UNIVERSITY of HOUSTON | ISSSO
302 Student Service Center 1 Houston, TX 77204-3024 Phone: (713) 743-5065 Fax: (713) 743-5079 http://issso.uh.edu

OPTIONAL PRACTICAL TRAINING EXTENSION (OPTX) CHECKLIST

PREPARATION CHECKLIST ☑

- ❑ Take *Employer Statement of Understanding* to your employer for verification.
- ❑ Obtain 2 color "passport type" photographs (e.g. head and shoulders looking straight ahead).
  - *The Creation Station in the University Center Underground will do the photos correctly for $10.*
- ❑ Schedule an appointment at ISSSO (some appointments are in a group setting)

APPOINTMENT CHECKLIST ☑

***You** bring these items to your appointment:*

- ❑ Current I-20
- ❑ Passport(s) that is valid for six months into the future with your most recent visa page
- ❑ I-94 card.
- ❑ Job offer letter from your employer indicating: job title & basic job description on company letterhead.
- ❑ Current EAD Card
- ❑ **Your diploma (s).**
- ❑ Have your employer read and sign the *Employer Statement of Understanding* page
- ❑ Complete form I-765. This form is attached & can be downloaded at http://www.uscis.gov/files/form/i-765.pdf.
  - Question 16 should be coded (c) (3) (C)
  - Question 17 requires your Employer's E-Verify number
- ❑ G-1145 form. This form can be downloaded at: http://www.uscis.gov/files/form/g-1145.pdf.
- ❑ 2 color passport type photos as described above.
- ❑ A personal check **payable to U.S. Department of Homeland Security** for **$380**.
- ❑ A personal check payable to **University of Houston** for **$60.**

***ISSSO** does the following:*

- ❑ Reviews application for accuracy and answers your questions.
- ❑ Requests a new I-20 from SEVIS with a recommendation for your OPT Extension.
- ❑ Supplies an envelope with a mailing label & delivery confirmation for you to use to mail the application documents to the USCIS Service Center.

MAILING CHECKLIST ☑

- ❑ Pick up your new I-20 and photocopies from ISSSO.
- ❑ Mail the following six documents in the envelope provided:
  1) G-1145 form
  2) I-765 application form
  3) Check for **$380** payable to **U.S. Department of Homeland Security** stapled to I-765.
  4) Photos in holder or small envelope stapled to I-765.
  5) Photocopy of new I-20 with OPT Extension recommendation on p. 3. ***You keep the original.***
  6) Photocopy of passport photo page including expiration date and most recent visa page.
  7) Photocopy of front and back of I-94 card.
  8) Photocopy of diploma (s).
- ❑ Send to USCIS using Priority Mail with Delivery Confirmation (confirm delivery at USPS website: www.usps.gov). Once your application is posted as "delivered", print this page for your own records.

WHILE WAITING FOR A RESPONSE ☑

- ❑ By submitting the G-1145 form, you should receive a text message or email notification that your package arrived at the USCIS Lockbox facility. This is separate from your formal receipt notice.
- ❑ You should receive an official receipt (called a Notice of Action) in about 2 weeks. *The receipt number (SRC #) on this form can be used to track the progress of your case from the USCIS website at:* https://egov.uscis.gov/cris/jsps/index.jsp.
- ❑ Normal processing times are from 60-120 days. Contact ISSSO for assistance if it has been longer than 90 days from the official receipt date and you still have yet to receive your EAD Card.

AFTER RECEIVING YOUR CARD ☑

- ❑ Bring your original EAD Card or submit to ISSSO a clear picture-quality-photocopy your EAD card (front & back).
- ❑ **Report to ISSSO any changes of name or address or any interruption of employment *within 10 days* of such changes**. (Keep all reporting appointments! Submit an *OPT SELF REPORT* when necessary.)
- ❑ At the end of your OPT Extension (non-H1-B petitioners) you have a 60 day grace period to file for a change in your status, receive a new I-20, or depart the U.S.

UNIVERSITY of HOUSTON | ISSSO

302 Student Service Center 1 Houston, TX 77204-3024 Phone: (713) 743-5065 Fax: (713) 743-5079 http://issso.uh.edu

I AM ON OPTIONAL PRACTICAL TRAINING EXTENSION (OPTX), NOW WHAT???

WHAT YOU NEED TO *KNOW*:

- You are still in F-1 Status (OPT is a *benefit* of F-1 Status);
- Do not attend school part/time or full/time while you are on OPT/OPTX;
- Obtain a new I-20 before you start any new degree program;
- Always check with ISSSO if you have questions about any of the above.
- You are only allowed a total of 120 days unemployment while on OPT (≤ 90 days during the first 12 months, ≤30 during the 17 months for OPTX). *Unemployment exceeding these amounts may result in violation of your F-1 status.*

WHAT YOU NEED TO *DO*:

- You are responsible for mailing your application to USCIS in a timely manner. Your application must arrive at the USCIS Texas Service Center WITHIN 30 Days of your OPT appointment. ***If the USCIS Service Center receives your application after your post completion OPT expires, you will have to cease employment and wait for new employment authorization (your new EAD card).***
- Submit to ISSSO a copy of your EAD card after you receive it.
- Actively search for employment. University Career Services (http://career.uh.edu/) can help you maximize your job search, resume, and interview skills. Their services are free for UH alumni during the first 6 months following graduation.
- Any time your personal information changes, update (1) ISSSO (submit an *OPT SELF REPORT* via https://sevisdv.uh.edu/isssouh/OPTform.aspx), (2) UH PeopleSoft "SEVIS" address type, and (3) submit an AR-11 (for detailed instructions visit, http://issso.uh.edu/PDF/Address-Change.pdf);
- Abide by *Student Responsibility Statement*;
- Bring ISSSO your employment information including employer name & address, supervisor name & contact information, job title/position, and the duration of your employment;*
- Submit a new employer acknowledgement of understanding each time employment changes.

*According to the federal regulations [8 CFR 214.(f)], F-1 students are responsible for reporting the address, employer's name and address, and any periods of employment and unemployment while on OPT. ISSSO is responsible for updating the student's SEVIS record to reflect these changes. This reporting requirement is an on-going requirement.

New to OPTX and OPT is the *OPT Self Report*, *Employer OPT Report*, and *Employer Statement of Understanding* (.pdf available on our website). These reports will be available for electronic submission to ISSSO via our website (http://issso.uh.edu/). Students are asked to submit additional requested documentation by fax, mail, or email (sevis@uh.edu, Subject: OPT Self Report). The information currently being requested on these forms includes:

STUDENT REPORT

- SEVIS ID
- PEOPLESOFT ID
- FIRST NAME
- LAST NAME
- CURRENT US ADDRESS
- CURRENT EMAIL ADDRESS
- EAD START/END DATE
- EMPLOYER'S NAME
- EMPLOYER'S ADDRESS
- EMPLOYMENT START/END DATES
- SUPERVISOR NAME
- SUPERVISOR CONTACT INFORMATION

EMPLOYER REPORT

- EMPLOYER NAME
- EMPLOYER ADDRESS
- EMPLOYEE SEVIS ID
- EMPLOYEE NAME
- EMPLOYEE JOB TITLE/POSITION
- DATE HIRED
- DATE TERMINATED
- SUPERVISOR NAME
- SUPERVISOR JOB TITLE/POSITION
- SUPERVISOR CONTACT INFORMATION

*You must submit a student report each time you change employment **and** on your reporting appointment dates. Your employer will submit a report within 48 hours of you departing employment. See *Information for Employers of Students on OPTX* handout for details on when you are considered "departed" by an employer.

UNIVERSITY of HOUSTON | ISSSO
302 Student Service Center 1 Houston, TX 77204-3024 Phone: (713) 743-5065 Fax: (713) 743-5079 http://issso.uh.edu

STUDENT STATEMENT OF RESPONSIBILITY

Students applying for OPTX are responsible to abide by the following:

Regarding reporting requirements:

- ❑ *I will report any changes in personal information (name, address, email, change of status, etc) or employment (employer, employment address, job title, supervisor information, employment dates) to ISSSO within 10 days of such change.*
- ❑ *I agree to submit a new job offer letter and employer statement of understanding form to ISSSO each time I change employers while on OPTX.*
- ❑ *I will keep my scheduled reporting appointments with ISSSO and understand that failing to report such information within 10 days from my appointment date could seriously jeopardize my employment benefits and F-1 status.*
- ❑ ***My scheduled reporting appointments are** (International Student Counselor will assign your dates):*

  - **Reporting Date #1**: _____*(start date on OPTX recommendation/EAD Card)*
  - **Reporting Date #2**:_____*(6 months after date #1)*
  - **Reporting Date #3**:_____*(6 months after date #2)*
  - **Reporting Date #4**:_____*(last day on EAD Card/OPTX recommendation)*

  - **Additional Reporting Dates**: ***Anytime personal or employment information changes.***

Regarding work authorization:

- ❑ *I will only work the dates listed on my EAD card* (exceptions may exist on a case-by-case basis. See ISSSO 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 ISSSO for assistance should I choose to pursue a new degree in the US.*
- ❑ *I will notify ISSSO by completing a Student Verification Report (available on our website: http://issso.uh.edu/) 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 120 days of unemployment the entire duration of my 29 month OPT (≤90 days for first 12 months of OPT, an additional 30 days for 17 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: _____

UNIVERSITY of HOUSTON | ISSSO

302 Student Service Center 1 Houston, TX 77204-3024 Phone: (713) 743-5065 Fax: (713) 743-5079 http://issso.uh.edu

GENERAL INFORMATION FOR EMPLOYERS OF STUDENTS ON OPTX

The F-1 student who supplied you with this handout is applying for/currently on an Optional Practical Training STEM Extension (OPTX). Students currently on post-completion optional practical training (OPT) who have received bachelors, masters, or doctoral degree (s) in certain STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics) fields may be eligible for a one-time, 17 month extension to their period of OPT. At the University of Houston, the acronym we use to describe this period is OPTX.

Employers of F-1 students on OPTX agree to two main responsibilities as identified in 8 CFR 214.2(f)(10)(ii)(C): (1) reporting to ISSSO at the time of employment termination or departure and (2) employer participation in E-Verify. F-1 students on Optional Practical Training Extensions are only eligible to work for employers who are currently participating in the E-Verify program.

(1) F-1 students on Optional Practical Training Extensions are also only eligible to work for employers who agree to report their termination or departure to International Student and Scholar Services Office (ISSSO) ***within 48 hours*** of the employment event. 8 CFR 214.2(f)(10)(ii)(C) defines an OPT worker as *departed* when the employer knows the student has left the employment or if the student has not reported for work for a period of 5 consecutive business days without the consent of the employer, whichever occurs earlier. The information you will be asked to provide includes:

- EMPLOYER NAME
- EMPLOYER ADDRESS
- EMPLOYEE SEVIS ID
- EMPLOYEE NAME
- EMPLOYEE JOB TITLE/POSITION
- DATE HIRED
- DATE TERMINATED
- SUPERVISOR NAME
- SUPERVISOR JOB TITLE/POSITION
- SUPERVISOR CONTACT INFORMATION

If you have any additional questions about reporting employment events to ISSSO, please email sevis@central.uh.edu.

(2) 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 provides an automated link to federal databases to help employers determine employment eligibility of new hires and the validity of their Social Security numbers. Additional information concerning the E-Verify program can be obtained online: http://www.uscis.gov/e-verify.

Disclaimer: This flyer is provided for general information purposes only and reflects the most current information available as of Tuesday, February 22, 2011. For further guidance regarding hiring students on optional practical training extensions, please consult your company's Human Resources department.

International Student & Scholar Services Office
302 Student Service Center 1 Houston, TX 77204 Ph. (713)743-5065 Fax: (713) 743-50779 http://issso.uh.edu

April 28, 2008

Dear Employer:

The Department of Homeland Security recently revised its regulations on F-1 Optional Practical Training (OPT). The new rule makes F-1 students who have completed a science, technology, engineering, or mathematics (STEM) degree eligible for a one-time 17 month extension of post completion OPT. The employment authorization period for the 17 month OPT extension begins on the day after the expiration of the initial post-completion OPT employment authorization. To be eligible, the student's employer must be enrolled in U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services' (USCIS) E-Verify employment verification program. In addition, the rule requires the employers to agree to report to the student's designated school official (DSO) within 48 hours after the OPT student has been terminated from, or otherwise leaves, his or her employment with that employer prior to the end of the authorized period of OPT. An employer must consider a worker to have departed when the employer knows the student has left employment, or if the student has not reported for work for a period of five consecutive business days without the employer's consent. In addition, the student must also agree to make periodic reports to the DSO. Attached is 8 C.F.R.214.2(f)(10)(ii)C which contains the regulations governing F-1 students on practical training.

If you agree to the reporting requirements as indicated herein, please attach a job offer letter on your company letterhead containing:

a) Employer address
b) Job title/position offered to student
c) Brief description of job duties
d) Supervisor name
e) Supervisor contact information

Also, please sign and return the attached Employer Statement of Understanding.

Employer Statement of Understanding

The employer agrees to report within 48 hours the termination or departure of the employee to the DSO at the International Student & Scholar Services Office at the University of Houston if the employee terminates or departs prior to the end of the authorized period of OPT. The employer shall consider the employee to have departed when it knows that the employee has left the employment or if the employee has not reported for work for a period of 5 consecutive business days without the consent of the employer, whichever occurs earlier.

Employee Name: _____

Employer Name: _____ Phone:_____email:_____

Employer Signature: _____

Title: _____ Date: _____

International Student & Scholar Services Office
302 Student Service Center 1 Houston, TX 77204 Ph. (713)743-5065 Fax: (713) 743-50779 http://issso.uh.edu

TO: Employers of OPTX Students

FROM: University of Houston International Student & Scholar Services Office

SUBJECT: 8 CFR 214.2(f)(10)(ii)(C)

DATE: April 28, 2008

This attachment is provided for employers of students applying for or currently on Optional Practical Training Extensions (OPTX) and is intended for informational purposes only. For further guidance regarding hiring students on optional practical training extensions, please consult your company's legal counsel.

The following attachment is taken directly from the Electronic Code of Federal Regulations 8 e-CFR 214.2(f)(10)(ii)(C), which contains the regulations governing F-1 students on OPT extensions. 8 e-CFR 214.2(f)(10)(ii)(C) is available online at: http://ecfr.gpoaccess.gov/cgi/t/text/text-idx?c=ecfr&sid=c5526b39eaed90139778197831067 88a&rgn=div5&view=text&node=8:1.0.1.2.18&idno=8#8:1.0.1.2.18.0.1.2.

8 CFR 214.2(f)(10)(ii)(C):

(C) *17-month extension of post-completion OPT for students with a science, technology, engineering, or mathematics (STEM) degree.* Consistent with paragraph (f)(11)(i)(C) of this section, a qualified student may apply for an extension of OPT while in a valid period of post-completion OPT. The extension will be for an additional 17 months, for a maximum of 29 months of OPT, if all of the following requirements are met.

(*1*) The student has not previously received a 17-month OPT extension after earning a STEM degree.

(*2*) The degree that was the basis for the student's current period of OPT is 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 *http://www.ice.gov/sevis.*

(*3*) The student's employer is registered in the E-Verify program, as evidenced by either a valid E-Verify company identification number or, if the employer is using a designated agent to perform the E-Verify queries, a valid E-Verify client company identification number, and the employer is a participant in good standing in the E-Verify program, as determined by USCIS.

(*4*) The employer agrees to report the termination or departure of an OPT employee to the DSO at the student's school or through any other means or process identified by DHS if the termination or departure is prior to end of the authorized period of OPT. Such reporting must be made within 48 hours of the event. An employer shall consider a worker to have departed when the employer knows the student has left the employment or if the student has not reported for work for a period of 5 consecutive business days without the consent of the employer, whichever occurs earlier.

Composition Checklist

7 Steps to Successful Photos

- ☑ 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

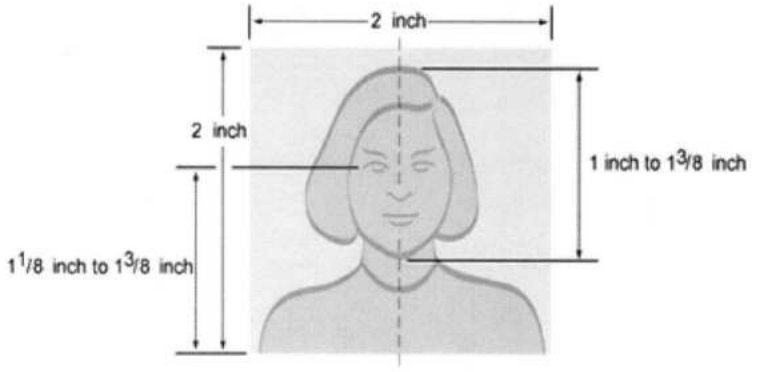

Figure 2. Head Position & Placement

Well-Composed Photos