### OPTIONAL PRACTICAL TRAINING (STEM) EXTENSION

#### Who may apply for an OPT extension?
- Students who have successfully completed a degree (bachelor’s, master’s or doctoral) in a STEM field can extend their 12-month OPT authorization for an additional 17 months, for an aggregate of 29 months.
- The student must be currently authorized for a 12-month period of OPT AND working for a US employer in a job directly related to his/her field of study. Employment must be considered traditional paid employment.
- Students engaging in post-completion OPT may not have accrued an aggregate of more than 90 days of unemployment during the initial 12-month period of OPT.
- In order to apply, the student must have a job offer AND be employed by an employer registered with the E-Verify federal employment verification system. (E-Verify is defined below.)
- The student must not have previously received a 17-month OPT extension after earning a STEM degree.

#### How to apply:
- The student’s former international advisor must issue an OPT extension Form I-20. In addition, the student must submit all other OPT paperwork, including Form I-765, an unofficial or official transcript confirming completion of degree, and the appropriate filing fee to the US Citizenship and Immigration Services Processing Center having jurisdiction over the student’s current place of residence.
- The student must file for the extension application in a timely manner, usually 90 days prior to when the current period of OPT expires. Students who file on time may continue employment while the extension application is pending until a final decision is made or for 180 days, whichever comes first.

#### Requirements for students and employers while on OPT extension:
- If granted a 17-month extension, students may not accrue an aggregate of more than 120 days of unemployment during the total 29-month period.
- The student’s employer must agree to report the termination or departure of a student to the ISSO of his/her former school, or through any other process chosen by the Department of Homeland Security.
- The student must agree to continue to report on the following information to the ISSO within 10 business days of any change. In addition, the student must email the ISSO every 6 months, starting from the date the extension begins, with the following information:
  - Change of name
  - Change of address
  - Name and address of employer
  - When employment changes or terminates
  - Change in employer

#### What exactly qualifies as a STEM field?
STEM fields include ONLY actuarial science, computer science applications (CIS, COSC, AIT), engineering, engineering technologies, biological and biomedical sciences (including molecular biology, biochemistry, and bioinformatics), mathematics and statistics (including applied and industrial math), military technologies, physical sciences (chemistry, forensic chemistry, geology, geosciences, and physics), science technologies, and medical scientists. For a complete list, visit http://www.ice.gov/sevis/stemlist.htm.

#### What is E-Verify and what is the employer’s obligation?
E-Verify is an internet-based system operated by the Department of Homeland Security in partnership with the Social Security Administration (SSA). The system allows participating employers to electronically verify the employment eligibility of their newly hired employees. It is free and voluntary; however, less than one percent of all US employers have enrolled, making utilization of the new rule difficult. (Search companies participating in E-Verify at [www.numbersusa.org](http://www.numbersusa.org).)
STEM EXTENSION REQUEST

This form collects information required by the Student Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS). Please complete the following information and submit it to the ISSO. Within 3 - 5 business days, the ISSO will issue your new OPT STEM Extension Form I-20, which you must then mail with your OPT application to the United States Citizenship & Immigration Services (USCIS).

Student's Name: _____________________________ TU ID# _____________________________

Alternate Email address: _____________________________
(Please provide us with a non-Towson University or personal email address.)

Local Address in the U.S.: __________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________

SEVIS Identification Number: ______________________________________________________
(Located on the upper right-hand side of page 1 of your Form I-20.)

Employer: __________________________________________
(Please provide us with the company name of the firm where you are employed)

Supervisor’s Name: _____________________________ Supervisor’s Email: _____________

Employer’s Address: ____________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________

*Please submit a copy of your current Employment Authorization Document (EAD) to the ISSO by email (isson@towson.edu) or fax (410-704-6040).