

Optional Practical Training workshop



International Student
& Scholar Services
University of Missouri

Workshop agenda

Introduction to OPT

Application process

Maintaining status on OPT

Travel information

After initial OPT

What is OPT?

Benefit of F-1 status at each higher-level degree

Eligible one time after bachelor's, master's and Ph.D. level

Work authorization for 12 months

Permission from U.S. government to work in the U.S. after graduation

Employment related to field of study

Job must be related to major, not minor

You are eligible for OPT if you...

1

Have been in F-1 status for one academic year

6

Have a passport valid six months into the future

364

Accumulated no more than 364 days of full time CPT

Thesis/dissertation students

- Post-completion OPT can start before you graduate
 - > For graduate students who only have research left to complete
- Program end date will be shortened to facilitate the start of your OPT period

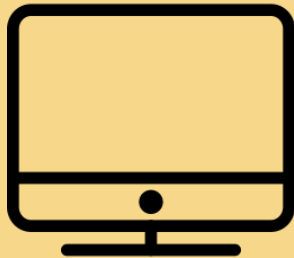


Application process

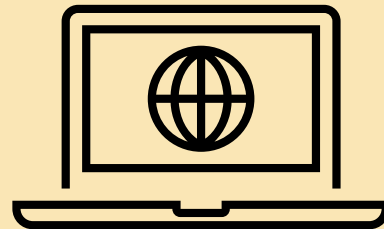
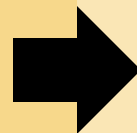
Application: 3 step process



Step 1: Gather and complete required documents



Step 2: Submit online request through myStatus



Step 3: File USCIS application online and wait

Step 1: Gather and complete paperwork

- I-765
- Copies of previous I-20s with CPT/OPT authorization
- Copies of passport, visa, I-94 and any previous EAD cards
- \$75 OPT processing fee
 - > Credit/debit payable in myStatus



I-765 Online

 U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services

Sign In

Email

Password

[Forgot your Password?](#) [Show Password](#)

[Sign In](#)

One account for all of your USCIS needs.
[Create an account.](#)

[Didn't receive confirmation instructions?](#)

Legal

- [Department of Homeland Security Consent](#)
- [DHS Privacy Notice](#)
- [Paper Reduction Act Burden Disclosure Notice](#)
- [Terms of Use](#)

Welcome to your USCIS Account

Select what you want to do

[Edit My Profile](#)
Editing your profile includes email, password, phone number, security questions, two-step verification and backup code.

Login to a USCIS Service

 [myUSCIS](#)
Apply for immigration benefits, find tools and resources to assist in preparation for naturalization, and search for doctors in your local community.

[FIRST](#)
Submit, manage and receive Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) requests.

[myE-Verify](#)
Confirm your records for employment eligibility, track E-Verify or Self-Check case status, and protect your identity by locking your Social Security Number (SSN).

Not sure what service you need? Start at [USCIS.gov](#)

 U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services

 My Account

Welcome To Your USCIS Account

Select What You Want To Do

 [Add a paper-filed case](#)
View your case status and case history by adding your case to your account

 [File a form online](#)
Start a new form, upload evidence, and pay and submit online

 [Enter a representative](#)
Review and prepare for attorney or representative interview

 U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services

I-765 Online

File a Form

Once you start your form, we will automatically save your information for 30 days, or from the last time you worked on the form.

Select the form you want to file online.

- ☐ Application to Replace Permanent Resident Card (I-90)
- ☐ Request for a Hearing on a Decision in Naturalization Proceedings (N-336)
- ☐ Application for Naturalization (N-400)
- ☐ Application for Replacement Naturalization/Citizenship Document (N-565)
- ☐ Application for Certificate of Citizenship (N-600)
- ☐ Application for Citizenship and Issuance of Certificate Under Section 322 (N-600K)

☒ Application for Employment Authorization (I-765)

Only certain F-1 students seeking optional practical training (OPT) may file Form I-765 online. This includes:

- Pre-completion OPT - (c)(3)(A) eligibility category;
- Post-completion OPT - (c)(3)(B) eligibility category; or
- a 24-month extension for STEM students (students holding a degree in science, technology, engineering, or mathematics) - (c)(3)(C) eligibility category.

For all other eligibility categories, you must submit a paper [Form I-765](#).

- ☐ Petition for Alien Relative (I-130)
- ☐ Application To Extend/Change Nonimmigrant Status (I-539)

Start form

Cancel

I-765, Application for Employment Authorization

Getting Started

Basis of eligibility

Reason for applying

Preparer and interpreter information

About You

Evidence

Additional Information

Review and Submit

What is your eligibility category?

! You can file your request online only for certain eligibility categories

If your eligibility category does not appear on the drop-down list, you must file a paper [Form I-765](#). If you submit online and are not eligible for one of the listed categories, your application may be denied.

A(12) Temporary Protected Status Granted

c(3)(A) Student Pre-Completion OPT

c(3)(B) Student Post-Completion OPT

c(3)(C) STEM Extension

Eligibility code: (C) (3) (B)

I-765 Online

What is your current U.S. **mailing address?**

We will use your current mailing address to contact you throughout the application process. We may not be able to contact you if you do not provide a complete and valid address. Please provide a U.S. address only.

In care of name (if any)

Address line 1

Address line 2

City or town

State

ZIP code

Is your current U.S. mailing address the same as your U.S. physical address?

☐ Yes

☒ **No**

Optional:
You can use the
International Center's
mailing address.

N52 Memorial Union
Columbia, MO 65211

I-765 Online

View draft snapshot (PDF)

I-765, Application for Employment Authorization

Getting Started ▾

About You ▾

Evidence ▾

Additional Information ▾

Review and Submit ▲

Review your application

Your application summary

Your statement

Review the I-765 form information  Print

Here is a summary of all the information you provided in your application.

Make sure you have provided responses for everything that applies to you before you submit your application. You can edit your responses by going to each application section using the site navigation.

We also prepared a draft case snapshot with your responses, which you can download below.

 [View draft snapshot](#)

Getting Started

Basis of eligibility

What is your eligibility category? c(3)(B) Student Post-Completion OPT



After completing the questions, **DO NOT** submit to USCIS. Download the draft snapshot and submit to ISSS for review.

I-765 Online

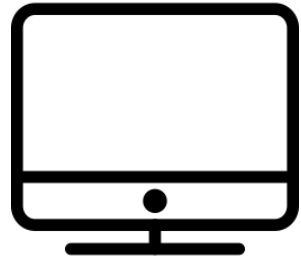
- Filing the I-765 electronically
 - > Complete form at uscis.gov/i-765
 - > Select 'view draft snapshot'
 - > Upload draft I-765 to myStatus for international student adviser review



After completing the questions, **DO NOT** submit to USCIS. Download the draft snapshot and submit to ISSS for review.

Step 2: Submit OPT request to ISSS

- Submit request in myStatus
 - > Start new request -> F-1: OPT Request
 - > Read OPT acknowledgements
 - > Read OPT fee information
 - > Complete OPT employment questionnaire
 - > Send approval verification to academic adviser
- Submit documents from step 1 in myStatus
 - > Pay \$75 OPT processing fee in myStatus



Step 2: Receive documents from ISSS

- Processing time for International Student and Scholar Services takes up to **five business days** after all required documents are submitted
- Documents provided by ISSS :
 - > New I-20 with OPT recommendation (will be uploaded to your documents in myStatus)

Before submitting your application to USCIS, please let your international student adviser know if you need to make any changes.

New I-20

- OPT starts and ends **after** the end date on your I-20
- Program end date will be adjusted to the end of the semester of your graduation

PROGRAM OF STUDY

EDUCATION LEVEL
DOCTORATE

NORMAL PROGRAM LENGTH
72 Months

PROGRAM START DATE
01 SEPTEMBER 2015

MAJOR 1
Economics, General 45.0601

PROGRAM ENGLISH PROFICIENCY
Required

PROGRAM END DATE
31 MAY 2021

MAJOR 2
None 00.0000

ENGLISH PROFICIENCY NOTES
Student is proficient



The image shows a sample I-20 form from the Department of Homeland Security, U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services. The form is titled "Form I-20, Statement of Financial Ability for Educational Purposes" and "Form I-20, Statement of Financial Ability for Educational Purposes". The form is divided into several sections, including "Personal Information", "Program Information", "Financial Information", and "Signatures". The "Program Information" section is highlighted with a red circle, and the "Program End Date" is circled in red. An arrow points from the "Program End Date" in the sample form to the "PROGRAM END DATE" in the "PROGRAM OF STUDY" table.

Section	Field	Value
Personal Information	SEVIS ID	90084705512
	CLASS	F-1
Program Information	Program Name	MAJOR 1
	Program End Date	31 MAY 2021
Financial Information	Financial Statement	Required
	Financial Statement Notes	Student is proficient

New I-20

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: [REDACTED]

NAME: [REDACTED]

EMPLOYMENT AUTHORIZATIONS

TYPE	FULL/PART-TIME	STATUS	START DATE	END DATE
POST-COMPLETION OPT	FULL TIME	REQUESTED	01 JUNE 2018	31 MAY 2019

CHANGE OF STATUS/CAP-GAP EXTENSION

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AUTHORIZED REDUCED COURSE LOAD

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CURRENT SESSION DATES

CURRENT SESSION START DATE	CURRENT SESSION END DATE
16 JANUARY 2018	11 MAY 2018

TRAVEL ENDORSEMENT

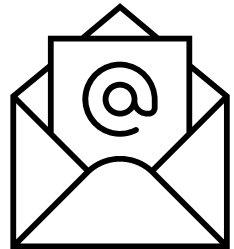
This page, when properly endorsed, may be used for re-entry of the student to attend the same school after a temporary absence from the United States. Each endorsement is valid for one year.

Designated School Official	TITLE	SIGNATURE	DATE ISSUED	PLACE ISSUED
Christine Huh	ISSS Advisor	X [Signature]	2/12/18	Columbia, Mo
		X		
		X		
		X		

Post-completion OPT
Status "Requested"

Step 3: Submit application to USCIS electronically

- Payment for \$470
- Passport-style photograph (taken recently)
- I-765 questionnaire
- Copy of new OPT I-20
- Copies of previous I-20s with CPT/OPT authorization
- Copies of I-94, visa, passport, any previous EADs



I-765 Online

I-20, Certificate Of Eligibility For Nonimmigrant Student Status

Upload a copy of the Form I-20, Certificate of Eligibility for Nonimmigrant Student Status endorsed by the Designated School Official (DSO). For the (c)(3)(B) eligibility category, your DSO must have entered the recommendation for OPT into your SEVIS record within 30 days of you submitting Form I-765. If you fail to do so, we will deny your OPT request. For the (c)(3)(C) eligibility category, the Form I-20 must have been endorsed by the DSO within 60 days of submitting Form I-765.

File requirements

- Clear and readable
- Accepted file formats: JPG, JPEG, PDF, TIF, or TIFF
- No encrypted or password-protected files
- If your documents are in a foreign language, upload a full English translation and the translator's certification with each original document.
- Accepted characters: English letters, numbers, spaces, periods, hyphens, underscores, and parentheses
- Maximum size: 6MB per file

[Choose](#) or drop files here to upload

Next

Upload OPT
Recommendation I-20

Pay for and submit your application

The final step to submit your Form I-765, Application for Employment Authorization, is to pay the required fee.

Your application fee is: **\$410.**

Refund Policy: By continuing this transaction, you agree that you are paying for a government service and that the filing fee, biometric services fee and all related financial transactions are final and not refundable, regardless of any action USCIS takes on an application, petition or request, or how long USCIS takes to reach a decision. You must submit all fees in the exact amounts.

Getting Started ▾
About You ▾
Evidence ▾
Additional Information ▾
Review and Submit ▴

Review your application
Your application summary
Your statement
Your signature
Pay and submit

We will send you to [Pay.gov](#) — our safe and secure payment website — to pay your fees and submit your form online.

Here are the steps in the payment and submission process:

1. Provide your billing information on [Pay.gov](#)
2. Provide your credit card or U.S. bank account information
3. Submit your payment

When you have paid your fee, your form will be submitted.

[Pay.gov](#) will redirect you to a [uscis.gov](#) confirmation screen, which will include your receipt number. Please keep a copy of your receipt number for your records. You can track the status of your application through your USCIS online account.

[Pay and submit](#)

\$470 application fee paid
through Pay.gov

What are the three steps to apply for OPT?

A.

1. Gather documents
2. Submit to USCIS
3. Start working

C.

1. Apply to International Center
2. Get OPT approval from International Center
3. Start working

B.

1. Gather documents
2. Submit myStatus request
3. Submit electronically to USCIS

D.

1. Apply to International Center
2. get new I-20
3. start working

Review

What are the three steps to apply for OPT?

A.

1. Gather documents
2. Submit to USCIS
3. Start working

C.

1. Apply to International Center
2. Get OPT approval from International Center
3. Start working

Review

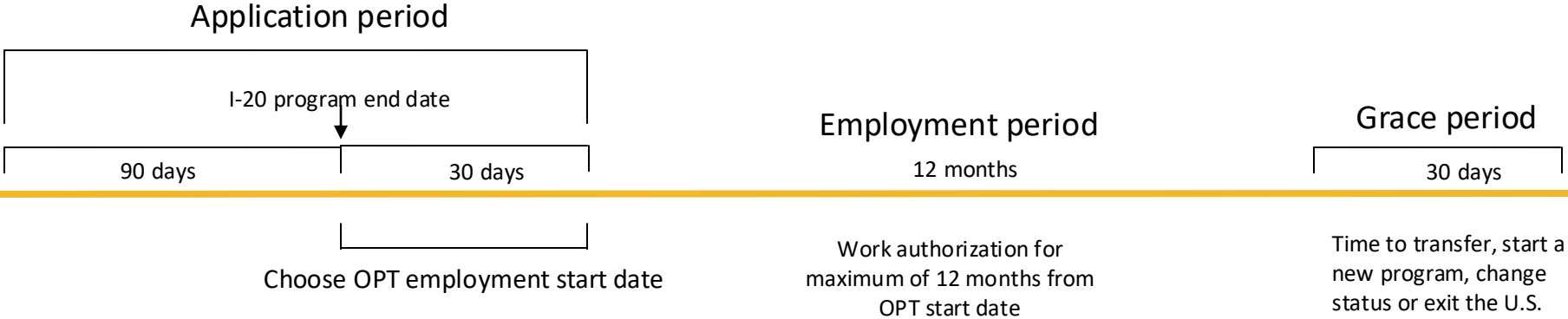
B.

1. Gather documents
2. Submit myStatus request
3. Submit electronically to USCIS

D.

1. Apply to International Center
2. get new I-20
3. start working

OPT timeline



Important dates

Key:

Dates for summer 2026 graduates

Dates for fall 2026 graduates

Dates for spring 2027 graduates

Program end date:

July 31, 2026

Dec. 18, 2026

May 14, 2027

Earliest application date

May 2, 2026

Sept. 19, 2026

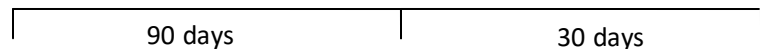
Feb. 13, 2027

Application deadline

Sept. 29, 2026

Jan. 17, 2027

June 13, 2027



Employment period

12 months

Grace period

30 days

Choose OPT employment start date between:

Aug. 1, 2026 and Sept. 29, 2026 *60 days

Dec. 19, 2026 and Jan. 17, 2027

May 15, 2027 and June 13, 2027

OPT end date between:

July 31, 2027 and Sept. 28, 2027

Dec. 18, 2027 and Jan. 16, 2028

May 14, 2028 and June 12, 2028

(depending on start date)

Application window

I-20 program end date	Earliest application date	Application deadline
July 31, 2026	May 2, 2026	Sept. 29, 2026
Dec. 18, 2026	Sept. 19, 2026	Jan. 17, 2027
May 14, 2027	Feb. 13, 2027	June 13, 2027

OPT employment start date range

I-20 program end date	Earliest start date	Latest start date
July 31, 2026	Aug. 1, 2026	Sept. 29, 2026
Dec. 18, 2026	Dec. 19, 2026	Jan. 17, 2027
May 14, 2027	May 15, 2027	June 13, 2027

Update: Final rule ending duration of status

- May impact change of major or degree level, transferring and extending time in the U.S. on F-1 and J-1 status.
 - 60-day implementation period before the rule becomes effective on Sept. 15, 2026.
 - ISSS will share further information as it becomes available.
- 
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After you apply

Department of Homeland Security
U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services

Form I-797C, Notice of Action

THIS NOTICE DOES NOT GRANT ANY IMMIGRATION STATUS OR BENEFIT.



Receipt Number 10E9507830491		Case Type I765 - APPLICATION FOR EMPLOYMENT AUTHORIZATION
Received Date 06/12/2024	Priority Date	Applicant [REDACTED]
Notice Date 06/12/2024	Page 1 of 2	
N52 MEMORIAL UN COLUMBIA MO 65211-7030		Notice Type: Receipt Notice Amount received: \$470.00 U.S. Class requested: C03B
We have received the application or petition ("your case") listed above. This notice only shows that your case was filed on the "Received Date" listed above. It does NOT grant you any immigration status or immigration benefit, and it is not evidence that your case is still pending. We will notify you in writing when we make a decision on your case or if we need additional information. Please save this and any other notices about your case for your records. You should also keep copies of anything you send us, as well as proof of delivery. Have these records available when you contact us about your case. If any of the information in your notice is incorrect or you have any questions about your case, you can connect with the USCIS Contact Center at www.uscis.gov/contactcenter or ask about your case online at www.uscis.gov/e-request. You will need your Alien Registration Number (A-Number) and/or the receipt number shown above. You can receive updates on your case by visiting www.uscis.gov/casestatus to get the latest status or you can create an account at my.uscis.gov/account and receive email updates for your case.		

- You will receive a receipt in the mail two to three weeks after your application is received by USCIS
- Check the status of your application through the USCIS website
- International student adviser cannot contact USCIS on your behalf

After USCIS receives your application

- After you apply, changing dates or withdrawing your application is **difficult** and not guaranteed
 - > Be sure about your OPT plans
 - > Talk to your international student adviser if you decide to withdraw
- You cannot cancel your OPT after your application has been approved

USCIS decisions

Approved	Rejection/denial	Request for evidence
Yay! Congratulations!	▪ Application > Received more than 90 days before program end date > Received more than 30 days after OPT recommendation > Filing online without the OPT I-20 ▪ Old or previously used photos ▪ Payment > Credit Card declined	RFE More information needed to make a decision *If you receive an RFE, please let us know

Timing tips

- Application must be received by USCIS **before** grace period ends (30-day)
 - Submit application within a timely manner
 - Apply as early as possible, even if you don't have a job yet
 - If you have a job offer, make sure you are applying at least 90 days in advance of your start date.
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Timing tips

- On-campus work authorization ends on program end date
 - There may be a gap in employment between program end date on I-20 and date OPT begins
 - If driver's license is expiring, renew before submitting your OPT documents to International Student and Scholar Services
 - If you intend to travel after graduation, you must submit your I-765 to USCIS **before** leaving the US
- 
- A decorative yellow brushstroke graphic at the bottom of the slide.

Premium processing

\$1,780 fee guarantees processing time within 30 **business** days

- I-907 can be filed together with I-765 or after I-765

Hold and Review

On Dec. 2, 2025, U.S. Citizenship & Immigration Services (USCIS) issued a policy memo that directs personnel to:

- Place a hold on pending benefits for individuals from the 19 countries identified in Presidential proclamation 10949
 - For students and scholars from the 19 affected countries, benefits processed by USCIS are currently on hold. Although not expressly addressed in the policy memo, this may include, but is not limited to, applications for work authorization (e.g., OPT and STEM OPT, J-2 work authorization).
 - Any additional updates regarding this announcement will be posted on our [Insights page](#).
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- A decorative yellow brushstroke graphic at the bottom of the slide.

Maintaining status on OPT

Maintaining F-1 status on OPT

- You are still in **F-1 student status** with the University of Missouri and using a benefit of that status
 - F-1 status is maintained through employment (not through enrollment)
 - Your I-20 is still valid — the second page shows OPT dates even though the first page program end date has passed
 - You can sign up for insurance through United Healthcare while on OPT, but it is not automatically applied unless you are enrolled in MU courses
- 
- A decorative yellow brushstroke graphic at the bottom of the slide.

Maintaining F-1 status on OPT

- Employment can be paid or unpaid
- Must work **21 hours** or more each week
- Can switch employers
- Can work for multiple employers
- Can take part-time incidental courses, but cannot start another academic program
 - > Recreational or vocational and courses for interest or fun are allowed
- Allowed 90 days of unemployment
 - > From start date on approved EAD card. Does not include pending application time

Maintaining F-1 status on OPT

- Update myStatus within 10 days of:
 - > Moving to a new address
 - Start new request -> F-1 OPT/STEM: U.S. Address Update
 - > Finding employment or switching employers
 - Start new request -> F-1: Add OPT Employer
 - > Ending employment
 - Start new request -> F-1: Edit OPT Employer
- If employment is not reported within 90 days from OPT start date, your SEVIS record will be automatically terminated

Maintaining F-1 status on OPT

- SEVP Portal updates:
 - > You may update the SEVP Portal with employment information
 - You must still let us know so we can issue new I-20
 - > You must update myStatus with employment
 - We will update SEVP information to issue new I-20



Maintaining F-1 status on OPT

- You can only begin working on the approved start date and once your EAD card arrives
 - > If your EAD card is approved after your requested start date, the start and end dates will be adjusted to give you the full benefit of your authorized period of employment
- You can stay in the U.S. while your OPT application is pending

What is your status while on OPT?

Review

A.

OPT

B.

H-1B

C.

F-1

D.

J-1

What is your status while on OPT?

Review

A.

OPT

B.

H-1B

C.

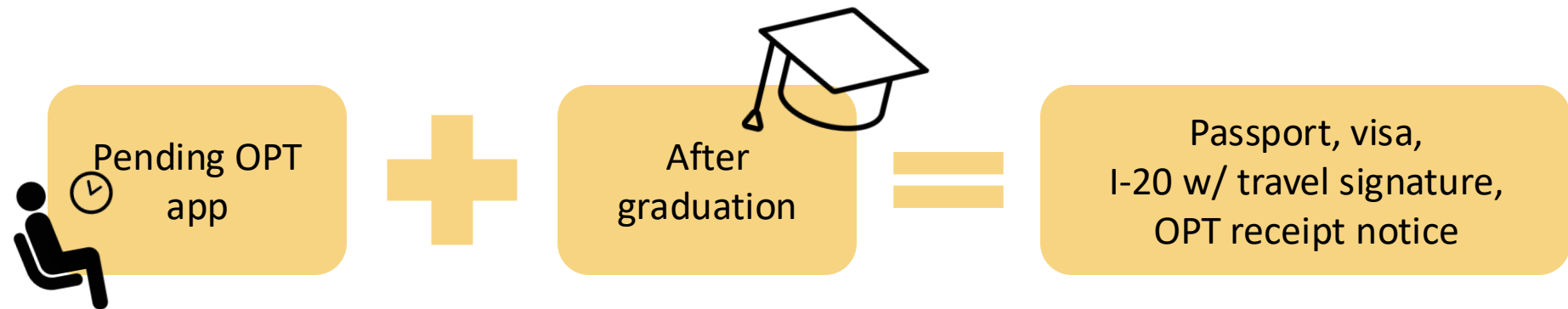
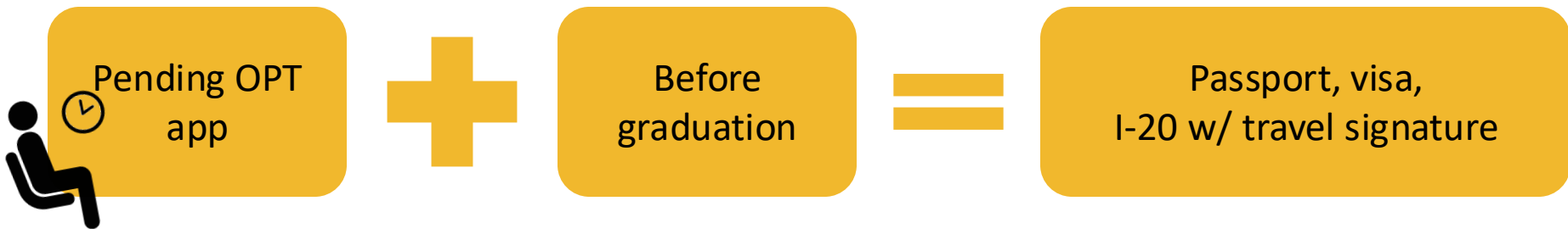
F-1

D.

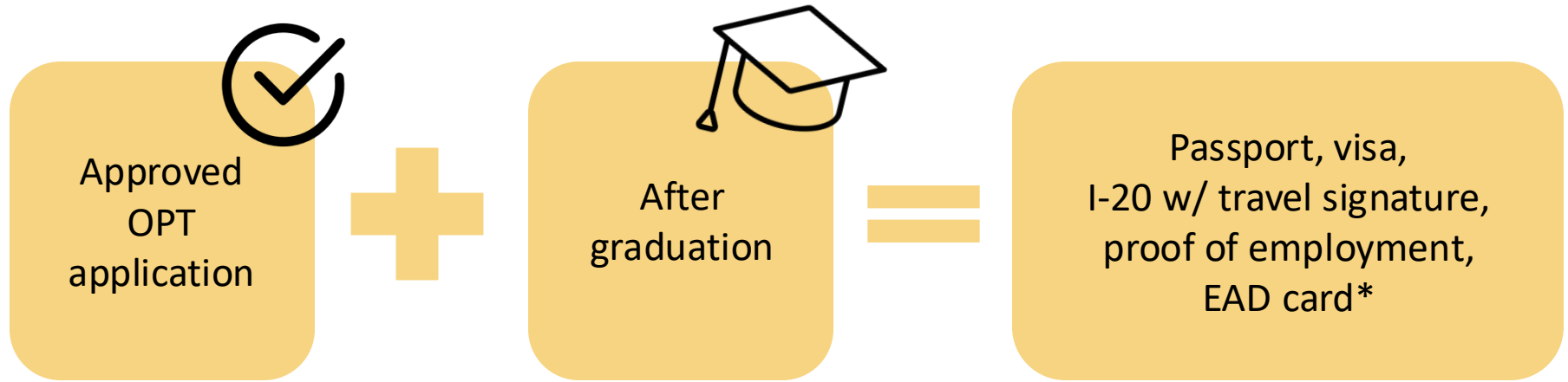
J-1

Travel information

Travel with pending application



Travel with approved application



*EAD card is not valid for re-entry by itself. After approval, you must have a job in order to re-enter the U.S.



Who should you tell when you get a new job?

Review

A.

USCIS

B.

Your best friend

C.

**MU International
Student and
Scholar Services**

D.

**Your academic
adviser**

Who should you tell when you get a new job?

Review

A.

USCIS

B.

Your best friend

C.

**MU International
Student and
Scholar Services**

D.

**Your academic
adviser**

When should you update them?

Review

A.

Today

B.

Within 10 days

C.

**Within one
month**

D.

**As soon as you
accept the job**

When should you update them?

Review

A.

Today

B.

Within 10 days

C.

**Within one
month**

D.

**As soon as you
accept the job**

After initial OPT

STEM OPT extension

- Eligibility:

- > Your degree is in STEM-qualifying field
- > You are working in a **paid** position related to your major
 - You can work for multiple employers, but **each** must be more than 20 hours/week
- > Your employer is registered with the **E-Verify** employment verification system

Application for 24-month STEM extension

- Must apply **before** initial OPT period ends
 - > As early as 90 days before the end of current OPT EAD
 - > No grace period to apply
 - > Can attend optional workshop or review STEM OPT slides
- Log in to myStatus to request OPT STEM extension
 - > Some additional documents needed, so review [online checklist](#)

H-1B cap-gap extension

- Eligibility: F-1 students working on OPT who have:
 - > An OPT work authorization end date between April 1 and Sept. 30 or April 1 must fall within your OPT grace period
 - > An employer who has filed a timely H-1B petition for you with a start date of Oct. 1
 - > Any major is eligible for H-1B; not restricted to STEM students
- Have questions? Consult with your employer who is filing the H-1B petition

MU Career Center

career.missouri.edu

CONTACT

(573) 882-6801

career@missouri.edu
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CAREER EXPLORATION

Assessments

Major/Career Resources

Career Specialist Consultation

CAREER READINESS

Resume & Cover Letters

Interviews

LinkedIn Profiles

Job Search Strategies



Connect with the MU Career Center here:



Career Center
University of Missouri

M-F 9am-4pm

Student Success Center, Lower Level



Questions?

- International Student and Scholar Services website: international.missouri.edu/iss
- **Jillian Collins:** collinsjk@missouri.edu
- **Kim Adams:** kimberlyadams@missouri.edu
 - > All sponsored students
- **Kristen Carranza:** carranzak@missouri.edu
 - > Last names starting with A-D
- **Daniel Rodriguez:** daniel.rodriguez@missouri.edu
 - > Last names starting with E–N
- **Mo Whitley:** whitleymo@missouri.edu
 - > Last names starting with O–Z

