Basic OPT Timeline

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.

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.

Completion of

OPT End Date

End of F-1 Status

Still Studying

60 Day Grace Period

12 months OPT Period

60 Day GP

Program

OPT Begin Date

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

90 Days: the time it takes for USCIS to process an OPT application, once it's submitted.

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

Source: Johns Hopkins Office of International Services