F-1 International Graduate Student Orientation
Fall 2023

Office for International Services (OIS)

Webinar Housekeeping

- Please save your questions for the Q&A panel at the end of the presentation.
- All slides will be available on our website after the webinar.
- Any unanswered questions can be emailed to ois@fordham.edu

Covered Topics

- Introduce Office for International Services (OIS)
- Maintaining Your F-1 Status
- Travel
- Social Security Card
- Driver's Licenses & DMV
- Health Insurance
- Employment while in school
- Employment after graduation

All info (and this presentation) can be found at: www.fordham.edu/ois

Office for International Services (OIS)

- **Who is OIS?**
  - Your most reliable source for "international" information as long as you are a retaining Fordham's F-1 status or being a non-immigrant student at Fordham
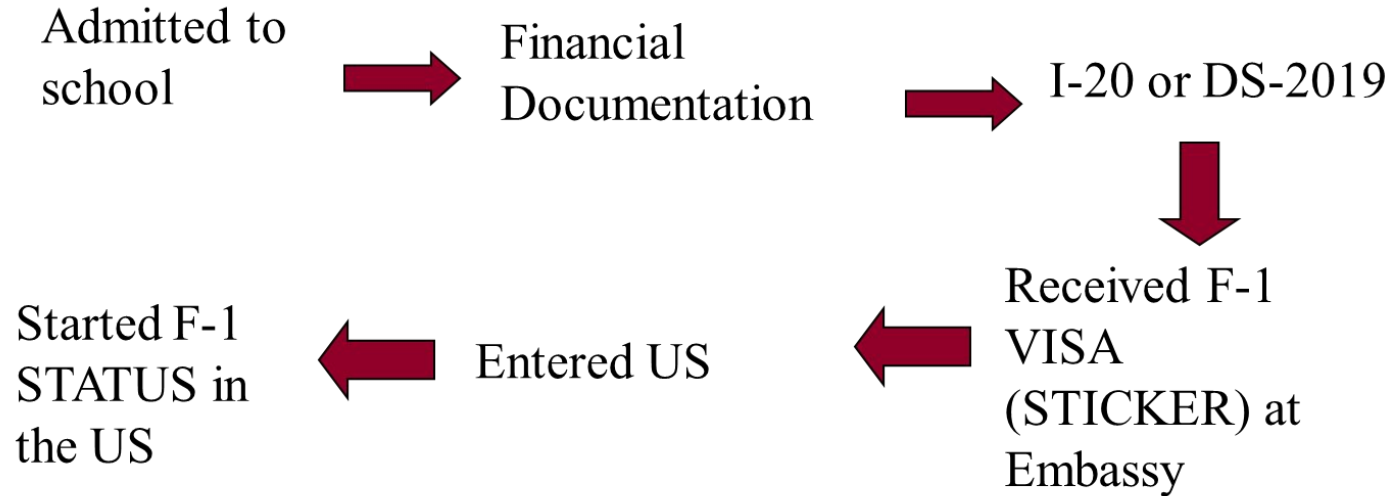- **What do we do?**
  - Immigration regulations compliance for our institution and students
  - Adjustment to new academic, social and cultural environment
  - Advocacy for international education and our international community
- **Where is OIS?**
  - Lincoln Center Campus: 45 Columbus Avenue, Suite 315
  - Rose Hill Campus: 441 E. Fordham Road, Bldg. 540
- **Contact Information:** ois@fordham.edu

International Student Timeline for Studying in the U.S.

Admitted to school → Financial Documentation → I-20 or DS-2019 ↓

Started F-1 STATUS in the US ← Entered US ← Received F-1 VISA (STICKER) at Embassy

Maintaining Your F-1 Status

Maintaining Your F-1 Status

1. Complete Mandatory Online Check-In
2. Maintain Full-Time Registration
3. Keep Documents Valid
4. Do Not Work Off-Campus Without Authorization

1. Check-In Online With OIS

- Checking in with us is absolutely necessary and is the first thing you must do to maintain your legal status here in the U.S.
- If you do not check in, your F-1 or J-1 status will be in jeopardy. Therefore, it is in your best interest to check in as soon as possible after you arrive in New York.
- Note: Do not check in if you are still outside the U.S. You must have entered the U.S. in order to check in!

Maintaining Your F-1 Status

How to Complete the Mandatory Check In

- Visit the Fordham OIS International Student Check-in page or scan the QR code to access the check-in form.
- You will only be allowed to submit the check-in form once, **using your Fordham email.**
- In the form, you will be asked to upload the following documents:
  - A copy of your current F-1 or J-1 visa page
  - Your I-94 record

Maintaining Your F-1 Status

2. Maintain Full-Time Registration

To maintain F1 status, you must enroll full time each term. Full time status is defined as

- at least 12 credits per term for undergraduates, and
- at least 9 credits per term for graduate students.

Reduced course load. Exceptions to the full time status requirement:

- Last Semester. You may be authorized for a reduced course load during your final term if fewer courses are needed to complete your course of study.
- Medical conditions. Contact OIS to request a reduced course load due to a medical condition.
- Academic Difficulties. OIS may authorize a reduced course load due to a student's initial difficulty with the English language or reading requirements, unfamiliarity with U.S. teaching methods, or improper course level placement.

Maintaining Your F-1 Status

3. Keep Documents Valid

- Passport
- F-1 Visa (if traveling abroad)
- Form I-20
- I-94 Record

Maintaining Your F-1 Status

Passport

- Keep your passport valid at all times.
- You can renew your passport at your country's consulate.
- Most countries have a consulate in New York City. (There are 116 Consulates in NYC!).

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Maintaining Your F-1 Status

F-1 Visa

The F-1 visa is the stamp or sticker that is placed in your passport and is used only to seek entry into the U.S.

F-1 Visa vs F-1 Status:

- You can stay in the U.S. on an expired F-1 visa as long as you maintain your student status. However, if you travel abroad, you must have a valid visa to return to the U.S.
- The F-1 Visa is your "key" to enter the U.S.

Renewing Your F-1 Visa:

- You may only renew your F-1 visa at a U.S. embassy or consular office outside of the United States.

Form I-20

Make sure all information listed on your Form I-20 is correct and up to date. F-1 regulations require a student to report any changes to the below information to OIS within 10 days of the change:

- Name
- U.S. Address
- Major
- Educational Level
- Program End date

Program End Date! This is your I-20 expiration date. Make sure that you are familiar with this date. If you need additional time to complete your studies reach out to OIS BEFORE your I-20 expires.

Page 1 of Form I-20:

PROGRAM OF STUDY

EDUCATION LEVEL	MAJOR 1
OTHER: LLM	Legal Professions and Studies, Other 22.9999
PROGRAM ENGLISH PROFICIENCY	ENGLISH PROFICIENCY NOTES
Required	Student is proficient
START OF CLASSES	PROGRAM START/END DATE
18 JANUARY 2022	03 JANUARY 2022 – 16 DECEMBER 2023

Maintaining Your F-1 Status

I-94 Record

- Form I-94 is the DHS arrival/departure record electronically issued to travelers who are admitted to the U.S.
- It is good practice to check your I-94 record upon re-entry into the U.S.
- Visit https://i94.cbp.dhs.gov and select "GET MOST RECENT I-94."
- Verify that you were admitted under the right status:
  - Class of Admission: **F-1**
  - Duration of status: **D/S**

U.S. Customs and Border Protection
Securing America's Borders

Most Recent I-94

Admission (I-94) Record Number : 51415565885
Most Recent Date of Entry: 2017 July 25
Class of Admission : F1
Admit Until Date : D/S
Details provided on the I-94 Information form:

Last/Surname :
First (Given) Name :
Birth Date :
Passport Number :
Country of Issuance :   China

Travel and Reentry

Travel Documents

The following are required documents for travel and re-entry into the United States:

1. Valid Passport
2. Valid F-1 Visa (Canadian Citizens Exempt)
3. Valid I-20 with Travel Signature/Endorsement.

Upon Re-Entry to the U.S. check your I-94 Record online.

Travel Documents: I-20 with Travel Signature/Endorsement.

- Check page 2 of your Form I-20.
- Travel signatures are valid for 12 months.
- You can request a new travel signature online via OIS's website by submitting a "New I-20/Travel Signature Request."

TRAVEL ENDORSEMENT

This page, when properly endorsed, may be used for re-entry of the student to attend the same school after a temporary absence from the United States. Each endorsement is valid for one year.

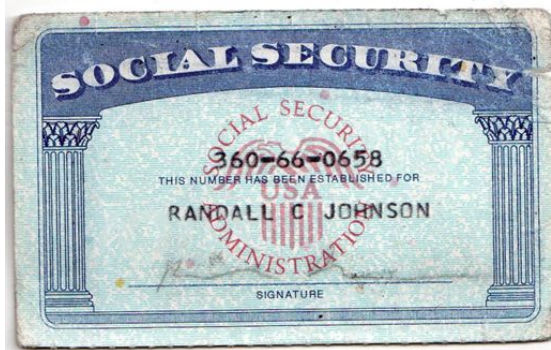| Designated School Official	TITLE	SIGNATURE	DATE ISSUED	PLACE ISSUED
Ana Belzunce	ISA/DSO	X	1/3/2023	New York, NY

Other Government-Issued Documents

- SSN
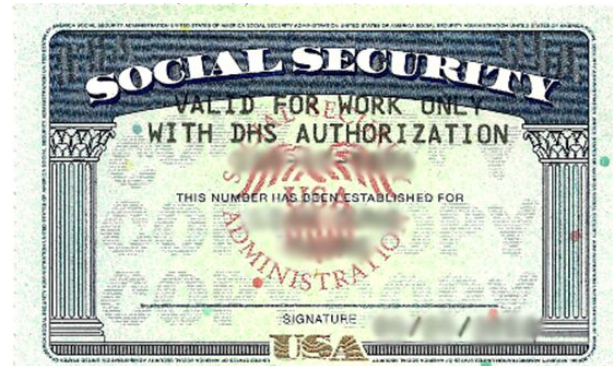- Driver's Licence

Social Security Number/Card

- The only reason to have a Social Security number is for tax purposes
- As an F-1 student, you are eligible for an SSN only if you have evidence of lawful employment authorization, such as on-campus employment or CPT employment authorization.
- If you have not secured lawful F-1 employment, you are not eligible to apply for an SSN.

Unrestricted

Restricted

Driver's License

F-1 students are encouraged to obtain a Driver's License if they plan to drive a car in the United States.

The Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) website outlines the process for obtaining a Driver's License. Be sure to carefully review the DMV's website for information on the written and driving skills tests, sample exams, safety videos, and more.

- Students living in New York must visit the NY DMV website: https://dmv.ny.gov/
- Students living in New Jersey must visit the NJ MVC website: https://www.state.nj.us/mvc/

Health Insurance

Student Health Insurance & Waiver Process

Fordham will automatically enroll you in the Student Health Insurance Plan (SHIP). The annual rate for insurance is $4,260.

You can waive the charge for this coverage by demonstrating proof of comparable external insurance. You can visit the AETNA website to submit your waiver request online: https://www.aetnastudenthealth.com/

Deadline: September 10, 2023

Health Insurance Questions?

Contact the Health Services

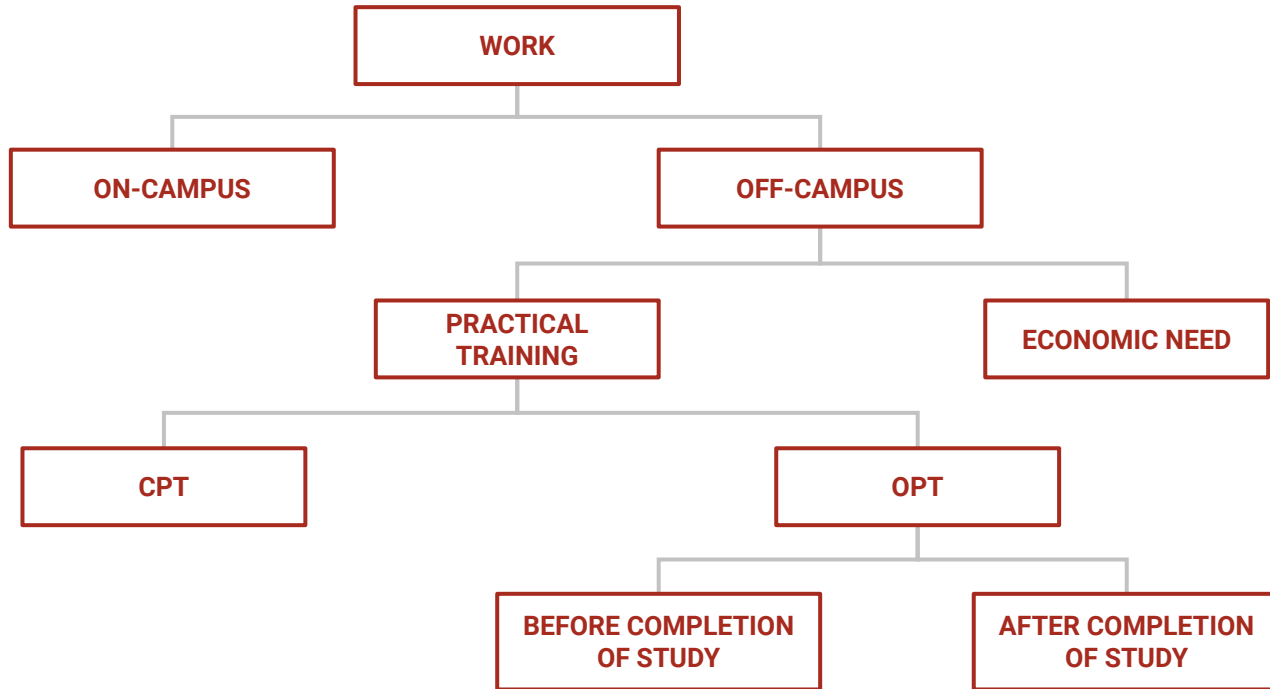studentinsurance@Fordham.edu

212-636-7160

140 W 62nd St, Rm G-16

Call to make an appointment

F-1 International Student Employment

Employment Authorization

Employment While In School

On-Campus Employment

CPT Employment Authorization

On-Campus Employment

- As an F-1 Student you are automatically authorized to work on-campus.
- Limitation:
  - You may NOT work for more than 20 hours per week when school is in session (Fall and Spring Semesters).

  - Note: Fordham has a general policy limiting *all* students to 19 hours per week of on-campus work

Off-Campus Employment: CPT Authorization

F-1 students must obtain employment authorization before starting any off-campus employment.

- Curricular Practical Training (CPT) allows you, as an F-1 student, to accept an internship or employment offer off-campus.
- CPT authorization is available to F-1 students who have been lawfully enrolled on a full-time basis for at least one academic year (two semesters or trimesters).
- The position must be an <u>integral part of your curriculum</u> or <u>directly related to your curriculum</u>.
- CPT employment authorizations are issued for a specific employer and for specific dates.
  - If you change employers or need to extend employment dates, you will need to request and obtain new CPT authorization.

Steps to Apply for CPT

Step 1: Obtain an employment offer, and an offer letter.

Step 2: Send your offer letter to your Class Dean (undergraduates) or Academic Advisor (graduate students).
- Your Class Dean/Academic Advisor completes the CPT Form through the OIS CPT Portal. They will upload the CPT Form and offer letter.

Step 3: OIS issues and emails student New I-20 reflecting CPT Authorization.
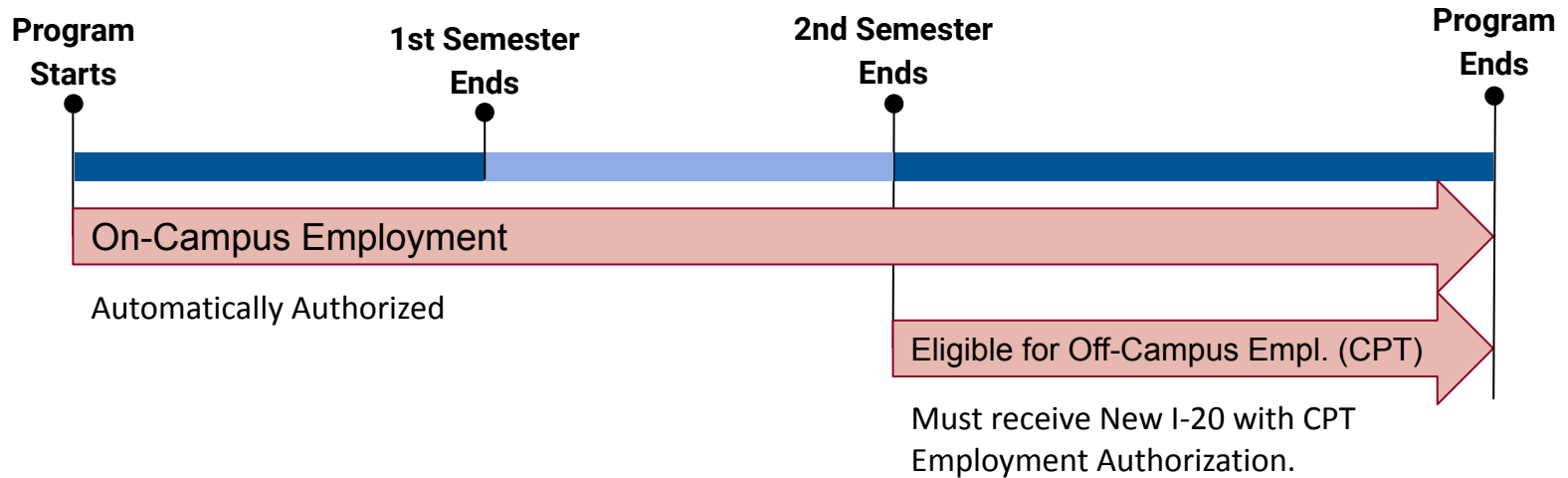
Step 4: Start employment!

Note that you may not begin your position without receiving the New I-20 with CPT authorization from the OIS.

The impact of prior use of <u>full-time</u> CPT at the same education level:

- F-1 students who engage in an aggregate of 12 months or more of <u>full-time</u> CPT at the same educational level become ineligible for optional practical training.

- The use of <u>part-time</u> CPT does <u>not</u> count towards the 12-months of full-time CPT "trigger" that eliminates eligibility for OPT.

Employment While in School Recap

Program Starts

1st Semester Ends

2nd Semester Ends

Program Ends

On-Campus Employment

Automatically Authorized

Eligible for Off-Campus Empl. (CPT)

Must receive New I-20 with CPT Employment Authorization.

What About
After Graduation?

- 60-Day Grace Period
- OPT
- STEM Extension
- Other Options

60-Day Grace Period

Upon completion of your studies you will have a 60-day grace period to:

1. Depart the U.S.,
2. Apply for post-completion OPT,
3. Transfer your SEVIS record to another school (follow the transfer procedures of the new school),
4. Return to Fordham for another degree (contact Admissions and OIS regarding procedures), or
5. If applicable, apply for a change of status to another visa type (contact an immigration attorney for additional information).

OPT

What is OPT?

- OPT is 12-month employment authorization in the U.S. after graduation.
- Applying for OPT allows you to retain F-1 status for 12 months after graduation.

Who is eligible for OPT?

- Must have completed two semesters (or trimesters) in full-time F-1 status.
- You do NOT need an employment offer to apply for OPT.

When can I start applying for OPT?

- 90 days (about 3 months) BEFORE your program end date. Apply early!

Steps to Apply for OPT

Step 1: Submit your documents to OIS via the OPT Portal.

Step 2: Receive New I-20 with OPT Recommendation from OIS

- OIS will notify you via email once your "OPT Application Package" is available online. The OPT Package will include:
  - Your New I-20 with OPT Recommendation.
  - A detailed guide for filing Form I-765 online with USCIS.

Step 3: File Form I-765 online with USCIS.
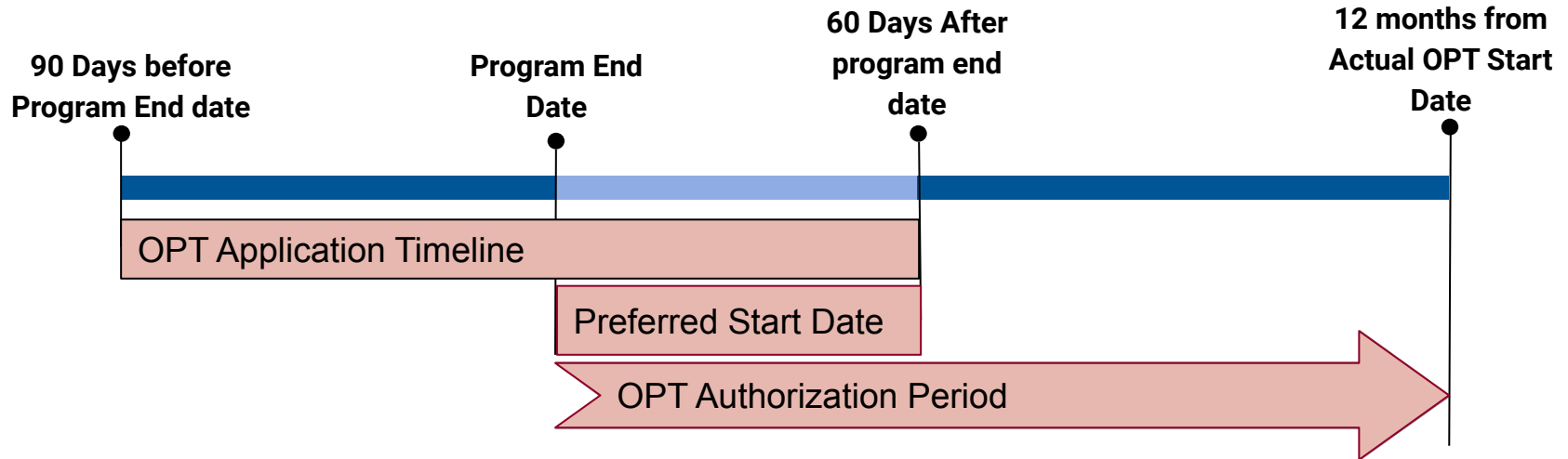
Important OPT Deadlines

There are two deadlines when applying for OPT:

1. You can file Form I-765 up to **90 days before** your program end date but no later than **60 days*** after the program end date, **AND**
2. You must file Form I-765 within **30 days** of the date OIS recommended OPT in SEVIS (i.e. the date OIS issued your I-20 with OPT Recommendation).

Failure to meet these deadlines will result in USCIS denying your OPT application.

*Must allow at least 10 business days for OIS processing time. Apply early!

OPT Timeline Recap

While on Approved OPT

EAD Card

USCIS processing time is 1-3 months.

Upon approval of your OPT application, you will receive an EAD (Employment Authorization Document) from USCIS:

The EAD card will be valid for 12 months.

This document will be your proof of employment authorization while on OPT. You will be authorized to work for the specific dates listed on the card.

90-Day Unemployment Clock

- While on OPT students can only be unemployed for a total of 90 days for the duration of the 12 months of OPT.
  - Gaps in employment during the 12 month OPT period will continue to accumulate towards the 90-day limit.
- The 90-day unemployment clock will start on the start date listed on your EAD card.
- While on OPT students will have access to the SEVP Portal. By reporting employment via the SEVP Portal you will stop the 90-day unemployment clock.

What type of employment can I report on OPT?

The position <u>must</u> be:

- Directly related to your field of studies.
- At least 20 hrs per week.

The position <u>can</u> be:

- Regular paid employment.
- Work for hire ("1099 employment").
- Self-employed business owner (student must be able to prove that they have proper business licences).
- Volunteers or unpaid internships.

STEM OPT Extension

STEM Extension: Basics

What is STEM OPT Extension?

- The STEM Extension is a 24-month extension of your OPT period.
  - Note. STEM is an Extension of the OPT period. All students (regardless of major) must first apply for "regular" OPT to be eligible for the STEM extension later.

Who is eligible for the STEM Extension?

- Must be on approved OPT.
- Must have graduated from a STEM degree.
- Must be employed, and the position must be STEM-related.
- The employer must be e-verified.

When can I apply for the STEM extension?

- You can start applying 90 days (3 months) before the expiration of your OPT period.

STEM Degree

The CIP code of the degree major field of study must appear on the *DHS STEM Designated Degree Program List*.

- You can find this CIP code on page 1 of your I-20 under "MAJOR 1."
- If you believe your area of study is classified as a STEM field, but it is not reflected in your I-20, contact OIS.

E-Verify Employer

To be eligible for the STEM OPT extension, the employer offering the job that serves as the basis for the STEM OPT extension must:
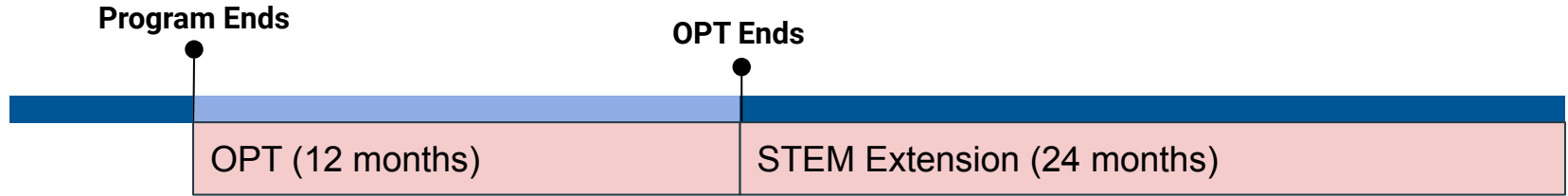
- Be "enrolled in E-Verify, as evidenced by either a valid E-Verify Company Identification number."
- Remain "a participant in good standing with E-Verify, as determined by USCIS" and
- "[H]ave an employer identification number (EIN) used for tax purposes"

8 CFR 214.2(f)(10)(ii)(C)(5)

More information about e-verify here:

Employment After Graduation Recap

Program Ends

OPT Ends

OPT (12 months)	STEM Extension (24 months)

- All majors eligible
- Offer letter NOT needed

- Only STEM majors eligible
- Offer letter needed
- Employer must be e-verified

Closing Remarks

Final Focus

- **Before OPT** – your most important and primary focus is on your **academic success**, and the regulations supporting that goal.

- **During OPT (if applicable)** – your most important and primary focus is to **obtain employment in your field**, and the regulations supporting that goal.

Get Involved!

- **One To World**: One to World programs provide a unique opportunity for U.S. residents and international students to engage; having dinner inside local homes, sharing culture and experiences in the classroom, and volunteering their time together through community service projects.
  - Visit http://www.one-to-world.org/ to learn more and get involved!

Life After F-1 Status

- OIS does not process and cannot advise on H1B applications or other visa types.
- Please communicate directly with your employer and/or an immigration attorney regarding a change of status to H1B or other visa types.

Q & A
Thank you!

Any unanswered questions can be emailed to ois@fordham.edu