

Q: How does choosing a later date affect OPT status? Do those days between my graduation and the start date count as “non-work” days?

The days between graduation and the start date of your OPT do not count as days of unemployment.

Your OPT start date has to start within 60 days of your program end date, so if you apply late and it is approved late, you will start losing days from the 12 months of OPT authorization starting on day 61 after your program end date. Your "unemployment days" would start on the date of your OPT approval.

Q: If we apply for OPT and find job after 60days of unemployment. Should we apply for extension once we get a job?

No, you can have up to 90 days of unemployment from the start date of your OPT. If you go past that, you are expected to leave the country.

Standard (initial) OPT is approved for 12 months. F-1 students with approved OPT are eligible for up to 90 days of unemployment. Students who complete a degree in a STEM field can apply for an additional 24 months of OPT when within 90 days of the end of the initial period of OPT. When approved, STEM OPT recipients are eligible for an additional 60 days of unemployment (total 150 for the entire OPT period).

Q: After graduating and while we wait for the approval of OPT, do we have to leave the country? or stay?

You can remain in the US while your application is pending.

Q: For example, I apply as early as possible but choose my start date as February 1st, 2021. Would OPT end Feb 1st, 2022 or a year after my program end date?

Assuming your start date is within the first 60 days after your program end date, the end date for your OPT would be January 31st, 2022.

Q: Can I work on the start date I choose? Or Do I need to wait until I get OPT?

You can start work only after you have received your OPT card and during the dates indicated on the card.

The start date you choose may or may not be the start date for your OPT. If it is approved after the date you request, then your start date will be a later date.

Q: If one applies for their OPT earlier but for some reasons they are not able to graduate by the time their OPT gets approved, what is the consequence of that and what should be the students course of action?

The answer depends on whether the student applying for OPT is an undergraduate student or graduate student. An undergraduate that needs to complete more coursework, can only work part-time until coursework is complete. Graduate students who have completed coursework but are still working on thesis or dissertation can work full-time on OPT while completing their thesis or dissertation.

This is a really complicated question and depends a lot on your particular circumstances. If you have completed all of your required coursework, but are still finishing up a thesis or dissertation, then your

OPT would remain in tact. If you have additional coursework that you are required to take, we would need to talk about what options you would have. We advise that you know you are truly going to be finishing your coursework before applying for OPT.

Anonymous Attendee 03:47 PM

Q: When is the best time to apply the OPT?

An F-1 student can apply for OPT as early as 90 days prior to program completion to as late as 60 days after their program completion date. Due to long processing times at USCIS (several months), it is best to apply early.

90 days before your graduation or defense date. You can submit the application to ISSS a few days before that, but USCIS should never receive the application more than 90 days prior to that program end date. We advise applying right after that 90 day point though, since applications can sometimes take over 3 months to be approved. For the December graduation date in Fall 2020, that would be September 19th for the earliest date they can receive your application.

Q: Could you please go over the application slide again. I am a bit confused about how what we are supposed to be mailing in. I thought we are supposed to submit the application form and I-765 form to ISSS

You will submit everything to ISSS first, and we will look everything over and create the I-20 for the OPT application, but then you will mail it to USCIS.

Q: Should I meet with ISSS before submitting my OPT app? What is a good start date considering I need my EAD card to start working/volunteering?

This would be a good question to discuss with an advisor in ISSS. What is best for you will depend on individual circumstances.

Q: Is there a website where I can verify that my major is stem?

<https://www.ice.gov/sites/default/files/documents/Document/2016/stem-list.pdf>

Your major's CIP code is listed on your I-20. It needs to match one on the list to be sure that you are eligible.

Q: Should I meet with ISSS before submitting my OPT app? What is a good start date considering I need my EAD card to start working/volunteering?

Yes, please meet with us first to make sure all of your questions are answered ahead of time. The start date should be the date that you hope to start working. It can be any date within 60 days of your program end date.

Q: My F-1 visa just expired. Am I still eligible for the OPT? Do I have to renew my F-1 visa in order to apply for OPT?

No, you would only need a new F-1 visa if you need to travel and re-enter the US, however, your passport should be valid at least 6 months into the future when you apply for OPT.

Q: Is it possible to set up with ISSS advisor to fill the eform on the website and is there a checklist available?

Here <https://international.colostate.edu/iss/remote-advising/> are our advising options (open advising or appointments). We don't usually walk through each step of the application, but we are happy to answer all of your questions about the application. If you have a lot of questions, it is probably best to schedule an appointment so that we have more time to get through them all.

Q: When filling out online job applications, if I'm not seeking an H1-B status with the company, is it okay to answer the question no to the "will you be needing sponsorship in the future?" question?

If you do not anticipate needing sponsorship for a work visa of any kind, then you can answer no.

Q: Regarding post-completion OPT: What does it mean to be in Continuous Registration? Apart from Health Insurance, what are the other charges that will be posted to my account?

If you have insurance through your OPT employer, we can waive that charge for you. I am not 100% sure what the fees are but the total cost for CR is \$300 per term without insurance.

Q: I used up 6 years of H1B, but then left the US for a few years. Am I eligible for a new H1B?

Yes, residing outside the U.S. for a year or more resets your H-1B "clock" making you eligible for H-1B again.