

# **OVERVIEW OF OPTX & H-1B CAP GAP**

**INFORMATION FOR F-1 STUDENTS**



**PRESENTER: JESSIKA JONES**

# WHAT IS THE STEM OPT EXTENSION?

**EXTENSION OF POST-COMPLETION OPTIONAL  
PRACTICAL TRAINING FOR STUDENTS WHO  
HAVE COMPLETED A DEGREE IN SCIENCE,  
TECHNOLOGY, ENGINEERING, OR MATHEMATICS  
(STEM) FIELDS.**

**VALID FOR AN ADDITIONAL 24 MONTHS  
IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING THE INITIAL 12  
MONTHS OF POST-COMPLETION OPT.**



UNIVERSITY of HOUSTON | ISSSO



# STEM OPT EMPLOYMENT

- **EMPLOYMENT ON STEM OPT MUST BE DIRECTLY RELATED TO THE STEM MAJOR**
- **EMPLOYER MUST BE ENROLLED IN E-VERIFY**
- **EMPLOYMENT MUST BE A FULL-TIME PAID POSITION**
- **EMPLOYEE AND EMPLOYER MUST COMPLETE THE FORM I-983 TRAINING PLAN AND AGREE TO MAKE ANY MODIFICATION IF NECESSARY**

# WHEN TO APPLY

- The application must be properly filed not more than 90 days prior to Post-Completion OPT EAD card end date, but not after the end date (Late applications would not be approved by USCIS)
- Application must be received and receipted by USCIS, on or before the current OPT EAD card end date
- You may submit your OPT STEM request to our office 90 days prior to the OPT EAD card end date

# HOW TO QUALIFY

## THE STUDENT MUST

- **CURRENTLY APPROVED FOR POST-COMPLETION OPT THAT HAS NOT EXPIRED.**
- **WORK FOR U.S. EMPLOYER IN A JOB DIRECTLY RELATED TO THE MAJOR AREA OF STUDY**
- **THE EMPLOYER MUST BE IS E-VERIFIED.**
- **HAVE COMPLETED A BACHELOR'S, MASTER'S, OR DOCTOR'S DEGREE IN A FIELD ON THE DHS STEM DESIGNATED DEGREE PROGRAM LIST (FIND YOUR CIP CODE ON PG. 1 OF MOST RECENT I-20)**
- **EMPLOYER AGREES TO COMPLETE THE I-983 TRAINING PLAN**

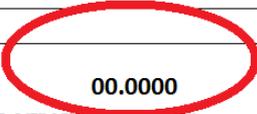
Department of Homeland Security  
U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement

I-20, Certificate of Eligibility for Nonimmigrant Student Status  
OMB NO. 1653-0038

SEVIS ID: N0010764152

SURNAME/PRIMARY NAME		GIVEN NAME	<b>Class of Admission</b>  <b>F-1</b>  <b>ACADEMIC AND LANGUAGE</b>
PREFERRED NAME		PASSPORT NAME	
COUNTRY OF BIRTH		COUNTRY OF CITIZENSHIP	
DATE OF BIRTH		ADMISSION NUMBER	
FORM ISSUE REASON CONTINUED ATTENDANCE - Updated Form I-20 or Name Conversion		LEGACY NAME	
<b>SCHOOL INFORMATION</b>			
SCHOOL NAME University of Houston-System University of Houston		SCHOOL CODE AND APPROVAL DATE HOU214F00110000 10 DECEMBER 2002	
SCHOOL OFFICIAL TO CONTACT UPON ARRIVAL Jason Scherzer International Student Counselor			
<b>PROGRAM OF STUDY</b>			
EDUCATION LEVEL	MAJOR 1	00.0000	MAJOR 2
PROGRAM ENGLISH PROFICIENCY Required	ENGLISH PROFICIENCY NOTES Student is proficient		EARLIEST ADMISSION DATE
START OF CLASSES	PROGRAM START/END DATE		

6 Digit CIP Code Determines  
Degree Eligibility



# CIP CODE LIST EXAMPLE

[WWW.ICE.GOV](http://WWW.ICE.GOV)

**CHECK FOR YOUR PARTICULAR CIP CODE TO DETERMINE ELIGIBILITY.**

CIP Code Two-Digit Series	2010 CIP Code	CIP Code Title
01	01.0308	Agroecology and Sustainable Agriculture
01	01.0901	Animal Sciences, General
01	01.0902	Agricultural Animal Breeding
01	01.0903	Animal Health
01	01.0904	Animal Nutrition
01	01.0905	Dairy Science
01	01.0906	Livestock Management
01	01.0907	Poultry Science
01	01.0999	Animal Sciences, Other
01	01.1001	Food Science
01	01.1002	Food Technology and Processing
01	01.1099	Food Science and Technology, Other
01	01.1101	Plant Sciences, General
01	01.1102	Agronomy and Crop Science

# ONCE READY TO APPLY

- VIEW THE POWER POINT PRESENTATION ON OUR WEBSITE:  
[WWW.UH.EDU/OISSS](http://WWW.UH.EDU/OISSS)
- COMPLETE THE I-765 APPLICATION
- COMPLETE THE I-983 TRAINING PLAN AND HAVE ORIGINAL SIGNATURE FROM YOUR EMPLOYERS
- PREPARE ADDITIONAL REQUIRED DOCUMENTS
- PROVIDED ISSS WILL ALL DOCUMENTS NEEDED SO THAT A DSO CAN RECOMMENDED YOU FOR OPTX

# 6 MONTH VALIDATION

**STEM OPT RECIPIENTS MUST COMPLETE A  
"VALIDATION REPORT" TO THE DSO**

**EVERY SIX MONTHS**

**STARTING FROM THE DATE THE 24-MONTH EXTENSION  
BEGINS. UPDATE THE SELF-REPORT ON ISSS'S WEBSITE  
AND EVERY TIME YOUR PERSONAL OR EMPLOYMENT  
INFORMATION CHANGES.**

**DUE WITHIN 10 BUSINESS DAYS OF EACH REPORT DUE  
DATE**

**UNIVERSITY of HOUSTON**  
OFFICE OF THE PROVOST  
International Student and Scholar Services  
Student Center North, N203, Houston, TX 77204-3024 Phone: (713) 743-5065 Fax: (713) 743-5079 [www.uh.edu/issss](http://www.uh.edu/issss)

**STUDENT Reporting Obligations**

Students applying for STEM OPT Extension must abide by the following Reporting Obligations:

**Six-month Validity Reports:** I must submit an OPT-Self Report on ISSS website on my scheduled validation reporting dates even I don't have any personal nor employment changes (**Please fill out prior to submission**):

- Reporting Date #1: \_\_\_\_\_ (This is the first day after your Post-OPT expires)
- Reporting Date #2: \_\_\_\_\_ (6 months after date #1)
- Reporting Date #3: \_\_\_\_\_ (6 months after date #2)
- Reporting Date #4: \_\_\_\_\_ (6 months after date #3)
- Reporting Date #5: \_\_\_\_\_ (last day of OPT-Extension, 24months)

**Immediately notify DSO (ISSS):** I must submit an OPT-Self Report on ISSS website for any of the events:

- Any time there is a "material change" in the terms and conditions of the original I-983
- Termination of practical training experience
- Beginning a new practical training opportunity with a new employer, a new Form I-983 must be executed and submitted to ISSS within 5 business days of the new start date and a final evaluation I-983 from your prior company.
- Employer noncompliance

**I-983 Evaluations:** I must submit the I-983 yearly and final evaluations to ISSS:

- After 12 months of the STEM OPT start or from the start date of working for a company, whichever comes later, and;
- Final evaluation at the end of the OPT-X period or at the end of any employment within 5 business days

Student is responsible for conducting self-evaluations and obtaining the necessary signatures on I-983 and submits the evaluations (I-983) to ISSS. For detailed information, please visit [STEM OPT Hub](#).

**Regarding work authorization:**

- I will only work the dates listed on my EAD card\* (exceptions may exist on a case-by-case basis. See ISSS for details and additional authorizations if on OPTX, see your immigration attorney if under H1-B Cap-Gap).
- I will only accept employment directly related to my major area of study.

**Regarding transitions:**

- I will obtain a new I-20 for any new degree program and contact ISSS for assistance should I choose to pursue a new degree in the US.
- I will notify ISSS by completing the OPT Self-Report in the event I change my status or decide to permanently leave the country prior to the ending date of my OPTX.

**Regarding other requirements:**

- I will not attend school part-time or full-time in a degree seeking program while on OPTX.
- I understand I can only accumulate 150 days of unemployment the entire duration of my OPT and OPT STEM Extension (≤90 days for first 12 months of OPT, an additional 60 days for 24 month OPTX). Exceeding these amounts may result in a violation of my F-1 status.

I, (legibly print your name) \_\_\_\_\_, have read and understand my obligations as an F-1 student on optional practical training STEM extension (OPTX).

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ PS ID #: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

# STEM OPT REPORTING REQUIREMENTS 6 MONTH SEVP PORTAL

**YOU MUST CONFIRM THAT YOUR ADDRESS, TELEPHONE AND EMPLOYER  
INFORMATION IS CORRECT IN THE SEVP PORTAL.**

**IT IS POSSIBLE THAT YOU WILL RECEIVE AN EMAIL REMINDER FROM SEVP THAT THE  
REPORT IS DUE.**

**TO SUBMIT THE REPORT ON THE PORTAL**

- 1. LOG IN TO THE SEVP PORTAL ([HTTPS://SEVP.ICE.GOV/OPT/](https://sevp.ice.gov/opt/))**
- 2. REVIEW THE DATA ON YOUR PROFILE AND EMPLOYMENT PAGES.**
- 3. MAKE THE NEEDED CHANGES**



# **CAP GAP EXTENSION**

## **WHAT IS IT?**

**CAP-GAP EXTENSION IS A PERIOD IN WHICH AN ELIGIBLE F-1 STUDENT'S STATUS IS AUTOMATICALLY EXTENDED TO BRIDGE THE GAP BETWEEN THE END OF F-1 STATUS AND THE START OF H-1B STATUS. IF THE STUDENT IS IN A PERIOD OF AUTHORIZED POST-COMPLETION OPT ON OR AFTER THE DATE THE H-1B PETITION IS RECEIVED BY USCIS, THE STUDENT'S OPT IS ALSO AUTOMATICALLY EXTENDED.**

# HOW TO QUALIFY FOR CAP-GAP

THE STUDENT MUST BE THE BENEFICIARY OF AN H-1B PETITION THAT:

- HAS BEEN TIMELY FILED;
- REQUESTS AN EMPLOYMENT START DATE OF OCTOBER 1, AND
- REQUESTS A CHANGE OF STATUS
- THE STUDENT MUST NOT HAVE VIOLATED TERMS OF HIS/HER F-1 STATUS. THE CAP-GAP EXTENSION IS APPLIED TO ALL F-1 STUDENTS REGARDLESS OF THEIR MAJOR.

# CAP-GAP EXTENSION

- THE CAP-GAP EXTENSION BEGINS WHEN THE STUDENT'S CURRENT PERIOD OF F-1 STATUS ENDS, REGARDLESS OF WHETHER THE STUDENT WAS IN A PERIOD OF OPT.
- THE EXTENSION IS GRANTED AUTOMATICALLY AT NO COST.
- WHILE THE EXTENSION IS GRANTED AUTOMATICALLY, SEVIS MAY NOT UPDATE AUTOMATICALLY.
- IT IS THE STUDENT'S RESPONSIBILITY TO CHECK WITH ISSSO TO VERIFY THAT THE SEVIS RECORD HAS BEEN UPDATED WITH THE EXTENSION

# CAP-GAP EXTENSION

- CAP-GAP EXTENSION IS TERMINATED IF THE H-1B PETITION IS REJECTED, DENIED, OR REVOKED.
- HOWEVER, THE STUDENT WOULD HAVE A GRACE PERIOD TO REMAIN IN THE U.S. FOR UP TO 60 DAYS
  - TO PREPARE FOR DEPARTURE FROM THE U.S.
  - START A NEW PROGRAM, TRANSFER, CHANGE STATUS, ETC.,
  - AS LONG AS THE STUDENT HAS NOT OTHERWISE VIOLATED STATUS. EMPLOYMENT IS NOT PERMITTED DURING THIS GRACE PERIOD.

# **CAP-GAP EXTENSION**

**THE DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY WILL NOT PERSONALLY NOTIFY STUDENTS WHEN AN H-1B IS WITHDRAWN OR DENIED.**

**THE STUDENT MUST REMAIN IN CONTACT WITH THE SPONSORING EMPLOYER FOR STATUS UPDATE.**

# TRAVEL

**UNDER CERTAIN CIRCUMSTANCES, AN F-1 STUDENT ON THE CAP GAP EXTENSION MAY TRAVEL ABROAD AND SEEK READMISSION TO THE UNITED STATES.**

**HOWEVER, IF AN F-1 STUDENT TRAVELS ABROAD BEFORE USCIS APPROVES THEIR H-1B CHANGE OF STATUS (COS) PETITION, USCIS WILL DEEM THE PETITION ABANDONED.**

**THE STUDENT'S F-1 STATUS WILL EXPIRE PER THE PROGRAM END DATE LISTED ON THEIR FORM I-20. MEANING, IF A STUDENT LEAVES THE UNITED STATES BEFORE USCIS APPROVES THEIR H-1B COS PETITION, THAT STUDENT WILL NOT BE ABLE TO RE-ENTER THE UNITED STATES AS AN F-1 STUDENT PURSUANT TO THE CAP GAP EXTENSION PROVISIONS.**

**TRAVEL SHOULD BE DONE WITH EXTREME CAUTION**



## **QUESTIONS**

**ISSSO WEBSITE:**  
[www.uh.edu/oisss](http://www.uh.edu/oisss)

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