

## **Changes to E-Verify, STEM OPT at the University of Wisconsin-Madison**

All F-1 students are eligible to apply for 12-months of post-completion work permission called optional practical training (OPT). F-1 students who have graduated with a degree in science, technology, engineering, or mathematics (STEM) are eligible to extend their OPT for an additional 24-months if they work for an employer who is enrolled in E-verify and the employer E-verifies all new hires.

As of January 1, 2018, F-1 students employed on OPT at UW-Madison will not be eligible to apply for the STEM extension at UW-Madison because of the University's E-verify agreement with the federal government. Similarly, F-1 students on OPT with other employers will not be eligible to apply for the STEM extension to work at UW-Madison.

Departments with current F-1 STEM OPT employees can allow the STEM students to continue to work after January 1, 2018 and must work with IFSS to change the F-1 STEM employee to another immigration status by June 30, 2018.

Departments with F-1 students whose STEM extension is pending can allow the STEM pending students to continue to work after January 1, 2018 and must work with IFSS to change their status by June 30, 2018.

PLEASE NOTE: These employees do not have to stop working nor will they be required to leave the U.S. because of their STEM OPT.

The University, Glacier and HRS does not know who the STEM OPT students are. The employing unit should have this information because, in order to obtain the STEM extension, the F-1 STEM OPT student was required to complete a formal training plan (I-983) that was signed by the Department Chair, Principal Investigator and employee. Once these STEM employees are identified by the departments, the departments must work with IFSS to change the employee's status.

Background: E-Verify is an electronic internet based system used to accurately verify the identity and employment eligibility of employees by comparing information from the US Department of Homeland Security (USDHS), the Social Security Administration (SSA), and the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) to I-9 documentation provided by the employee. An employer can choose to E-Verify all its new hires or only those employees who are being paid to perform substantial contract work on specific federal contracts that include the E-Verify clause. All US employers who participate in E-Verify must sign a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the USDHS and specify which option it will use for E-Verification of their employees. The Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) the University of Wisconsin-Madison signed with USDHS only allows the University to E-verify employees paid to work on federal contracts.

Because the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) the University of Wisconsin-Madison signed with USDHS is only for employees paid to work on federal contracts, the STEM OPT extension is not available for employees of UW-Madison because it does not E-verify all new hires.