OPT: 24-Month Extension
Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) Majors

Global Services
Bryan Hall 108
**STEM Eligibility**

- STEM majors are identified by the U.S. Department of Education and the Department of Homeland Security.
  - IP-GS *does not* choose which majors are STEM eligible.
  - IP-GS *must* follow STEM eligibility guidance as set forward by the Department of Education and the Department of Homeland Security.
- This tutorial outlines the application process and eligibility requirements for a STEM extension.
STEM Eligibility

- The list of majors that The Department of Education and U.S. Department of Homeland Security have used to identify STEM eligibility can be found here: https://www.ice.gov/sites/default/files/documents/Document/2016/stem-list.pdf

- Please note: Your degree name does not determine if you are eligible, rather the code (Classification of Instructional Program – CIP code) that is listed in the Program of Study.
STEM Eligibility

- The CIP Code listed on your I-20 must match the exact coding that is listed on the STEM Designated Degree Program List for an immigration advisor to recommend a STEM extension.

- If your major code is not found on the list you are not STEM eligible and an immigration advisor cannot recommend the extension.

- Keep in mind you may use Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) concepts in your degree program and still not be eligible for the STEM extension.

- CIP codes are not determined by IP-GS and IP-GS cannot adjust or recommend STEM OPT for students in majors that are not identified as STEM majors.
24-Month OPT Requirements

- CIP Code of degree major appears on the DHS STEM Designated Degree list (see previous slides to determine if you are eligible)

- Hold a degree from an accredited, SEVP Certified, US Institution: https://studyinthestates.dhs.gov/school-search
  - Degrees obtained outside the United States are not eligible for STEM extensions

- Must hold a job and work at least 20 hours per week
  - Volunteer positions do not meet STEM requirements per regulations

- Employer must be registered in E-Verify program
  - Cannot be self-employed for a STEM extension

- Student and the employer complete a Form I-983 training plan and student provides IP-GS a completed and signed form prior to DSO recommending the extension. Instructions for completing the form can be found here.

- U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) processes STEM applications and must receive the application prior to the expiration of the standard 12-month OPT
Previously Obtained STEM Degree

The new 24-month rule permits students to use a previously obtained STEM degree from an accredited U.S. educational institution as a basis to apply for a STEM OPT extension, even if it did not serve as the basis for the student's standard 12-month post-completion OPT, under the following conditions:

- The prior degree was conferred no more than 10 years before the DSO recommends a STEM OPT extension in SEVIS based on that degree;
- The prior degree was conferred by a U.S. educational institution that is accredited and SEVP-certified at the time the student's DSO recommends the student for the 24-month OPT extension;
- The prior degree is in a degree program category included on the current STEM Designated Degree Program List at the time of the DSO recommendation;
- The practical training opportunity that is the basis for the 24-month STEM OPT extension must directly relate to the prior degree;
- The prior degree was actually conferred (i.e., a student who uses a prior degree cannot take advantage of the "all but thesis or dissertation" exception)
Application Process

1. Submit documents in mypassport.wsu.edu (see next slide for list of documents)

2. IP-GS immigration advisor reviews submitted documents

3. If complete, IP-GS immigration advisor creates an OPT STEM I-20

4. Student collects I-20 and mails all application materials to USCIS

5. USCIS reviews and processes application within 2-3 months of submission

6. If approved student engages in the STEM extension
Application Materials

- Upload completed I-983 (must be signed by employer)
- Completed I-765
- Check for 410 dollars made out to Department of Homeland Security
- Two passport style photos
- Copy of valid passport page (include extension if necessary)
- Copy of visa (can be expired)
- Copy of I-94 number or card
- Copy of previous EAD card (front and back)
- Copy of transcript
- Form G-1145
- If applying using a previously obtained STEM degree include: letter, transcript and letter on letterhead from PDSO at previous school indicating CIP Code of degree obtained, date degree was obtained, school accreditation, and SEVIS school code
Next Steps: After approval of extension

- Be aware that the I-983 form requires periodic updates ("Evaluation of Student Progress") by the employer during the course of your OPT extension.

- Go to mypassport.wsu.edu to submit Evaluation of Student Progress forms a) within first 12 months of OPT STEM extension approval; and b) within second 12 months.

- Complete follow-up tutorial on WSU-IP website for mailing instructions and other STEM extension requirements.