Basic OPT Timeline

Still Studying

12 months OPT Period

60 Day Grace Period

OPT Begin Date

Completion of Program

60 Days after OPT End date/"Grace Period": You must leave the US, begin a new program, or change status during this time.

Within 90 days before program completion:
The ideal time to apply for an OPT. Please consider applying during this time since the processing time can take up to 90 days.

90 days following OPT begin date: Must find and begin employment during these 90 days. Maximum of 90 days of unemployment allowed per 12 months of OPT. If on STEM extension, at total of 120 days of unemployment allowed per the entire 29 months of OPT.

60 days following program completion: The begin date MUST be selected within these 60 days. Technically, you are eligible to apply for OPT during this time as well, though you are encouraged to apply early.

120 days before OPT End date: Ideal time to apply for STEM Extension, if in the STEM field and have a job offer from an E-verify Employer.

60 Day GP

End of F-1 Status

Source: Johns Hopkins Office of International Services