

Cornell University
International Students
and Scholars Office

B-50 Caldwell Hall
Ithaca, New York 14853-2602
Telephone: 607.255.5243
Fax: 607.255.2778
Email: isso@cornell.edu
Web: <http://www.isso.cornell.edu>

F-1 Optional Practical Training (OPT): 17 Month Extension Application

F-1 OPT extension of 17 months for students in certain fields:

F-1 students on OPT who have received a degree in certain fields, referred to as “STEM” fields (science, technology, engineering, or mathematics), will have an opportunity to apply for a one time 17-month extension of their regular 12 month OPT period. Students who file an application for the 17-month OPT extension before the end date of the first OPT period, will be able to continue employment while the extension application is pending, until a final decision on the I-765 or for 180 days, whichever is first. You should apply during your first 12 months of OPT, and no later than the end date of your OPT.

Step One

- Fill out the "ISSO information sheet for 17 month OPT extension" and Form I-765 which you can download from uscis.gov (follow directions on page two on completing the form).

Step Two

- FAX the ISSO information sheet and the I-765 to the ISSO “Advisor On Duty” at 607-255-2778. An ISSO advisor **will print out a new I-20** for you which will include an “ISSO advisor recommendation” for your OPT extension and will mail that I-20 to you with an instruction sheet. **You will send** a copy of this new I-20 with your completed application.

Step Three

- Make a photocopy of all of the documents you send for your records and mail in the following documents so that they are **RECEIVED by the immigration service no later than the end date on your current OPT card** to the USCIS Service Center which governs your area (see chart on page 4).
 - Form I-765 (which you can download at uscis.gov)
 - A photocopy of page 1 and page 3 of the new I-20 with the ISSO advisor's recommendation for Optional Practical Training 17 month extension on page 3.
 - A photocopy of both sides of your I-94 Card
 - A copy of photo page (identification page) of your passport also include any extra pages that record extensions of the validity of your passport).
 - A copy of the F1 visa page of your passport (even if expired)
 - A copy of ALL previous I-20s that have been issued to you (if you do not have these, check with the ISSO advisor to get copies of Cornell I-20s or your previous schools' international office.)
 - A copy of your previous OPT card or other work card (EAD) if you have had one
 - For the 17 month extension**, you must also include a copy of your transcripts or diploma as long as it states the degree field.
 - Two passport type photographs (See attached sample). Print your name and I-94 card number lightly in pencil on the back of each photo. Put the photos in an envelope and attach it to front of the I-765. **DO NOT CUT THE PHOTOS!**
 - Fee of \$380.** Personal checks from a U.S. bank or a money order may be made payable to the Department of Homeland Security. **NO CASH.** Attach the check to the front of the I-765.

Staple all above documents together and send them by **certified mail** with a return receipt OR **federal express** (so that you have a tracking number). You will receive a notice (Form I-797) from the USCIS.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR FILLING OUT FORM I-765 for the 17 month extension

- ❑ **Check first box “renewal”;** fill out lines 1 through 17; sign and date:

- ❑ **#3 Return Address:** This must be an address at which you can receive mail for at least the next 3 ½ months. You cannot put in a forwarding order on this address—the immigration service’s envelopes state “Do Not Forward.” If the card is sent to an address with a forwarding order, or if you cannot receive mail at the address you use, your card will be returned to the immigration service and destroyed.

- ❑ **#3 Return Address:** Whatever return address you enter here will determine which immigration service center you will send your application to (see chart on page 4).

- ❑ **#10 Alien Registration Number:** You can use your I-94 number found on the I-94 card that you received when you entered the US (small white card in your passport) OR the A# listed on your current OPT card.

- ❑ **#11 Previous employment authorization:** Because you are applying for a 17 month extension, please answer “yes” and complete the related information.

- ❑ **#16 Eligibility Categories:** for the 17 month extension of OPT write: (c) (3) (C)

- ❑ **#17 Complete this section with your degree field and your employer’s “E-Verify” number.**

- ❑ **Certification:** Remember to sign and date the I-765

Frequently Asked Questions on the 17 month Extension:

1. What is the 17 month OPT extension?

A new regulation, published April 8, 2008, allows F-1 students on OPT who have received a degree in the fields listed below, referred to as “STEM” fields (science, technology, engineering, or mathematics), to apply for a one time 17-month extension of their regular 12 month OPT period. **You will NOT apply for 29 months up front.** The 17 month extension will allow students to have continuous work authorization at least through October 1st of any given following year, in case they do not get an H1B visa in their first year after graduating. Students who file an application for the 17-month OPT extension before the end date of the current OPT period will be able to continue employment while the extension application is pending, until a final decision on the I-765 or for 180 days, whichever comes first.

2. I think I qualify, when do I apply for the 17 month extension?

FIRST: Students graduating now with degrees in these fields will first apply for the regular 12 month period of OPT as usual.

WITHIN 3 months of the end date of your OPT: If you meet the following criteria, you can apply through the ISSO office for your 17 month extension of your OPT when you are within 3 months of the OPT end date.

CRITERIA FOR THE 17 MONTH EXTENSION:

- Your employer must be enrolled in the “E-Verify” program (see information links below).
- You must have graduated and be working in one of the fields listed below referred to as “STEM” fields
- You must have maintained status while on OPT and be within 3 months of your OPT end date

3. What are the “STEM” fields?

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) For a more detailed list, see our website at:

<http://www.isso.cornell.edu/immigration/f1/f1newoptreg.php>

4. What is “E-Verify”?

E-Verify is an Internet-based system operated by U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) in partnership with the Social Security Administration (SSA). E-Verify is currently free to employers and is available in all 50 states. E-Verify provides an automated link to federal databases to help employers determine employment eligibility of new hires and the validity of their Social Security numbers. More information is available at: www.uscis.gov.

5. Are there any other requirements while I am on the 17-month extension?

In addition to reporting address changes and periods of unemployment, students on the 17 month extension of OPT period will also have to report name and address of their employer, any changes in employer AND they will have to complete a report to the school every six months while on the 17 month extension. We will send out email reminders. You will report to us using the OPT report form at:

<http://www.isso.cornell.edu/immigration/f1/optreport.php>

TRAVEL and the 17 month extension of OPTIONAL PRACTICAL TRAINING

6. What documents do I need to re-enter the U.S. while on OPT normally?

You will need your I-20 that has been endorsed on the travel line by the ISSO within the last 6 months; the Employment Authorization Document (EAD card) from the U.S.C.I.S. (or the receipt notice for your OPT application), your valid passport, a **current F-1 visa stamp, AND your job offer letter or proof of employment.**

7. What if I have applied for the 17 month extension but I have not yet received the card, can I travel out of the U.S.?

No, the immigration service advises that you do NOT try to re-enter the country until you RECEIVE the new OPT card.

Where should I send my 17 month extension application?

<p><u>If you live in (return address on I-765):</u></p> <p>Alabama, Arkansas, Connecticut, Delaware, District of Columbia, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Mississippi, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, Puerto Rico, Rhode Island, South Carolina, Oklahoma, Tennessee, Texas, Vermont, Virginia, U.S. Virgin Islands, or West Virginia</p>	<p><u>Mail your application to USCIS Dallas Lockbox:</u></p> <p>For U.S. Postal Service deliveries: USCIS PO Box 660867 Dallas, TX 75266</p> <p>For Express Mail: USCIS, Attn: AOS 2501 S. State Hwy, 121, Business Suite 400 Lewisville, TX 75067</p>
<p><u>If you live in (return address on I-765):</u></p> <p>Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Guam, Hawaii, Idaho, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, Nevada, North Dakota, Ohio, Oregon, South Dakota, Utah, Washington (state), Wisconsin, Wyoming, or Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands</p>	<p><u>Mail your application to USCIS Phoenix Lockbox:</u></p> <p>For U.S. Postal Service deliveries: USCIS PO Box 21281 Phoenix, AZ 85036</p> <p>For Express Mail: USCIS, Attn: AOS 1820 E. Skyharbor Circle S, Suite 100 Phoenix, AZ 85034</p>



Cornell University
International Students
and Scholars Office

B-50 Caldwell Hall
Ithaca, New York 14853-2602
Telephone: 607.255.5243
Fax: 607.255.2778
Email: isso@cornell.edu
Web: <http://www.isso.cornell.edu>

ISSO Information Sheet for OPT 17 mo. ext

We will enter our ISSO advisor recommendation for your OPT extension in the SEVIS database and print out a new I-20 with our recommendation with the extension dates printed on page 3. We need the following information:

FIRST NAME: _____ LAST NAME: _____

SEVIS ID# (upper right hand corner of your I-20, starts with "N"): N _____

CURRENT OPT END DATE: _____

Current Email Address: _____

Current Residential Address: _____

Address to which we should mail the new I-20 (if different then residential address):

Degree Field (field in which you earned your Cornell degree): _____

Your Job Title: _____

Name of Employer: _____ Employer's E-Verify ID#: _____

Address of Employer: _____

Supervisor's Name: _____ Supervisor's Phone number: _____



U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services

USCIS Is Making Photos Simpler



**Old Three-Quarter
Style Photo**



**New Passport
Style Photo**

Photos Must Be in Color

Washington, DC — In accordance with language specified in the Border Security Act of 2003, U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) today announced a change in the photo requirements for all applicants from a three-quarter face position to a standard, full-frontal face position to take effect **August 2, 2004**.

USCIS will accept both three-quarter and full-frontal color photographs until **September 1, 2004**, after which only full-frontal color will be accepted.

The application process of customers who have already submitted materials that include color photos with the three-quarter standard **will not** be affected by this change.

All photos must be of just the person. Where more than one photo is required, all photos of the person must be identical. All photos must meet the specifications for full-frontal/passport photos and must not be more than 30 days old when an application is filed.

For more information on photo standards, visit the Department of State website at <http://www.travel.state.gov/passport/pptphotos/index.html>, or contact the USCIS National Customer Service Center at 1 800 375 5283.

[List of forms that require photos is on the back](#)

Passport Photographs: Composition Checklist

(from http://www.travel.state.gov/passport/guide/composition/composition_874.html)

7 Steps to Successful Photographs:

- ✓ Frame subject with **full face, front view, eyes open**
- ✓ Make sure photo presents **full head** from top of hair to bottom of chin; height of head should measure 1 inch to 1-3/8 inches (25 mm to 35 mm)
- ✓ **Center head** within frame (see Figure 2 below)
- ✓ Make sure **eye height** is between 1-1/8 inches to 1-3/8 inches (28 mm and 35 mm) from bottom of photo
- ✓ Photograph subject against a plain white or off-white **background**
- ✓ **Position subject** and **lighting** so that there are no distracting shadows on the face or background
- ✓ Encourage subject to have a **natural expression**

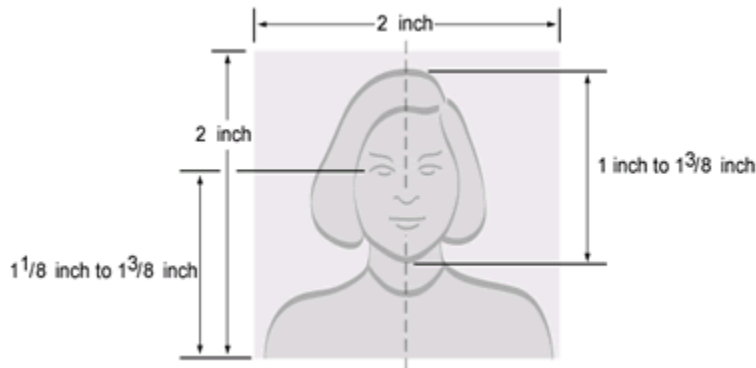


Figure 2. Head Position & Placement

Well-Composed Photos



Frequently Asked Questions about Passport Photographs

(from: http://www.travel.state.gov/passport/guide/faq/faq_881.html)

Do the photos have to be in color?

Yes, the photos must be in color.

How recent must the photos be?

The photos must be no older than 6 months.

What pose should the photos show?

The photo should show a clear, front view, full face of the customer. The customer should be in normal street attire, without hat or dark glasses against a plain white or off-white background. The customer should have a natural expression, mouth closed, and eyes open and looking directly ahead. Photos in which the face of the person being photographed is not in focus will not be accepted.

How big should the head be in the photo?

The customer's head, measured from the bottom of the chin to the top of the hair, should be between 1 inch and 1-3/8 inches. The head should be centered in the photo. The head of the person being photographed should not be tilted up, down or to the side. It should cover about 50% of the area of the photo.

Can hats or religious headgear be worn for the photo?

Unless worn daily for religious reasons, all hats or headgear should be removed for the photo. In all cases, no item or attire should cover or otherwise obscure any part of the face.

Can eyeglasses be worn for the photo?

Eyeglasses worn on a daily basis can be worn for the photo. However, there should be no reflections from the eyeglasses that obscures the eyes.

Can sunglasses or tinted glasses be worn?

Dark glasses or nonprescription glasses with tinted lenses are not acceptable unless you need them for medical reasons. A medical certificate may be required.

Can work uniforms be worn for the photo?

Uniforms should not be worn in photographs except in the case of religious attire that is worn daily. Otherwise, normal street attire should be worn.

Are photos that are copied from recent driver licenses or other official documents acceptable?

No, only original photographs are acceptable. Copied or digitally scanned photos of photos will not be accepted. In addition, photos must not be retouched to alter the customer's appearance in any way.

Are snapshots, magazine photos, or photos from vending machine acceptable?

No, snapshots, magazine photos, most vending machine prints, or full-length photographs are not acceptable.

May photos be taken with a digital camera?

If the digital camera has sufficient resolution — capable of capturing and storing images with 1 million pixels (megapixels) or more — it can be used to take the photos. However, printing of digital images is best done by professional photography processing labs because many off-the-shelf digital printers cannot achieve the image-quality required for passport and visa photographs. In any case, the image-quality criteria, described on this website, must be met in the submitted conventional film photo and/or the digital image printed photo.

Places to obtain Passport Photos

Fees are in the \$10-14 range

Student Agencies, Inc.
www.studentagencies.com
409 College Avenue
272-2000

The Post Office at ILR
311 E. Palm Road
(on campus)
Hours for passport photos only: 8am-12noon
255-3907

AAA
1284 Dryden Road
273-6727

The Cornell Store