RECOMMENDATIONS FOR COMPLETING THE TRAINING PLAN FOR STEM OPT STUDENTS, FORM I-983
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Federal regulations require the development of a formal training plan that identifies both the learning objectives and a plan for achieving those objectives. The intent of the training plan is to better ensure the academic benefit and integrity of the STEM optional practical training (OPT) extension, and the plan is to be developed by the trainee and the trainee’s mentor.

**General Recommendations for Form I-983**

- The form should be typed so there is no ambiguity or misinterpretation of information by anyone who reviews the form.
- In section 1, in the student email address box, a personal email address is recommended so that all U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) correspondence will be received.
- Following completion of sections 1 and 2, it is recommended that you contact your institution’s postdoctoral office to help review the responses to section 5.
Recommendations for Section 5 of Form I-983

**STUDENT ROLE:**

(I-983 instructions) Describe the student's role with the employer and how that role is directly related to enhancing the student's knowledge obtained through his or her qualifying STEM degree.

- Describe specific goals and objectives that the trainee will undertake during training. How will these change over the 24-month training period?
- Describe how these objectives relate to their STEM degree.
- Describe tasks and assignments the trainee will be involved with during training. How will the trainee expand and enhance the knowledge gained during the STEM degree program?

**GOALS AND OBJECTIVES:**

(I-983 instructions) Describe how the assignment(s) with the employer will help the student achieve his or her specific objectives for work-based learning related to his or her STEM degree. The description must both specify the student's goals regarding specific knowledge, skills, or techniques as well as the means by which they will be achieved.

- Describe the specific skills, knowledge and techniques that the trainee will learn and/or apply.
- Describe why this training position will provide knowledge and experience beyond a classified staff position.
- Describe how this training will enable the trainee to achieve the stated goals and objectives.
- Describe specific tools or techniques that need to be improved to achieve the stated goals.
- Describe how the trainee will improve over the 24-month training period and how duties will change during this time to enhance learning.
- Describe the training curriculum and the timeline for achievement.

**EMPLOYER OVERSIGHT:**

(I-983 instructions) Explain how the employer provides oversight and supervision of individuals filling positions such as that being filled by the named F-1 student. If the employer has a training program or related policy in place that controls such oversight and supervision, please describe.

- Does your institution have a formal training development plan? This would be a document designed to assist the mentor and trainee with setting initial research goals with measurable outcomes, such as:
  - Research plans (laboratory, office or clinical): include plans for research projects, grant proposals (indicate agency, if known), current active research support and any other research activities such as collaborations.
○ Publications: include details of manuscripts and abstracts currently submitted or in press and plans for manuscripts and abstracts to be submitted.
○ Educational activities: include plans for presentations and seminars, mentoring and tutorial activities, and other educational or scholarly activities
○ Extramural service: include plans for contributions as a reviewer and for membership on committees and in organizations and societies.

● Describe the mentoring plan for achieving training goals and objectives for the trainee.
● Describe how the mentor will supervise the training and the frequency of meetings for feedback regarding training progress.

MEASURES AND ASSESSMENTS:

(I-983 instructions) Explain how the employer measures and confirms whether individuals filling positions such as that being filled by the named F-1 student are acquiring new knowledge and skills. If the employer has a training program or related policy in place that controls such measures and assessments, please describe.

● Does your institution utilize an annual review or some other systematic review of a trainee’s accomplishments? This process may include some or all of the following:
  ○ Describe your accomplishments during the past year, including articles, presentations, honors and awards, etc. One useful mechanism is to update your CV and highlight those activities that occurred in the last year.
  ○ Evaluate your current skill set. A useful, online tool is http://myidp.sciencecareers.org/. Utilize their printed version to receive feedback from your mentors and colleagues.
  ○ Set goals for the next year. Three goals maximum are recommended, with one each in the areas of research, skill improvement and professional/career advancement.

● Describe how the trainee’s accomplishments will be evaluated. Provide details about measurable outcomes from a well-rounded training plan including both research and career development goals. For example, progress can be measured by papers, presentations, awards, completed research objectives and other completed career development opportunities.
● Describe how the mentor will provide feedback during each 12-month training period.
● Describe how the trainee will be assigned new or more complex tasks or research objectives.

ADDITIONAL REMARKS:

Provide any additional pertinent information.
Additional Information from the U.S. Department of Homeland Security

Study in the States contains valuable information from the government about extending your F-1 visa if you have earned your degree in a STEM field. Study in the States STEM OPT hub provides an overview of the process.

After the student and employer complete the necessary sections, the student is required to submit the completed and signed Form I-983 to his or her designated school official, where it will be kept in the student’s record. It will be incorporated at a later date into the DHS’s Web-based Student and Exchange Visitor Information System, which is used to maintain information on foreign students in the United States.