

# Optional Practical Training Duration Extended from 17 to 24 Months for Students with STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) Degrees

## WRITTEN BY

Mark J. Newman | Yane Park McKenzie

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On May 10, 2016, the Department of Homeland Security's (DHS) rule allowing certain F-1 students who have STEM degrees to apply for a 24-month extension of their post-completion Optional Practical Training (OPT) goes into effect. DHS extended the OPT period by an additional 7 months to allow certain students to have additional time to gain practical experience. In effect, this will allow some students to have another attempt at making the H-1B cap if an employer is willing to sponsor them.

Some students who are currently in their OPT period under the old rule may also be eligible to apply for the additional 7 months. To take advantage of this benefit, employers must participate in E-Verify and provide a detailed outline of their applicable training program.

Detailed information about this new rule and eligibility requirements are available at <http://studyinthestates.dhs.gov>.

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