24-Month Optional Practical Training (OPT) Extension Application Instructions

For Designated Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM)

1. **Determine your eligibility for an extension.** You are eligible if you:
   - Have not already received a STEM extension. (The STEM extension is only available one time)
   - Are currently in a valid period of OPT based on a Bachelor’s or Master’s degree in CIS, MIS, Experimental Psychology, through Bellevue University with the Primary Major code on page two of the I-20 listed as a number within 11.XXX or 26.XXX or 42.XXX.
   - Have a job with a U.S. employer in a job directly related to your major.
   - Have an Employer who is registered in the E-Verify program with a valid E-Verify number in good standing with USCIS, and
   - Have an Employer who agrees to report the end of your employment to a Bellevue University Designated School Official if it is before the last day of your OPT end date (within 48 hours)

2. **Submit your application so that USCIS will receive it as early as 120 days (four months) before your current OPT expires.** Extension applications can only be approved by USCIS if they are received before the current OPT authorization expires! Your extension period will begin the day after your current OPT ends, regardless of the extension approval date.

3. **Complete and print out Form I-765.** Do not submit the form I-765 on line! Click on the link at: [http://www.uscis.gov/sites/default/files/files/form/i-765.pdf](http://www.uscis.gov/sites/default/files/files/form/i-765.pdf). In item #16 on the fillable Form I-765, type the code (c)(3)(C). After typing your information into the form, print it out, sign and date this form in blue ink. (Don’t forget the E-Verify number and degree information). Additional instructions on the Form I-765 are listed on the USCIS website, if needed.

4. **Obtain the following items:**
   a. Completed, signed in blue ink and dated Form I-765
   c. Copy of visa, identification and expiration date pages(s) of passport and the front and back sides of Form I-94 (if you still have the paper copy)
   d. Copy of current Employment Authorization Document card with OPT authorization displayed
e. Letter from your Employer stating your title, brief job description and confirming your continued employment. The letter must include the company name, address, E-Verify number Supervisor’s name and Supervisor’s contact information (email address and telephone number)

f. Copy of your conferred degree

g. Copy of your final academic transcript showing degree completion (An unofficial copy is ok.)

h. Two (2) passport-style photos with your name printed lightly on the back of each photo.

i. Check or money order for $380 made payable to the U.S. Department of Homeland Security.

**Send items a. through g. listed above:**

By mail to: 
Robin Bitzinger
International Programs
Bellevue University
1000 Galvin Road South
Bellevue, NE 68005

Or, as clear, scanned copies by email to:
rob.bitzinge@bellevue.edu

5. **Wait Three weeks or more.** Your OPT Extension application will be processed and you will be issued and sent a new Form I-20 with the OPT Extension request printed on page two of the I-20 and a copy of the Event

6. **Send the complete application packet to USCIS:**
   
a. Completed, signed in blue ink and dated Form I-765


c. I-983 Instructions and I-983 Form

d. Copy of visa, identification and expiration date pages(s) of passport and the front and back sides of Form I-94 (if you still have the paper copy)

e. Copy of current Employment Authorization Document card with OPT authorization displayed

f. Letter from your Employer stating you title, brief job description and confirming your continued employment. The letter must include the company name, address, E-Verify number Supervisor’s name and Supervisor’s contact information (email address and telephone number)

g. Copy of your conferred degree

h. Copy of your final academic transcript showing degree completion (An unofficial copy is ok.)

i. Two (2) passport-style photos with your name printed lightly on the back of each photo.

j. Check or money order for $380 made payable to the U.S. Department of Homeland Security.

**Please note:** You will need to send your application to USCIS so that it is received within 30 days of the issue date on your new I-20 (the date on page one by DSO signature block) and the end date on your current EAD card.
If you live in Nebraska, please send your application to either of the following addresses:

For U.S. Postal Service deliveries:
- USCIS
- PO Box 21281
- Phoenix, AZ 85036

Express mail & Courier Services:
- USCIS
- 1820 E. Skyharbor Circle S, Suite 100
- Phoenix, AZ 85034

If you do not live in Nebraska, refer to the Form I-765 Application Instructions for the appropriate USCIS mailing address for your application.

**Next Steps:**

Your status depends on it! What to do after you have applied for a Post Completion OPT extension through USCIS.

1. Keep the Form I-797C, Notice of Action Receipt, you receive from USCIS. If you do not receive the I-797C within three weeks from the date they receive your application, please contact a Designated School Official in Bellevue University International programs immediately. Please also contact a Designated School Official if you do not receive a Notice of Decision from USCIS in 90 days from the date they receive your application.

2. Complete and submit the online [OPT Student Update Form](#) within 10 days of any change of employment for the duration of your OPT extension and every six months throughout the extension period, starting with the date the extension begins, regardless of the number of form submissions you make throughout your extension period.

3. Complete and submit the online [Change of Address Form](#) within 10 days of any change of address, telephone number or email address for the duration of your OPT even if your employment has not changed.

**Additional Concerns**

**Periods of Unemployment**

Your F-1 status is dependent upon employment during Post Completion OPT. Students may not accrue an aggregate of more than 90 days of unemployment carried out under the initial OPT authorization. Students granted a 24 month Post Completion OPT extension may not accrue an aggregate of more than 120 days of unemployment during the total Post Completion OPT period compromising any OPT carried out under the initial post-completion authorization and the subsequent 24-month extension period.

*Only one 24-Month Extension is allowed*

Be sure to consider at which degree level you wish to utilize this extension option.

**Travel Outside the U.S.**

An F-1 student who has a valid, unexpired EAD issued for post-completion optional practical training and who is otherwise admissible may return to the United States to resume employment after a period of temporary absence. The EAD must be used in
combination with an I-20 endorsed for reentry by a Bellevue University Designated School Official in International Programs within the last six months. You will need a valid F-1 visa and passport for at least six (6) months into the future. Be sure to also bring a letter from your employer that indicates they expect you to resume employment upon returning to the U.S.

Taxes
In general, students who have been in the United States for less than five years are exempt from Social Security (F.I.C.A.) taxes. Your earnings are subject to applicable federal, state, and local taxes. F-1 International students must file a tax return on or before April 15th of each year. Students may be entitled to a refund of taxes withheld from their wages if the amount of tax owed is less than the amount withheld. Please watch for non-resident VITA tax assistance session sponsored by the United States Internal Revenue Service (IRS) in your area for free resources available to assist with completing your tax return.

Health Insurance
You are eligible (and required) to purchase Health Insurance through the single Bellevue University approved provider, LewerMark, if you meet the following criteria:
If you are covered by an employer sponsored plan, you must contact international@bellevue.edu regarding your eligibility and responsibility. Since this health insurance is required, Bellevue University will automatically enroll you once payment is made. *** Important Note*** Please Do Not purchase new Health Insurance or renew a policy from an outside provider. The insurance fee for the term is due to Bellevue University two weeks before the start of the term. Missing this date can affect your I-20 status for failing to meet University regulations.

Letter from the employer
Must contain language that states:
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.

Employer note:
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 days without the consent of the employer, whichever occurs earlier.