

DATE: January 9, 2020

TO: International scholars on F-1 STEM OPT

RE: **Potential Site Visits by US Department of Homeland Security (DHS), Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE)**

FROM: Penny Rosser, Director

This is to inform you that the US Department of Homeland Security, Immigration and Customs Enforcement has announced plans to conduct routine site visits to employers. The agency is authorized to do so by the regulations at [8CFR 214.2\(f\)\(10\)\(ii\)\(C\)\(11\)](#). The announcement can be seen on the [Study in the States website](#).

You are receiving this email because records show you are in F-1 visa status with a period of STEM OPT work permission or that you have applied for STEM OPT. To be granted STEM OPT, you were required to complete a Form I-983, "Training Plan for STEM OPT Students" with your MIT supervisors/faculty host describing the STEM training in which you would be engaged.

The purpose of the site visits is to confirm that you are receiving the stated training, the training is directly related to your degree, and other facts. **A DHS/ICE agent may contact you, and/or your supervisor who signed Form I-983.** Normally, your supervisor will be given 48 hours' notice of an upcoming site visit, although that may not always be the case. If you or your faculty supervisor are contacted to schedule a site visit, inform the human resources administrator in your department headquarters and the International Scholars Office Director, Penny Rosser at (617) 253-2851 or [pennysun@mit.edu](mailto:pennysun@mit.edu).

To prepare for the site visit, **you should provide a copy of Form I-983 STEM OPT Training Plan to your supervisor, who signed the form.** If the DHS/ICE agent asks to speak with you directly, remain calm and answer the questions about your work/training. Be prepared to explain the relationship between your STEM degree, your current position and the training you are now receiving. You may be asked questions about your salary and other employment details.

- DHS/ICE officers are required to show their official badges and identify themselves upon arrival. Be sure to see these upon introducing yourself.
- You may meet with the DHS/ICE officer at your administrative office, the International Scholars Office, a conference room, or other location.
- The conversation should be about you and your training, not other employees, students or faculty.

- If you are asked questions to which you do not know the answer, inform the officers that you can look into the questions and get back to them after the visit.
- DHS/ICE officers may ask for a tour of your worksite. The officers can be shown your office/desk and the general location of a laboratory.
- For safety and liability reasons, entry into an MIT experimental laboratory containing chemical, biological materials or equipment may be restricted. If a DHS/ICE officer makes a specific request to enter a laboratory, it may or may not be possible. Published guidance from MIT Environmental Health and Safety (EHS) indicates visitors should be met by the laboratory contact, who will explain any restrictions and/or protocols. If it is determined that entry to the lab is permitted, the laboratory contact should explain any safety and protective equipment requirements for the area to be visited. Per EHS guidance, outside visitors to MIT laboratories should be escorted at all times.
- If you are a postdoc and you are asked about how your salary was determined, please refer the government officers to the Vice President for Research's Postdoc salary guidelines <https://postdocs.mit.edu/about/vice-president-research-statement-salary-and-benefits>. If you are not a postdoc, and are unsure your salary determination was made, you can provide the information later (after consulting the HR administrator in your department headquarters).
- If copies of your appointment letter, paystubs or tax forms are requested by DHS/ICE officers, please note: *you should not send unencrypted documents or records/attachments over email*, as it is not secure. Request a fax number or mailing address to which the requested documentation can be sent.