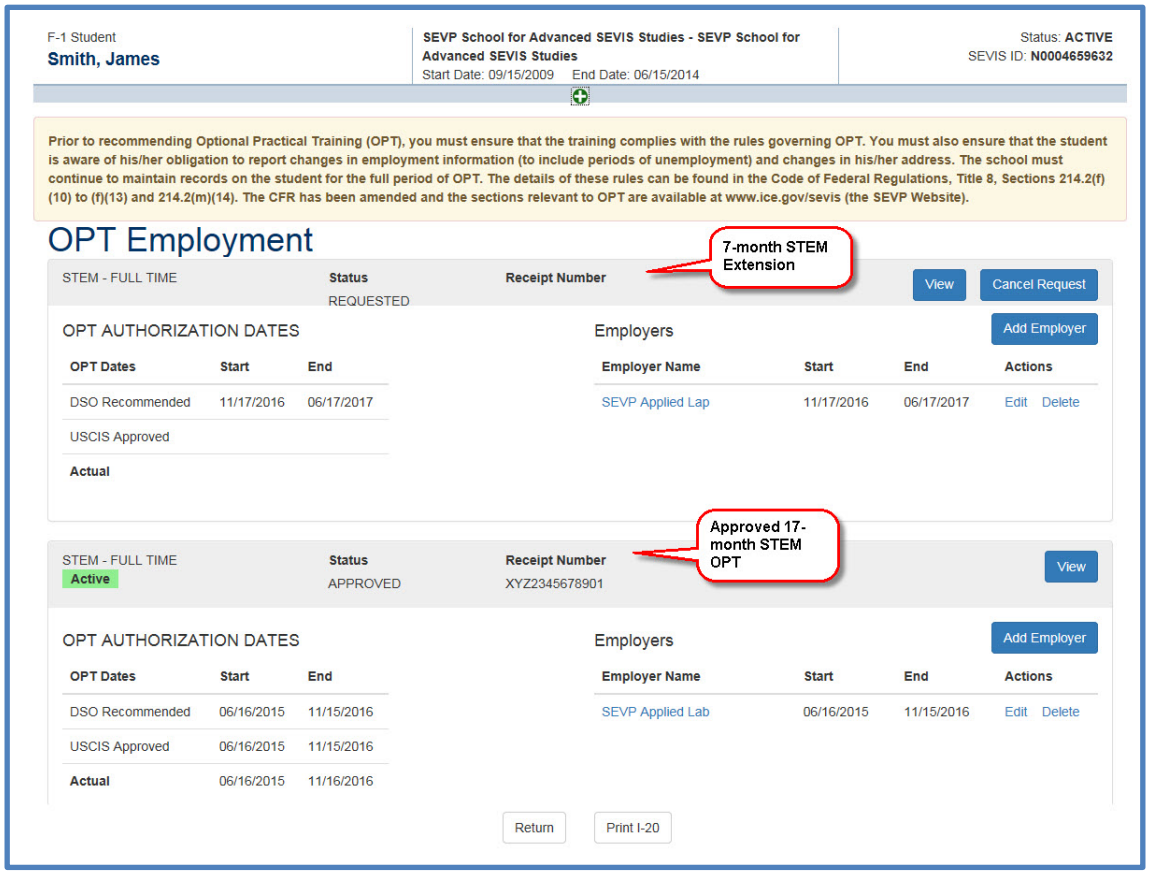
Telephone Number * **Email Address ***

ext.

Extend OPT Employer | Cancel

Enter training plan workaround text into the "**Explain how employment is related to student's course of study**" field, which describes the relationship of the position to the student's major course of study.

7-Month Extension of Approved STEM OPT



F-1 Student
Smith, James

SEVP School for Advanced SEVIS Studies - SEVP School for Advanced SEVIS Studies
Start Date: 09/15/2009 End Date: 06/15/2014

Status: **ACTIVE**
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

7-month STEM Extension

STEM - FULL TIME | **Status** REQUESTED | **Receipt Number** | View | Cancel Request

OPT AUTHORIZATION DATES

OPT Dates	Start	End
DSO Recommended	11/17/2016	06/17/2017
USCIS Approved		
Actual		

Employers — Add Employer

Employer Name	Start	End	Actions
SEVP Applied Lap	11/17/2016	06/17/2017	Edit Delete

Approved 17-month STEM OPT

STEM - FULL TIME
Active
Status APPROVED
Receipt Number XYZ2345678901
View

OPT AUTHORIZATION DATES

OPT Dates	Start	End
DSO Recommended	06/16/2015	11/15/2016
USCIS Approved	06/16/2015	11/15/2016
Actual	06/16/2015	11/16/2016

Employers — Add Employer

Employer Name	Start	End	Actions
SEVP Applied Lab	06/16/2015	11/15/2016	Edit Delete

Return | Print I-20

SEVIS displays the recommendation.

7-Month Extension
As It Appears on the Form I-20

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 Lap	17 NOVEMBER 2016	17 JUNE 2017	ARLINGTON, VA

7-month extension of STEM OPT

STEM OPT RELATED TOOLS AND RESOURCES

SEVIS Help Hub Materials

- Demonstration: Recommend 24-month Extension of OPT
  - **https://studyinthestates.dhs.gov/sevis-help-hub/learn-more/sevis-demonstrations**
- 24-Month Extension of OPT page
- STEM OPT Rule Implementation in SEVIS page
  - **https://studyinthestates.dhs.gov/sevis-help-hub/update-records/maintain-student-records/fm-student-employment/stem-opt-rule-implementation-in-sevis**

Note: Available on the SEVIS Help Hub on Study in the States.

Planning Tools

- Planning Tool for 7-month Extension of STEM OPT
  - **https://studyinthestates.dhs.gov/sevis-help-hub/learn-more/tools**
- Planning Tool for 24-month Extension of OPT
  - **https://studyinthestates.dhs.gov/sevis-help-hub/learn-more/tools**
- SEVIS 6.25 Release Planning Guide
  - **https://studyinthestates.dhs.gov/sevis-help-hub/learn-more/sevis-enhancements**

Note: Available on Study in the States and Webinar Download Pod.

Other STEM OPT-Related Materials

- SEVP STEM OPT Hub on Study in the States
  - **https://studyinthestates.dhs.gov/stem-opt-hub**
- SEVP Special Report: STEM OPT Webinar Recording from April 14, 2016
  - **https://studyinthestates.dhs.gov/stakeholder-webinars**
- USCIS page on STEM OPT

FUTURE WEBINARS

Future SEVIS Webinars

Date	Topic
May 20, 2016	SEVIS Registration Webinar
June 10, 2016	SEVIS 6.27 Pre-Release Webinar
July 15, 2016	SEVIS 6.27 Post-Release Webinar
July 22, 2016	Form I-17 Webinar

Note: New Form I-17 will be released in late summer/early Fall. Changes are being made to the Form I-17, but DSOs do not have to change anything that is already in SEVIS.

RESOURCES

Study in the States Website URLs

- SEVIS Information Page
  - **http://studyinthestates.dhs.gov/sevis**
- Webinar Page
  - **http://studyinthestates.dhs.gov/webinars**
- SEVIS Help Hub
  - **http://studyinthestates.dhs.gov/sevis-help-hub**

Other Resources

- SEVIS Email
  - **SEVISTechnicalFeedback@ice.dhs.gov**
- SEVIS Batch Email
  - **SEVIS.Batch@ice.dhs.gov**
- SEVP Response Center
  - **SEVP@ice.dhs.gov**
- SEVIS Help Desk
  - **800-892-4829**
  - **SEVISHelpdesk@ice.dhs.gov**

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS