



OPT Workshop

Optional Practical Training

Please hold all
your questions
until the end.

We will have time for Q&A



InfoSession Outline

- **Basic terms**
- **OPT Overview**
 - What is it and who is it for?
- **Types of OPT**
- **Application**
 - Timeline
 - Forms
 - Documents
- **Life On & After OPT**
- **Common Questions**
- **Q&A**



Basic Terms

Basic Terms

Visa	A visa is the stamp in your passport that you received at the US embassy or consulate. Individuals with a visa may enter the US in the status shown on that visa.
Status	Status is your immigration classification in the United States. You gain this when entering the US. This defines your presence/purpose in the United States.
Program	<p>This is your academic program. Your program ‘begins’ when you start at UND. Your program ‘ends’ when you have <u>completed all required coursework</u> for your degree.</p> <p><i>The Program End Date may be adjusted. Students needing to shorten this date to apply for OPT will have this date adjusted when applying for OPT with the UND Int’l Center.</i></p>
EAD	<p>Employment Authorization Document</p> <p>This is a card issued by USCIS to applicants who have been authorized to work in the US. This will show the dates for which the individual is authorized for work.</p>

OPT Overview

What is OPT?

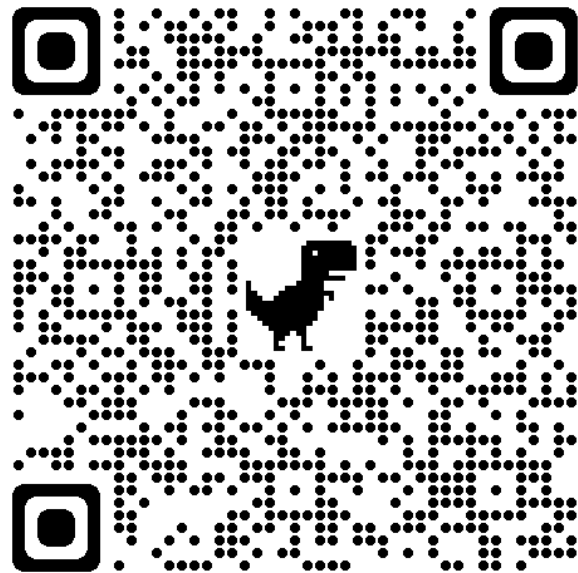
- Optional Practical Training (OPT) is a benefit of F-1 status allowing students to apply for **employment authorization** to work in the United States.


What is OPT?

- OPT is meant to give an opportunity for students to work **in their field of study**. It is typically given for 12 months for all degree holders
 - OPT must be “directly related to the student’s major area of study.”
 - A 24-month extension is available for qualifying STEM degree holders. (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics)
 - For a list of qualifying STEM fields, USCIS has a list [here](#).

All OPT info can be found on our website


- Seriously, it's all here





INFO FOR ✓LOGINS ✓DIRECTORY

ACADEMICSADMISSIONSSTUDENT LIFERESEARCHATHLETICSMAJORS & PROGRAMSABOUT



AcademicsInternational CenterInternational Student & Scholar Services

INTERNATIONAL STUDENT & SCHOLAR SERVICES

Newly Admitted Students✓

Current Students✓

Employment Authorization^

TN Employment

Curricular Practical Training

Optional Practical Training

J-1 Scholars✓

International Student & Scholar Services

International Student & Scholar Services (ISSS) provides advising services to students and scholars in F, J, and M status at the UND.

While maintaining legal status is the responsibility of the student/scholar, ISSS provides orientation, advising, and resources throughout an individual's time at UND. Additional services include information for faculty and staff working with international students and support for cultural programming for students and the community.

INTERNATIONAL STUDENT & SCHOLAR SERVICES

Newly Admitted Students	✓
Current Students	✓
Employment Authorization	^
TN Employment	
Curricular Practical Training	
▪ Optional Practical Training	
I-1 Scholars	✓
Information for Departments	
Peer Mentor Program	
Contact Us	

International Center

Memorial Union 240
2901 University Ave Stop
7109

Optional Practical Training

Optional Practical Training (OPT) is employment authorization for employment opportunities that are directly related to your field of study.

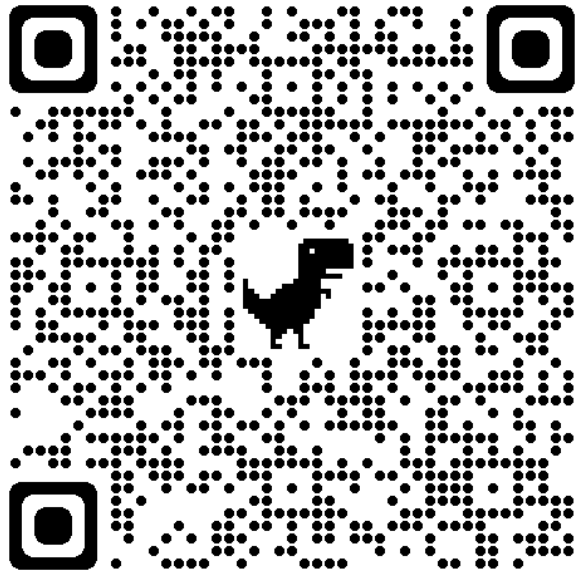
- You do not need to be receiving academic credit to be eligible.
- OPT is granted for a maximum of 12 months per degree level. (You can do OPT in your field of study for 12 months after you graduate from UND.)
- Students in certain STEM degrees may be eligible for one 24-month extension of post-completion OPT.
- To maintain legal status while on OPT, you must complete the [OPT Reporting Form](#) within ten days of beginning a new job, a change in job information, or every six months if nothing changes. STEM students have [additional reporting and evaluation requirements](#).
- The filing fee is non-refundable
- USCIS must receive and log all OPT applications within the 30 days of the OPT I-20 being issued.
 - Applications received with I-20s older than 30 days will not be considered.
- USCIS MUST receive and log all Post-Completion OPT applications no later than 60 days after the program end date listed on the OPT I-20 and STEM extension applications before the original OPT expires. Applications not logged by USCIS adjudicators within 60 days of the program end date will be denied
- If you plan to make an appointment, please have a completed packet of all the items on the [OPT Checklist \(PDF\)](#). Please do NOT bring original documents to your appointment. If your packet is incomplete, you may be asked to make another appointment. If you do not require an appointment, please allow 2-4 days for application review and processing.

Types of OPT

You may be approved for Pre-Completion or Post-Completion OPT. Certain students are

All OPT info can be found on our website

- Seriously, it's all here



Who is eligible for OPT?

Part 1

- F-1 full-time students who are in good standing and have completed at least 2 semesters (one academic year) of university study in the States.
- Students **must not** have used 12 months full-time CPT or pre-completion OPT.
 - Part-time CPT does not affect OPT eligibility.
- Must be physically present in the U.S., in F-1 status, to apply to USCIS.

Who is eligible for OPT?

Part 2

- Have not previously had 12 months of Post-Completion OPT for the same level of degree.
- Students in English language training programs are not eligible for OPT.
- Part-time F-1 "border commuter students" are eligible only for CPT and Post-Completion OPT.

Important information on OPT

- Employment **must be** directly related to field of study and at equivalent degree level.
 - *It is the responsibility of the student to explain how it is related*
- Employment may be anywhere in the United States.
 - *Provided any other F-1 status requirements are being met*
- Employment authorization is not job specific. So, students may change jobs during authorization period.
 - *Remember to notify the Int'l Center if this occurs.*

Types of OPT

Types of OPT

- There are three types of OPT:

Pre-Completion OPT	Post-Completion OPT	STEM Extension OPT
Generally, available before you graduate	Generally, available after you graduate	Only available to students majoring in eligible programs

Pre-Completion OPT is available for students to work in their area of study before completion of their program.



Pre-
Completion
OPT

Pre-Completion OPT

- Pre-Completion OPT, the respective amount of time is deducted from 12 months Post-OPT time period.
 - You can work part time up to 20 hours on Pre-Completion OPT when school is in session and 40 hours (full time) during breaks.
- If you choose to use Pre-Completion OPT, you will lose that amount of time from the overall 12 months OPT.
 - It will be 1 month for 2 months of part-time OPT (Fall and Spring terms) and 1 month for 1 month of full time OPT (Summer/Winter terms)



Post- Completion OPT

**Students may apply for
Post-Completion OPT to
work in their area of
study after the
completion of their
academic program.**

Post-Completion OPT

- Post-Completion OPT is meant to start after the end date of your degree program stated on your I-20.
- Students **do not need** a job offer to apply for OPT.
 - However, they cannot be unemployed for more than 90 days from the start date on their EAD (Employment Authorization Document) card.
- *If you took part in Pre-Completion OPT, then that time is deducted from Post-Completion OPT.*

Post-Completion OPT

- Students should apply 90 days prior to the end of their program.
 - Note: You have 60 days to apply for Post-Completion OPT after the end of your program. If you do not apply within this time frame you forfeit OPT.

We'll take a look at the OPT Application Timeline on slide 26

STEM Extension OPT

Stem Extension OPT is meant for science, technology, engineering, or mathematics (STEM) degree holders to extend their current OPT.

The STEM degree must be recognized by ICE to be eligible

STEM Extension OPT

- The 24-Month Extension of Optional Practical Training (OPT) is a “24-month extension of post-completion OPT for students with a science, technology, engineering, or mathematics (STEM) degree.”
 - The degree’s CIP code must be listed by ICE as a STEM eligible degree
<https://www.uscis.gov/working-in-the-united-states/students-and-exchange-visitors/optional-practical-training-extension-for-stem-students-stem-opt>
 - A qualified student may apply for an extension of OPT while in a valid period of Post-Completion OPT.
- The extension will be for an additional 24 months, for a maximum of 36 months of OPT, if all of the following requirements are met.” 8 CFR 214.2(f)(10)(ii)(C)
 - Note: Students under a STEM OPT are allowed 150 days of unemployment in the combined 36-month period of OPT.

STEM OPT

- Students need to apply as early as 90 days before the end of their 12 month OPT period, and the application must be received by USCIS before your 12 month OPT end date.
 - Note: If your new EAD card has not arrived by the start date of your 24 month extension period, you may continue to work for the e-verified employer for 180 days.

Application Process

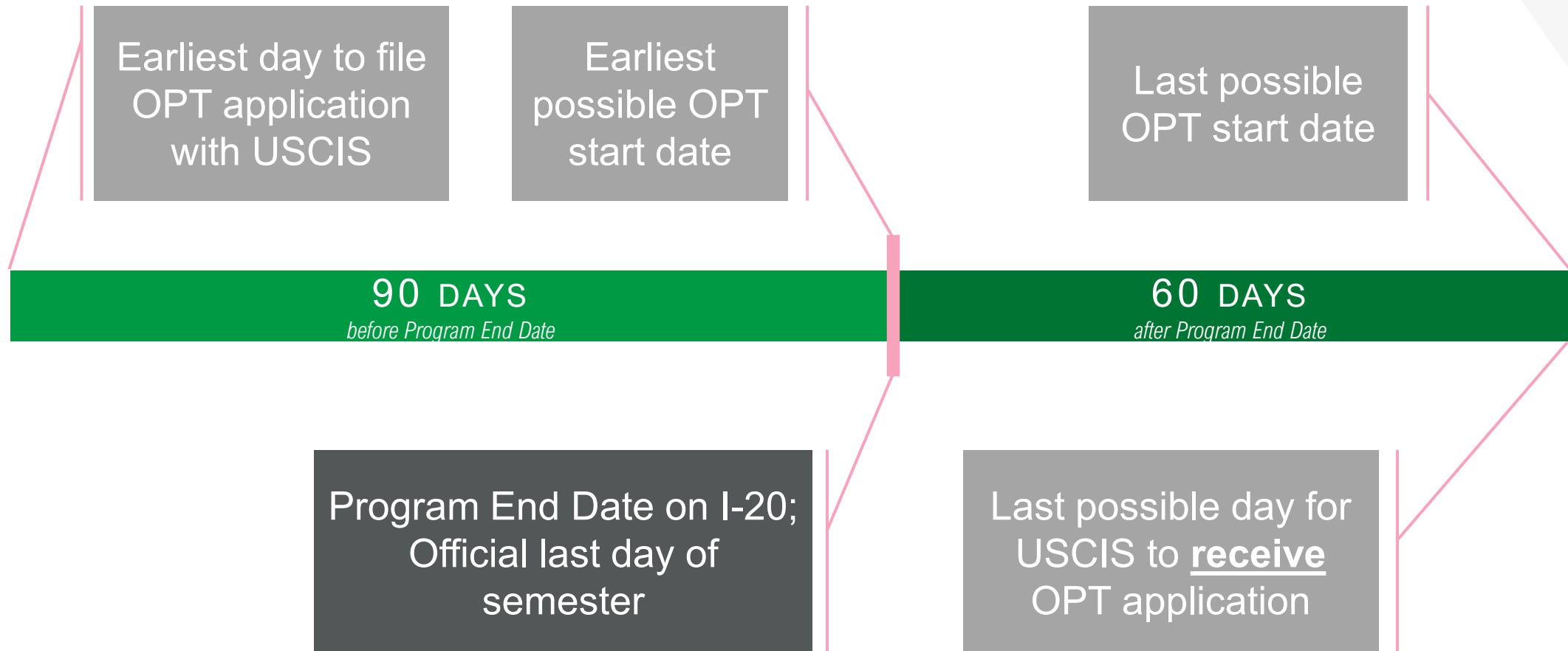


APPLICATION PROCESS: Preview

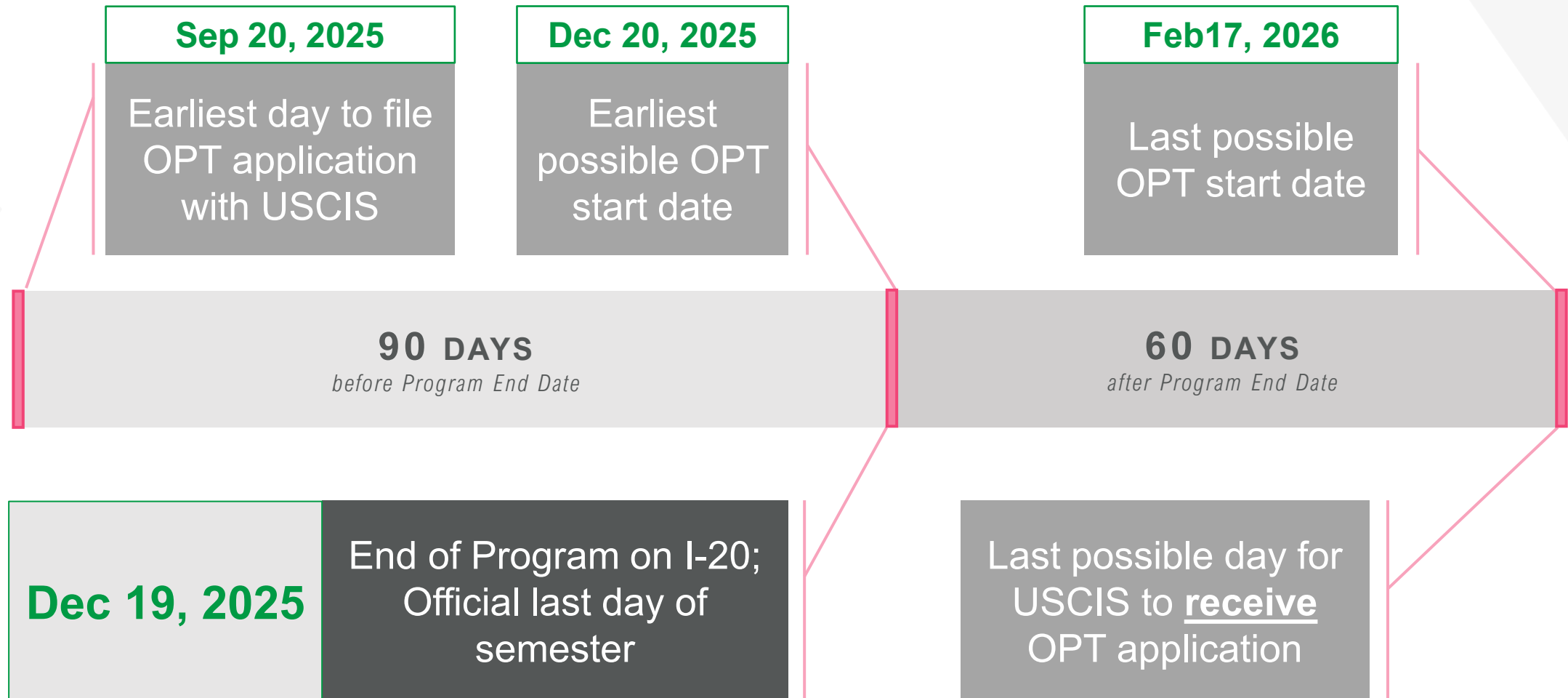
1. Get your OPT Recommendation
2. Prepare your documents
3. Submit your OPT application to USCIS
4. USCIS Processing
5. Receive notice, begin OPT

We'll go more into detail on these, but first, let's take a look at the OPT Processing timeline.

Post-Completion OPT Timeline



Post-Completion OPT Timeline: FALL 2025



APPLICATION PROCESS: Get your OPT Recommendation

- [Complete the OPT Application Form](#)
 - Select an OPT start date.
 - The date you select must be within the 60-day window after the completion of your program.
 - *But when should I start OPT?*
 - That decision is yours to make. Each student's circumstances are different, so you will need to choose what works best for you.
 - Considerations: Do you need additional time to search for work?, Do you already have a job in mind?, Do you just want a break from school/work?, etc.
 - **Note:** After filing your OPT application with USCIS, your OPT start date cannot be changed!

APPLICATION PROCESS: Get your OPT Recommendation

- Once you've completed the OPT Application Form
 - Your form will be sent to your Academic Advisor
 - They must confirm you are on-track to complete within the current term
- Once your Advisor completes the form
 - International center will receive your completed application
 - You will receive a new I-20 with an OPT recommendation via email within 2-3 business days

APPLICATION PROCESS: Prepare your documents

- Students should prepare the following documents:
 - Signed I-20 with OPT recommendation
 - Recent Passport-style photograph
 - Passport photo page
 - Most recent form I-94
 - If applicable, any previously issued I-20s with OPT or CPT authorization
 - If applicable, any previous issued EAD cards
- The **OPT Checklist** is highly recommended, particularly for those filing their applications by mail.

GUIDE TO FILING FORM I-765 ONLINE

POST-COMPLETION OPT

REMINDER: You must first receive an OPT Recommendation from the UND International Center before submitting your OPT application to USCIS.

It is the student's responsibility to ensure the Form I-765 is completed fully, accurately, and includes all required document uploads before submitting their application to USCIS.

Effective April 12, 2021, F-1 students seeking OPT approval can [file the Form I-765 online](#) via [myUSCIS](#). The online filing option allows F-1 students to apply for the post-completion OPT EAD, request a Social Security Number (SSN) (if needed), upload supporting application documents, pay the \$470 filing fee, track the status of their application, communicate with USCIS through a secure inbox, and respond to Requests for Evidence (RFE).

Students must have copies of the following documents ready to upload when filing the Form I-765 through [myUSCIS](#):

REQUIRED APPLICATION DOCUMENTS

- ☐ **Recent Passport-style color photograph** (JPG, JPEG, or PNG)
 - Must comply with U.S. Department of State passport photograph requirements
- ☐ **Passport photo page** that includes name, passport number, and expiration date (JPG, JPEG, PDF, TIF, TIFF)
 - Passport must be valid for at least 6 months from the application date
- ☐ **Most recent form I-94** (JPG, JPEG, PDF, TIF, TIFF)
 - Form is available here [I94 - Official Website \(dhs.gov\)](#)
- ☐ If applicable, **any previously issued I-20s with OPT or CPT authorizations**
 - Only include copies of I-20s with work authorization; I-20s without work authorization are not required
- ☐ If applicable, **any previously issued EAD cards**
- ☐ **Signed I-20 with OPT recommendation**, pages 1&2 (JPG, JPEG, PDF, TIF, TIFF)
 - Student must print their OPT I-20 and sign the *Student Attestation* section in ink (a typed or electronic student signature is not acceptable)

APPLICATION PROCESS: Prepare your documents

- These items are not required for your **initial** OPT application
 - However, you may include the following items **if applicable**:
 - Job Letter
 - Copy of past CPT employment history
 - Previous EAD card
 - Optional: E-Notification of Application/Petition Acceptance (USCIS form G-1145)

APPLICATION PROCESS: Submit your application

- You are responsible for submitting your OPT application to USCIS
- You may submit your OPT application to USCIS only **after** you have received your I-20 with an OPT recommendation
- You have **30 days** from the day you received an OPT recommendation to submit your application to USCIS.

Department of Homeland Security U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement		I-20, Certificate of Eligibility for Nonimmigrant Student Status OMB NO. 1653-0038		
SEVIS ID: N00XXXXXXXXX (F-1)		NAME: Yoo En Dee		
EMPLOYMENT AUTHORIZATIONS				
TYPE	FULL/PART-TIME	STATUS	START DATE	END DATE
POST-COMPLETION OPT	FULL TIME	REQUESTED	07 AUGUST 2021	06 AUGUST 2022
CHANGE OF STATUS/CAP-GAP EXTENSION				

APPLICATION PROCESS: Apply online

Via USCIS.gov

- USCIS now offers F-1 students to submit I-765 applications for OPT online. You may begin the process of submitting your online application at <https://myaccount.uscis.gov/>
 - Create an account
 - We recommend using your **personal email** for this account
 - Once you've created an account, you will select 'My USCIS'
 - Select 'Applicant'; File a form online; and the authorization you are applying for
 - Post-Completion OPT: (c)(3)(b)
 - STEM Extension OPT: (c)(3)(c)
 - Fill the form
 - Once completed and paid, download a copy for your records

APPLICATION PROCESS: Submit to USCIS

- Items you will **NEED**:
 - Completed USCIS form I-765
 - \$470 Dollars
 - If filing online, you submit payment online
 - If filing by mail, you may submit a check or money order made out to the “U.S. Department of Homeland Security”. DO NOT send cash. The fee to file a paper application is \$520
 - Passport Sized Photos (Can get these at the International Center for \$10)
 - Copies of your current Passport, I-94 Card, and Visa
 - Copy of I-20 issued for OPT
 - Copies of past I-20s with any approved CPT or OPT
 - Copies of Transcripts (STEM OPT only)
 - And Diploma (If applicable)

APPLICATION PROCESS: USCIS Processing

- USCIS sends an I-797 Notice of Action once your application is received.
 - This notice will contain a receipt number which you can use to check application status at: <https://egov.uscis.gov/cris/jsps/index.jsp>
- USCIS may send you, via mail, any questions they have regarding your application along with a due date by which to answer those additional questions.

APPLICATION PROCESS: USCIS Processing

- Important notes while you wait:
 - Check out UND Career Services to help prepare for your future career!
 - If you are still waiting for USCIS to process your application when your Program End Date passes, please note the following:
 - All employment must end after the Program End Date on your I-20, including on-campus employment, even if this is your intended OPT Employment
 - International travel after your Program End Date while you have a pending application is not recommended.

APPLICATION PROCESS: Receive Notice, Begin OPT

- Once a decision is reached, USCIS will send you a I-797 alerting you of their decision on your application
- If approved, USCIS mails you your EAD card. Processing times vary, but can be as long as 90 days.
- You may begin employment no sooner than the OPT Start Date on your EAD card
 - **Make sure to check the card to make sure all the information is correct (spelling of name, dates, etc.). If it is incorrect, please contact the office immediately.**

Example Employment Authorization Document (EAD) Card



APPLICATION PROCESS: Review

- **Get your OPT Recommendation**
 - Who must confirm you are on-track to complete your required coursework?
 - Your Academic Advisor!
- **Prepare your documents**
 - Once you receive your OPT Recommendation, you will receive application instructions. Prepare the documents needed for your preferred submission method
- **Submit your OPT application**
 - When is the earliest you can submit your application? (*for Fall 2025*)
 - September 20, 2025
 - When is the latest you can submit your application? (*for Fall 2025*)
 - February 17, 2026
- **USCIS processing**
 - Can you begin employment before USCIS approves your application?
 - No
- **Receive notice / begin OPT**

Life On & After

OPT
For students on **Post-Completion OPT**

BASICS

- You are still in F-1 status!
 - As a student, full-time enrollment was required. Now that you're on OPT, full-time employment is now required
- Your I-20 remains important!
 - Travel endorsements are still required if you travel internationally
- All changes must still be reported!
 - This includes your address as well as your employer

ONCE OPT IS APPROVED

- As mentioned, you'll receive an I-797 Notice of Action notifying you of the approval and then your EAD card shortly after.
- Once your OPT begins (shown on your EAD card), you have **90 days** of unemployment.
 - You must find employment, paid or unpaid, working at least 20 hours per week for full-time OPT
 - An additional 60 days of unemployment are made available for students who are approved for a STEM Extension (totaling 150 days)
- If you are unable to find employment and exceed the permitted days of unemployment, your OPT ends

I'VE FOUND A JOB, NOW WHAT?

- You must report it! Students **must** report that employment by either:
 - Self-reporting employment through a SEVP Portal Account
 - Once approved for OPT, you will receive an email from SEVP to create an SEVP Portal account.
 - Complete the **OPT Reporting Form** on the UND website.
 - An advisor will update your SEVIS record with your employment information
- *If you move during your OPT, you must report the change within **10 days***

WHAT HAPPENS AFTER OPT?

- After completing your time in OPT, you have a **60-day grace period**. During this time, these are your options to remain in valid visa status:
 - Prepare to leave the US.
 - Once you leave the US, your F-1 status ends!
 - Have a pending application for the STEM Extension
 - Have a pending application for a change of status (e.g., H-1B)
 - Obtain a SEVIS transfer to another school with the new school's Transfer Pending I-20
 - Be accepted to a different program at UND and have a Change of Level Completed I-20 by an International Student Advisor

Frequently Asked Questions



When should I apply for OPT?

PLAN AHEAD

- You must have your EAD card (Employment Authorization Document) in hand to start working, even unpaid. USCIS can take up to **90 days** to process post- completion OPT applications
- You do not need a job offer to apply. Applications can be submitted up to 90 days before the completion date on your I-20.
 - The completion date is noted on your I-20. If the completion date on the I-20 is incorrect, please contact your ISA.
- You do have the option to apply for Premium Processing, which will allow your application to be adjudicated within 30 days.
 - Fee for Premium Processing is \$1,685

What if my plans change after applying for OPT?

- **Immediately** contact an International Student Advisor if your graduation or oral defense plans change after your OPT application has been submitted.
- A change in plans may mean that you are not eligible to work full time as planned. Depending on your situation, you might require an I-20 extension to remain in valid F-1 status.

Do I need to do anything different when applying for jobs than an American student?

- Keep in mind general cultural differences – U.S. resumes/CVs shouldn't include age, marital status, or a photo, but should include your name
- You may be asked if you have permission to work in the United States. It's tricky, but since your work permission is benefit of your F-1 status, you can check yes
- Contact [UND Career Services](#) for help with resumes or interviewing

Do I need sponsorship for OPT?

- No, but your employer will need to complete a training plan and be registered in e-verify in order to apply for a STEM extension.

How long do I have to find a job?

- Students are permitted a total of 90 days of unemployment during the 12-month OPT
 - For students approved for 24-month STEM OPT, 150 days of unemployment are granted.
- Students are required to work full-time (defined as over 20 hours per week) during OPT.
- Unpaid work (20 hours or more) within a student's major field counts as employment during the 12-month OPT period but not for OPT STEM Extension.

What about travel?

- To travel outside the United States, you will need:
 - Passport (valid for six months after you plan to re-enter the U.S.)
 - Valid F-1 visa stamp in your passport
 - I-20 (with a valid travel signature no older than one year)
 - EAD Card
 - Evidence that you already have a job in the U.S. or that you have a job offer.

Travel Cont'd

- **Please Note:**

- Students who have an EAD card for Post-Completion OPT and evidence of either a job or a job offer are allowed to leave and re-enter the U.S. during their OPT period.

Of course, re-entry to the U.S. is never guaranteed.

- If a student who has an EAD card but does not have a job or a job offer leaves the US during the Post-Completion OPT period, **OPT POTENTIALLY ENDS.**

Border officials might not allow someone in this situation to re-enter the U.S. Thus, students who do not have a U.S. job or a U.S. job offer but who plan to leave and re-enter the U.S. after their EAD card has been issued (their OPT has been approved by USCIS) are taking a risk.

- **Travel can be very risky. Please contact an International Student Advisor prior to leaving the U.S. to discuss all your options.**

What if I don't have a social security number yet?

- The I-765 form can be used to obtain a social security number. You will have to provide some additional information.

What status am I on while on OPT?

- You are on F-1 status. OPT is a benefit of F-1 status, not a status in itself.
- OPT is NOT a work visa, it is still part of student status
- You can apply for a change of status while on OPT, but once the new status starts your OPT will no longer be valid

When can I start working?

- You can start working once you have your EAD card in hand and you are within the dates listed on your EAD card.

Am I required to follow-up with the International Center when I am on OPT?

- **You must maintain current information in SEVIS. You may do that through a portal that you can set up once OPT is approved OR complete the International Center's OPT Update Form**
 - If you move or change your address – you must notify us within 10 days of any change.
 - New employment information must be sent to us within 10 days of any change.
 - If your job is ending, if you are transferring to another school, if you are starting a new degree, changing status, etc...
 - Any small change taken needs to be reported to ISSS,

Am I required to follow-up with the International Center when I am on OPT?

- **You must maintain current information in SEVIS. You may do that through a portal that you can set up once OPT is approved OR complete the International Center's OPT Update Form**
 - If you move or change your address – you must notify us within 10 days of any change.
 - New employment information must be sent to us within 10 days of any change.
 - If your job is ending, if you are transferring to another school, if you are starting a new degree, changing status, etc...
 - Any small change taken needs to be reported to ISSS,

Contact Us

International Center

- Email:
Amy Vein amy.vein@und.edu
Ric Auman ricvenanthony.auman@und.edu
Scott Blanchard scott.blanchard@und.edu

Walk-In Hours

- Monday through Friday: 9:00am -10:30am and 2:30pm – 4:00pm

Appointment

- Schedule an appointment with an advisor through [Hawk Central](#)

Questions?





THANK YOU FOR JOINING US!