

Pre-Completion Optional Practical Training



WILLIAM & MARY

CHARTERED 1693

Agenda

- What is Pre-Completion OPT?
- Eligibility & Requirements
- Employment & Reporting
- Impact on Post-Completion OPT
- Application Process & Timeline
- OPT Resources
- Time for Q&A



What is Pre-Completion Optional Practical Training (OPT)?

F-1 work authorization

Work must be related to degree

Must be used prior to graduation

Work anywhere in the U.S.

12 months per degree level

No job needed to apply

Paid or unpaid

OK to have multiple jobs

Part-time while school is in session

Must apply within the U.S.

Eligibility for Pre-Completion OPT

- Been in F-1 status for **at least two consecutive semesters**
- Must not have used 12 months of full-time CPT or OPT (defined as more than 20 hours of work per week).
- Undergraduates must have declared a major
- No job offer is needed to apply

Maintain a Full Course of Study

- Students must maintain a full course of study during the period of employment if it will occur while classes are in session (not applicable in summer)
- PhD students who have completed all coursework must continue to make normal progress towards completing their thesis or dissertation
- All employment on pre-completion OPT must end by the student's graduation date

Part-time vs. Full-time

- Can only apply for part-time or full-time OPT, not both
- If applying to work while classes are in session:
 - Work limited to part-time (20 hours/week)
 - **Except** PhD students in dissertation phase of program
- If applying to work during official university breaks:
 - May apply for full-time work (more than 20 hours/week)

Employment Requirements on OPT

All employment must be related to your major field of study

Multiple employers and/or changing jobs is OK

Unpaid internships are OK

Work through an Employment Agency is OK

OPT Reporting Requirements

See [OPT Reporting](#) webpage for more information

- Required to report the following within **10 days of the change**:
 - Address or phone number
 - Changes in current employment
 - New employment
 - Relationship between your employment and your major field of study

OPT Reporting Requirements

See [OPT Reporting](#) webpage for more information

- Report changes in your **SEVP Portal Account**
- If the SEVP Portal is not functioning, submit an **OPT Employment Update e-form in iStart**
- Report changes in only one place, not both

Impact on Post-Completion OPT

- Students are granted 12 months of OPT per degree level
- Using pre-completion OPT reduces the amount of OPT available after graduation
- **Full-time** – reduces OPT at **100%** rate
- **Part-time** – reduces OPT at **50%** rate
- If you apply for pre-completion OPT but do not use it, this will likely still reduce post-completion OPT

Impact on Post-Completion OPT

Example 1: If you apply for 2 months of **full-time pre-completion OPT**, you will have 10 months of OPT left to use after graduation.

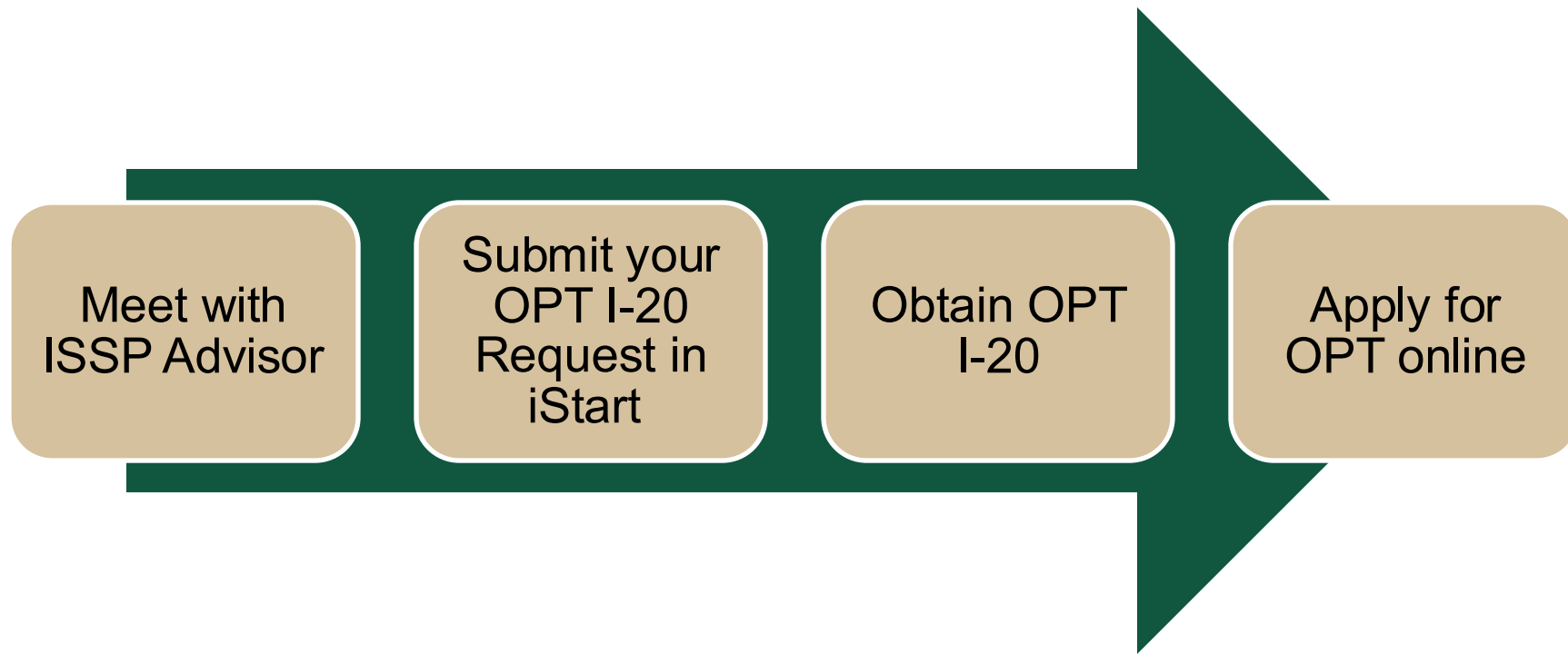
Example 2: If you apply for 2 months of **part-time pre-completion OPT**, you will have 11 months of OPT left to use after graduation.

Example 3: If you're approved for 2 months of **full-time pre-completion OPT**, but do not work, you will still only have 10 months of OPT left to use after graduation.

OPT STEM Extension

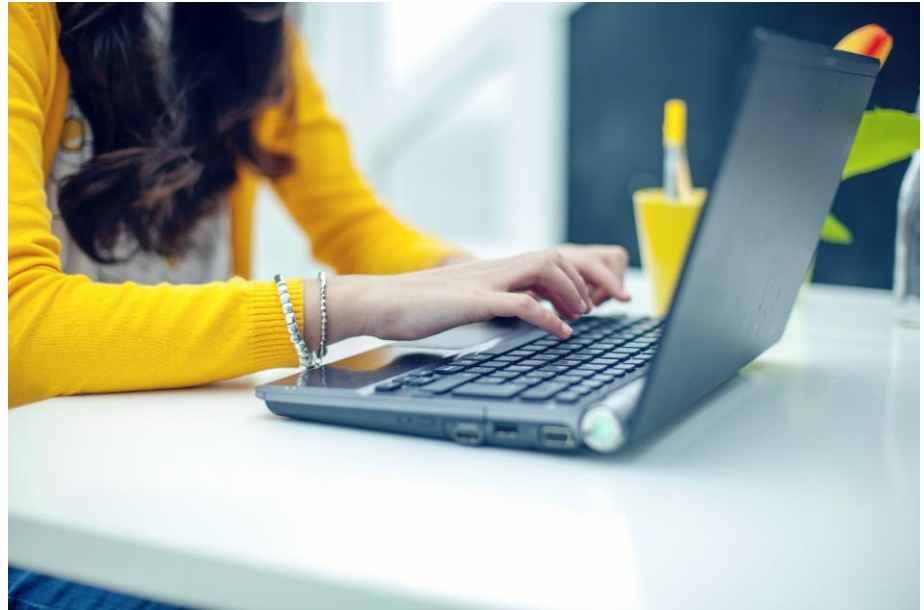
- To apply for the OPT STEM Extension, students must apply to ***extend a current period of post-completion OPT***
- Therefore, to remain eligible for the OPT STEM extension, **students should keep some post-completion OPT available for use after graduation**

Application Process



OPT Appointment with ISSP

- An OPT appointment is **required** for students seeking pre-completion OPT
- Schedule appointment [online](#)
- Review [OPT Packet](#) & online application before your appointment
- Ask questions!



ISSP OPT Request Form



WILLIAM & MARY



- Home
- Admission
- F-1 Practical Training**
- F-1 Student Services
- H-1B Employee Services
- Immigration Check-In
- Insurance and Finances
- International Office
- Pre-Arrival
- Scholarships
- Special Programs

F-1 Practical Training

Tasks



OPT I-20 Request



CPT-Curricular Practical Training



OPT STEM Extension I-20 Request



OPT Employment Update



OPT STEM Updates and Evaluations

The OPT I-20

REMARKS

OPT recommended for employment in the field of study.

SCHOOL ATTESTATION

I certify under penalty of perjury that all information provided above was entered before I signed this form and is true and correct. I executed this form in the United States after review and evaluation in the United States by me or other officials of the school of the student's application, transcripts, or other records of courses taken and proof of financial responsibility, which were received at the school prior to the execution of this form. The school has determined that the above named student's qualifications meet all standards for admission to the school and the student will be required to pursue a full program of study as defined by 8 CFR 214.2(f)(6). I am a designated school official of the above named school and am authorized to issue this form.

X _____ DATE ISSUED _____ PLACE ISSUED _____

SIGNATURE OF:

STUDENT ATTESTATION

I have read and agreed to comply with the terms and conditions of my admission and those of any extension of stay. I certify that all information provided on this form refers specifically to me and is true and correct to the best of my knowledge. I certify that I seek to enter or remain in the United States temporarily, and solely for the purpose of pursuing a full program of study at the school named above. I also authorize the named school to release any information from my records needed by DHS pursuant to 8 CFR 214.3(g) to determine my nonimmigrant status. **Parent or guardian, and student, must sign if student is under 18.**

X _____

SIGNATURE OF: _____ DATE _____

NAME OF PARENT OR GUARDIAN _____ SIGNATURE _____ ADDRESS (city/state or province/country) _____ DATE _____

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: (F-1) NAME:

EMPLOYMENT AUTHORIZATIONS

TYPE	FULL/PART-TIME	STATUS	START DATE	END DATE
POST-COMPLETION OPT	FULL TIME	REQUESTED	15 JULY 2021	14 JULY 2022

CHANGE OF STATUS/CAP-GAP EXTENSION

AUTHORIZED REDUCED COURSE LOAD

CURRENT SESSION DATES

CURRENT SESSION START DATE CURRENT SESSION END DATE
27 JANUARY 2021 25 MAY 2021

TRAVEL ENDORSEMENT

This page, when properly endorsed, may be used for re-entry of the student to attend the same school after a temporary absence from the United States. Each endorsement is valid for one year.

Designated School Official	TITLE	SIGNATURE	DATE ISSUED	PLACE ISSUED
		X		
		X		
		X		
		X		

Preparing OPT Application

OPT Packet (Checklist & Tips)

- List of required documents
- Instructions on applying for OPT online and paying the application fee
 - **\$470** (online application)
 - **\$520** (paper application)

Optional Practical Training Application Checklist

OPT is a work authorization granted to F-1 students for employment in their field of study (their major). Most students use it for post-graduation employment.

Learn About OPT

- Attend an [OPT Session](#) for the current semester, or watch a session recording.
- [Schedule an appointment](#) with an ISSP advisor (optional). Ask application questions during your appointment.

Prepare Your Documents

To make the process of submitting your online application easy, please have the **electronic files** for these documents ready before you begin.

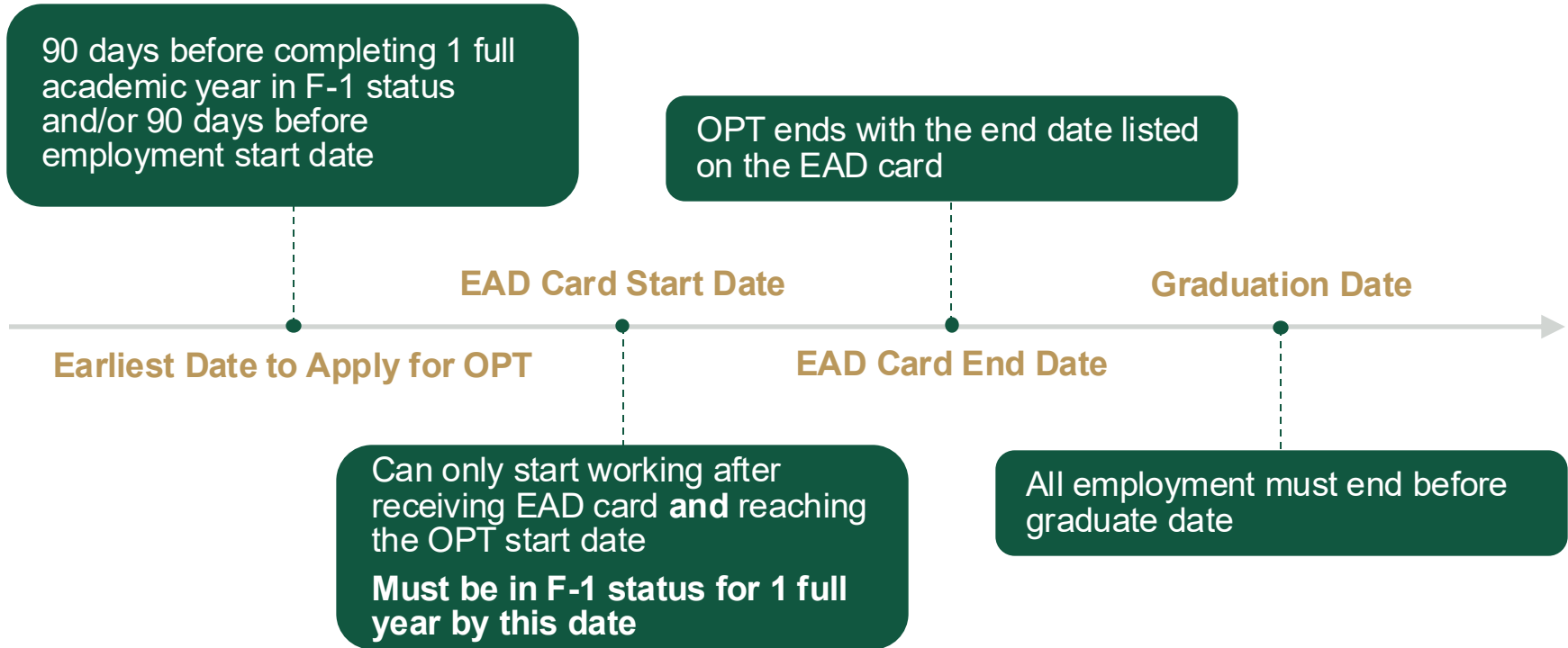
Acceptable file formats: JPG, JPEG, PDF, TIF or TIFF.

- OPT I-20. Request this in [iStart](#), using the *OPT I-20 Request* form. Your OPT dates will be listed on page 2 of your I-20. Print, sign and scan your OPT I-20. **Your OPT application will be denied without this!**
- [I-94 record](#) ("Get Most Recent I-94"). If you last traveled to the US by land, this will be in your passport instead, and you should scan a copy **front** and **back**, even if blank. You do not need to upload your travel history.
- Copy of passport identity page(s) showing your biographical info and expiration, valid 6 months in future.
- Copy of 1 color passport style photo, sized 2 inches by 2 inches. Review [photo requirements](#).

Application Process

- Can only apply for one instance of OPT at a time
 - Pre-completion OPT and post-completion OPT must be filed on separate applications
- Students must obtain OPT I-20 before applying for OPT with USCIS
 - ISSP recommends applying for OPT within 30 days of receiving OPT I-20 from our office

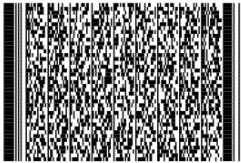
Application Timeline



Case Processing Time

- OPT processing times often takes ~2-5 months
- Check wait times at <https://egov.uscis.gov/processing-times/>
 - Form I-765
 - Based on a request by a qualified F-1 academic student
- Expedited processing is available for an additional fee (\$1,780)
- Shortens processing time to 30 business days (about 6 weeks) from date premium processing is submitted
- [USCIS Request for Premium Processing](#)

USCIS Biometrics Appointment

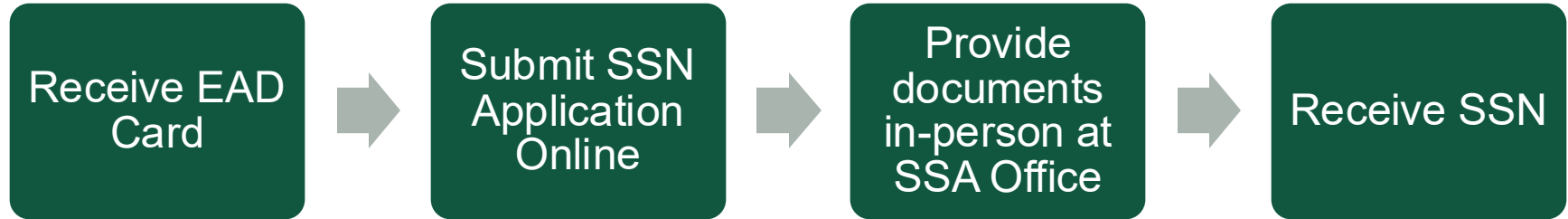
ASC Appointment Notice		CASE TYPE	NOTICE DATE
		1765 - APPLICATION FOR EMPLOYMENT AUTHORIZATION	02/28/2026
		USCIS A#	CODE
		Z300 126 356	2
ACCOUNT NUMBER	TCR	SERVICE CENTER	PAGE
090918082504		YSC	1 of 2
			
<p>READ THIS ENTIRE NOTICE CAREFULLY. To process your application, petition, or request, U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) must collect your biometrics. Please appear at the Application Support Center (ASC) at the date and time specified. TO REQUEST THAT USCIS RESCHEDULE YOUR APPOINTMENT, SEE THE INSTRUCTIONS AT THE BOTTOM OF THIS NOTICE. IF YOU FAIL TO APPEAR AS SCHEDULED, USCIS WILL CONSIDER YOUR BENEFIT REQUEST ABANDONED AND IT MAY BE DENIED.</p>			
APPLICATION SUPPORT CENTER USCIS NORFOLK 5678 E Virginia Beach Blvd Norfolk VA 23502		DATE AND TIME OF APPOINTMENT 03/16/2026 12:00PM	
<p>WHEN YOU APPEAR AT THE ASC FOR BIOMETRICS SUBMISSION, YOU MUST BRING:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">THIS APPOINTMENT NOTICE. If you received multiple ASC notices, bring all notices to your first appointment, andPHOTO IDENTIFICATION. You must bring a valid government-issued photo identification. If the name on your identification is different than the name on your ASC notice, bring supporting documents. If you filed an Application for Naturalization (Form N-400) or Application to Replace Permanent Resident Card (Form I-90), you must bring your Permanent Resident Card (also known as a Green Card).			

- Attend your biometrics appointment to have your photo taken after submitting your OPT application
- If you do not receive an appointment notice 2 weeks after submitting your OPT application, contact globe@wm.edu for assistance

After OPT is Approved

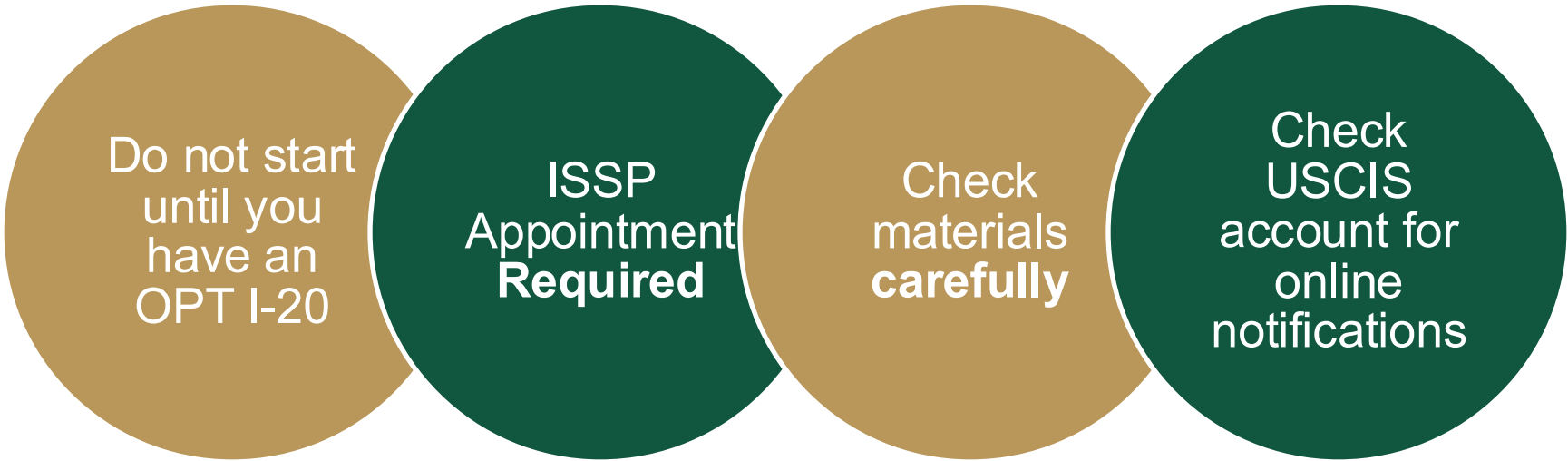
- EAD card mailed one week after approval
- Can only begin working after receiving your physical EAD card **AND** the start date listed on your EAD has been reached
- Apply for SSN after you receive your EAD (if you don't already have one)

Social Security Number (SSN)



Review ISSP's [Social Security Numbers \(SSN\)](#) webpage for more details on the application process

Online Application Tips



Do not start
until you
have an
OPT I-20

ISSP
Appointment
Required

Check
materials
carefully

Check
USCIS
account for
online
notifications

Common Reasons for Denial

1. Not including an **OPT I-20** in the application
2. Applying more than **30 days** after ISSP processed the OPT I-20 in SEVIS
3. Using a credit/debit card that doesn't work or an international credit/debit card
4. Not enough money in bank account

ISSP is here to help, but what you submit is ultimately your responsibility

Final Reminders

Save a copy of your application

Monitor status of your application on [Case Status Online](#)

Attend your biometrics appointment

Review [OPT resources](#) after approval

Keep EAD card for your records

Avoid using AI for questions related to OPT

Online OPT Resources



[OPT Home Webpage](#)

[OPT Packet](#)

[OPT Employment](#)

[OPT Reporting](#)

[STEM OPT Extension](#)