What is E-Verify?

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E-Verify is an online system used by employers to confirm the eligibility of employees to work in the United States. It cross-checks information from an employee's I-9 form with government records to verify that the employee is authorized to work in the United States. It helps ensure compliance with immigration laws and reduces the risk of employing individuals who are not legally authorized to work.

What is STEM OPT?

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STEM OPT (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics Optional Practical Training) is a program that allows international students with a degree in STEM fields to work in the United States for an additional 24 months beyond their initial 12-month OPT period. This extension allows students to gain valuable work experience in their field of study.

To be eligible for STEM OPT, students must work for an employer that participates in E-Verify. This requirement ensures that students on STEM OPT are employed by employers that are compliant with United States immigration laws and regulations. Without E-Verify, employers cannot hire students under the STEM OPT extension.

Why is the School of Medicine and Public Health (SMPH) implementing E-Verify at this time?

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After several months of collaboration with core partners and thoughtful planning, SMPH will be implementing E-Verify as part of a pilot program in February 2025. This initiative will help us assess the effectiveness of the E-Verify system in ensuring a streamlined process for verifying work eligibility.

The goal of this pilot program is to evaluate how E-Verify can improve our processes and ensure continued compliance with employment eligibility requirements.

As SMPH will participating in E-Verify, they will be allowed to hire students on STEM OPT extension. This applies only to SMPH, and as a result, employees hired under the STEM OPT extension will not be eligible to hold dual appointments or transition to roles outside of SMPH.

What does this mean for other schools, colleges, and divisions?

At this time, SMPH will be the only UW–Madison unit authorized to implement this pilot program. Please note E-Verify must be implemented through the Office of Human Resources. Your school, college, or division is not authorized to implement E-Verify independently.

We understand that there is a growing interest in implementing E-Verify and STEM OPT. There are numerous factors to consider before proceeding with further implementation. To ensure a thorough understanding of the process and its effectiveness, we are beginning with SMPH as a starting point.

E-Verify is an involved and precise system that requires careful attention to detail. Ensuring compliance with I-9 regulations is of the utmost importance, as any discrepancies or errors could have significant implications. Therefore, it is crucial to approach the integration of E-Verify in a methodical and well-informed manner.