

F-1 Post-Completion Practical Training (OPT)

International Student and Scholar Services (ISSS)
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UConn

What is Post-Completion OPT?

Post Completion



AFTER you complete
your degree

Optional Practical Training

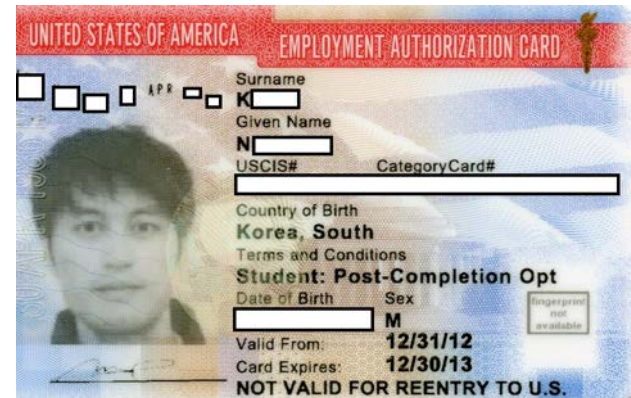


Temporary authorization
to gain training in your field
(Work Authorization)

You will be able to work in the U.S. for 12 months
after you have completed your degree with a valid **EAD**.

What is an EAD?

- Employment Authorization Document.
- Issued by U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services.



12 Month Standard OPT

Two Types:

Post-Completion OPT

If you are completely finished with your degree.

Post-Completion with Thesis Pending

If your thesis has not been submitted yet, you can still begin OPT as “Thesis Pending.”

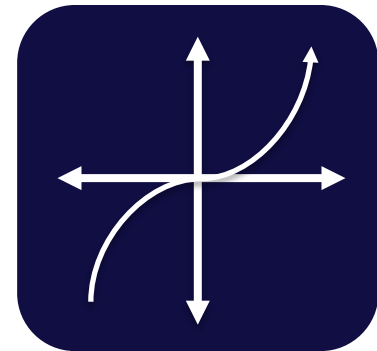
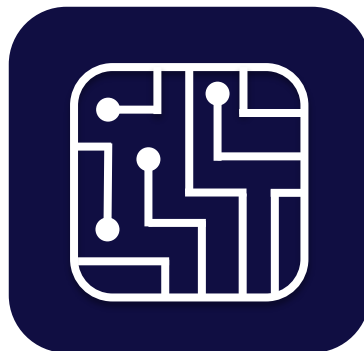
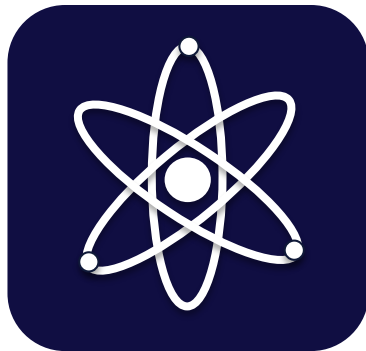
How do you know which you are?

But what if I want to work
more than 1 year?
Can I?

Maybe! – See OPT
Extensions Presentation

OPT Extension #1: STEM OPT Extension

**Did you receive your degree in a STEM field?
(Science, Technology, Engineering, Math)**



**You may be eligible to apply
for a
24-Month OPT Extension!**

OPT Extension #2: Cap Gap OPT

An extension of your OPT that may occur if your employer files a petition on your behalf for an H-1B visa.

How do I start
Post- Completion OPT?

Standard Post-Completion OPT Eligibility Requirements

Required

- Must have been **enrolled FULL-TIME** for at least one academic year
- Employment must be in **field of study** & appropriate to level of education
- Employment must be **full-time (20+ hours/week)**
- Takes place after completion of **ALL degree requirements**
- One 12 month period for each academic program; combined **pre- and post-completion time**

Not Required

- Job offer is **not required** to apply

Not Eligible

- Had **full-time CPT for 12 months**

Standard Post-Completion OPT Eligibility Requirements...Thesis Pending

Required

- Must be MS Plan A or PhD student
- Completed all course requirements and are working only on the thesis/ dissertation
- May not have a Graduate Assistantship

Pre-Completion and Post-Completion Options

May apply for full time OPT as either pre-completion or post-completion.

Talk to ISSS advisor to determine which is better for you.

Standard Post-Completion OPT Eligibility Requirements

90 Days Unemployed Rule

You may have cumulative 90 days of unemployment while on Post-Completion OPT

HOWEVER...

Unpaid internships can be counted as “employment” (as long as it’s more than 20 hours/week) and must be directly related to your field of study.

You must get a letter from your internship site to prove your engagement as there is no pay stub or job offer letter.

How do I apply?

Applying for OPT

STEP 1: Apply with ISSS (School)

1. Complete Form I-765
2. Complete Practical Training Application Form (ISSS 357)
3. Full-Time enrollment certification for your entire time at UConn (Registrar's Office)
4. Receipt for Payment of Post-OPT SEVIS Maintenance Fee (\$150)

Submit these forms to ISSS in person or by email

THEN

Up to two weeks later,
you will receive a new I-20
from ISSS with:

1. Updated degree completion date
2. OPT Recommendation

Applying for OPT

STEP 2: Apply with USCIS (Government)

1. Original **Form I-765**
2. Photocopy of the **new I-20** with OPT recommendations
3. Photocopies of **all previous I-20's**
4. 2 recent passport style **photos**
5. Photocopy of your **most recent visa**
6. Photocopy of your **passport** ID page
(must be valid at least 6 months into the future)
7. Form **I-94** printout or copy of I-94 card (Canada)
8. Photocopy of previous Employment Authorization Documents (**EAD**)
9. Personal check to U.S. Department of Homeland Security for **\$410**

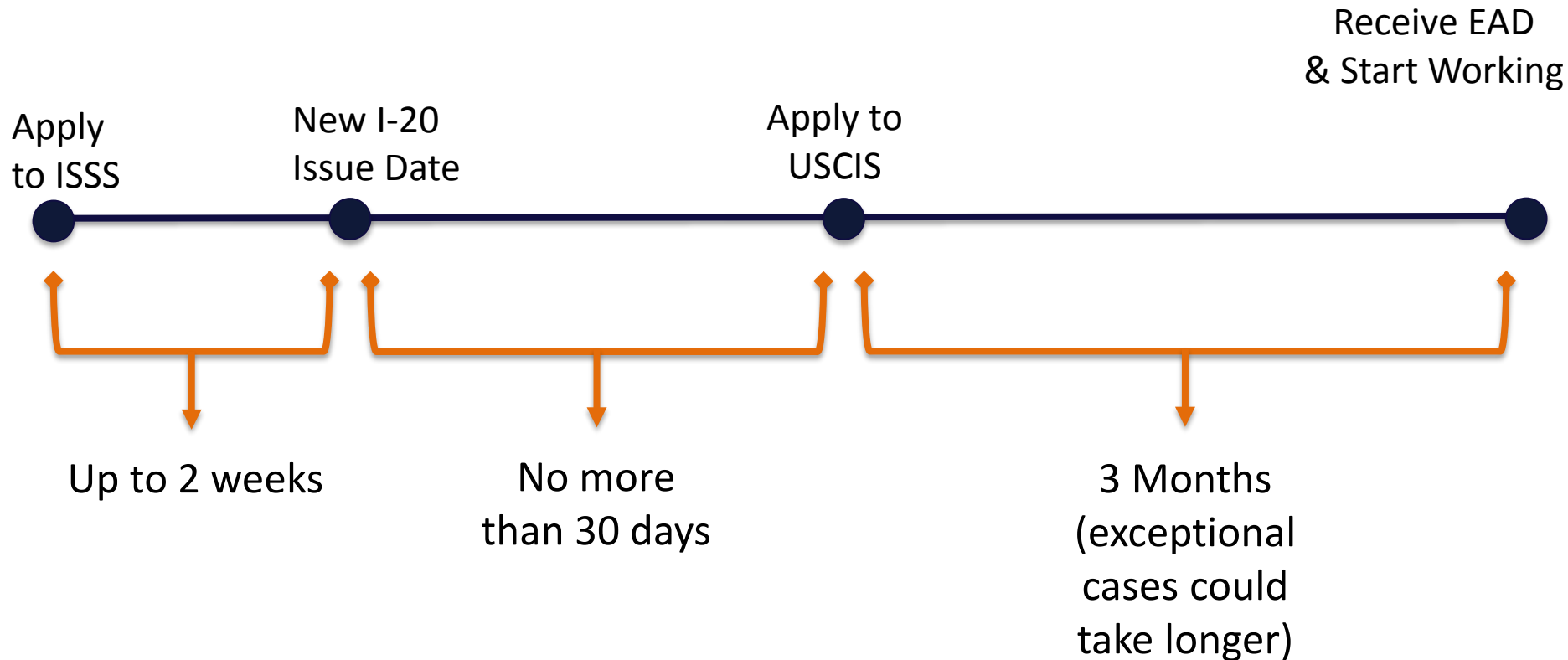
Mail these forms to USCIS within **30 days** of your new I-20.
Late applications will be rejected!

IMPORTANT:

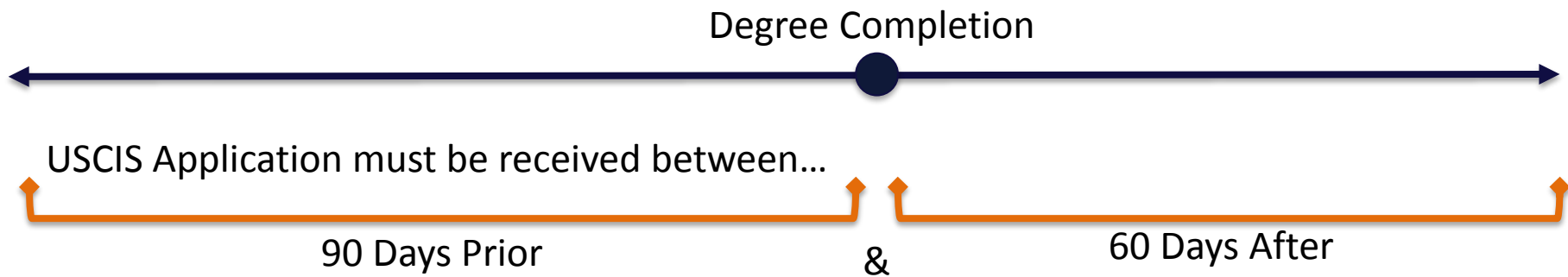
You **MUST** be in the U.S. when
you apply for OPT to USCIS!!!

When should I apply?

Application Time Line



When to Apply



PLUS...

Once you apply to USCIS it can take

3 months or even longer to receive an answer.

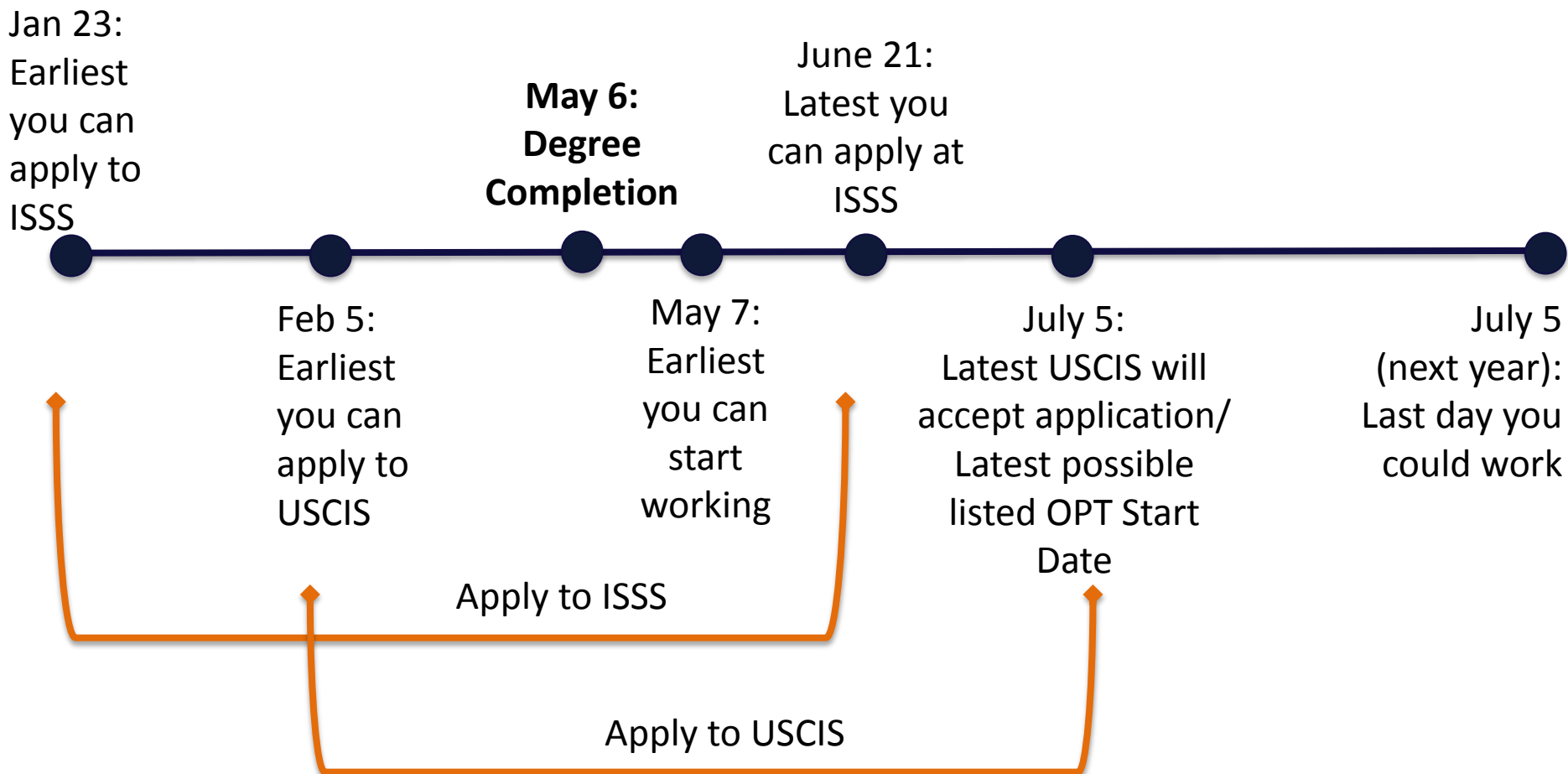
When to Start Working

Post-completion OPT may start any time during the 60 day grace period after degree completion and must end within 14 months of degree completion date.

When completing the application with ISSS (Part #1), **you** will have to pick a start and end date.

Wait, that's a lot of dates.
I'm still confused?

Example Timeline



Degree Completion Date

Undergraduate & Plan B Master's Student

Last date of the semester that you complete all degree requirements
(This is typically graduation day in May, August, or December)

OR

Master's Exam Results Date

Plan A Master's & PhD Students

Date that you finish and submit your thesis/dissertation to the Graduate School

Students with Graduate Assistantships: If you submit the final Thursday of the semester or later, your GA offer letter end date will be the program completion date and you can complete the GA.

How will that affect my
on campus employment?

On Campus Employment

F-1 Regulation: Your work at UCONN is based on the on-campus employment benefit for F-1 full-time students.

THEREFORE

1. You will no longer be allowed to work on-campus after your degree completion date.

2. GA-ships: You may be allowed to complete your GA-ship, but if you finish your program before the final Thursday of the semester, you will need to separate from your GA employment.

On Campus Employment



If you are engaged in any employment without appropriate authorization, you will be considered to have violated your F-1 status.

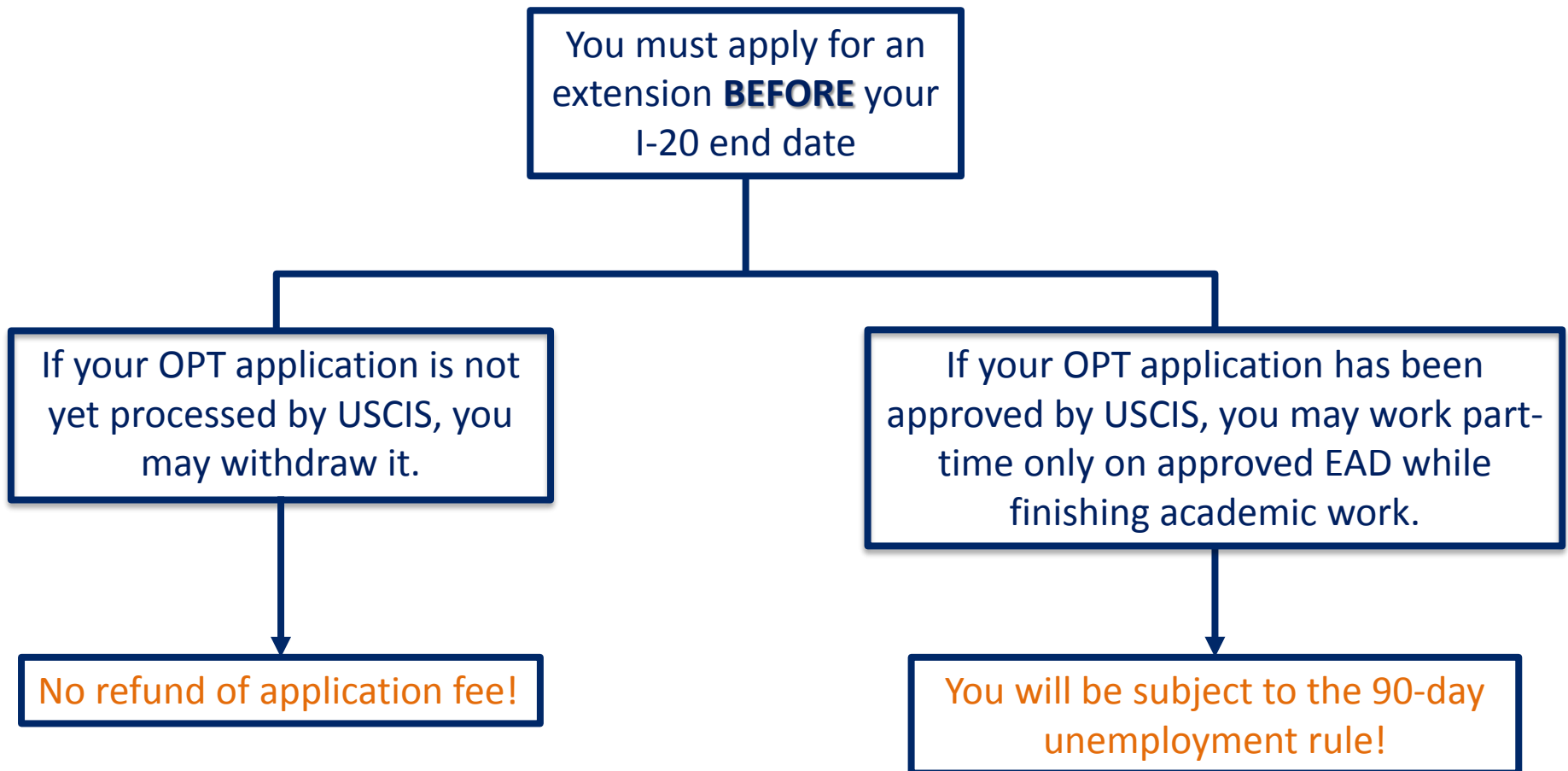
Unauthorized employment is one
of the most severe violations!

What happens if I apply for OPT
but don't complete my degree
as planned by
the I-20 end date?

Am I in Trouble?

Scenario #1

IF your I-20 has NOT yet expired:



Am I in Trouble?

Scenario #2 – Plan A Masters & PhD

IF your I-20 has NOT expired:

You can extend your I-20 to your OPT start Date and switch to “Thesis Pending” as long as you have completed your course requirements.

Thesis-Pending
Regulations

1. Cannot hold on-campus student job
2. Are subject to the 90-day unemployment rule
3. Must work full-time
4. Can apply for OPT STEM extension
5. Are eligible for H-1B Cap Gap Extension

Am I in Trouble?

Scenario #2 – Plan A Masters & PhD

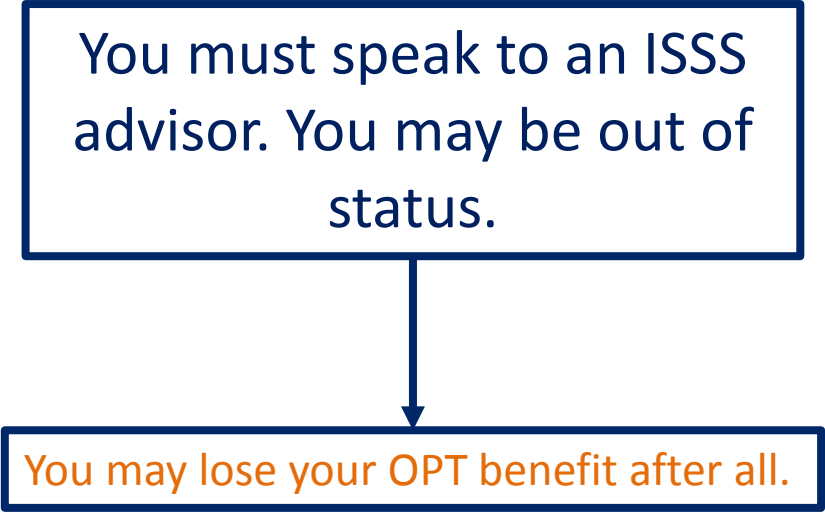
You **MUST** submit your dissertation as soon as possible, **at latest by your OPT end date**. If you don't do so, you cannot extend program and your F-1 status will be **terminated**.

Am I in Trouble?

Scenario #3 – Undergrads & Plan B Masters

IF your I-20 HAS expired:

You must speak to an ISSS advisor. You may be out of status.



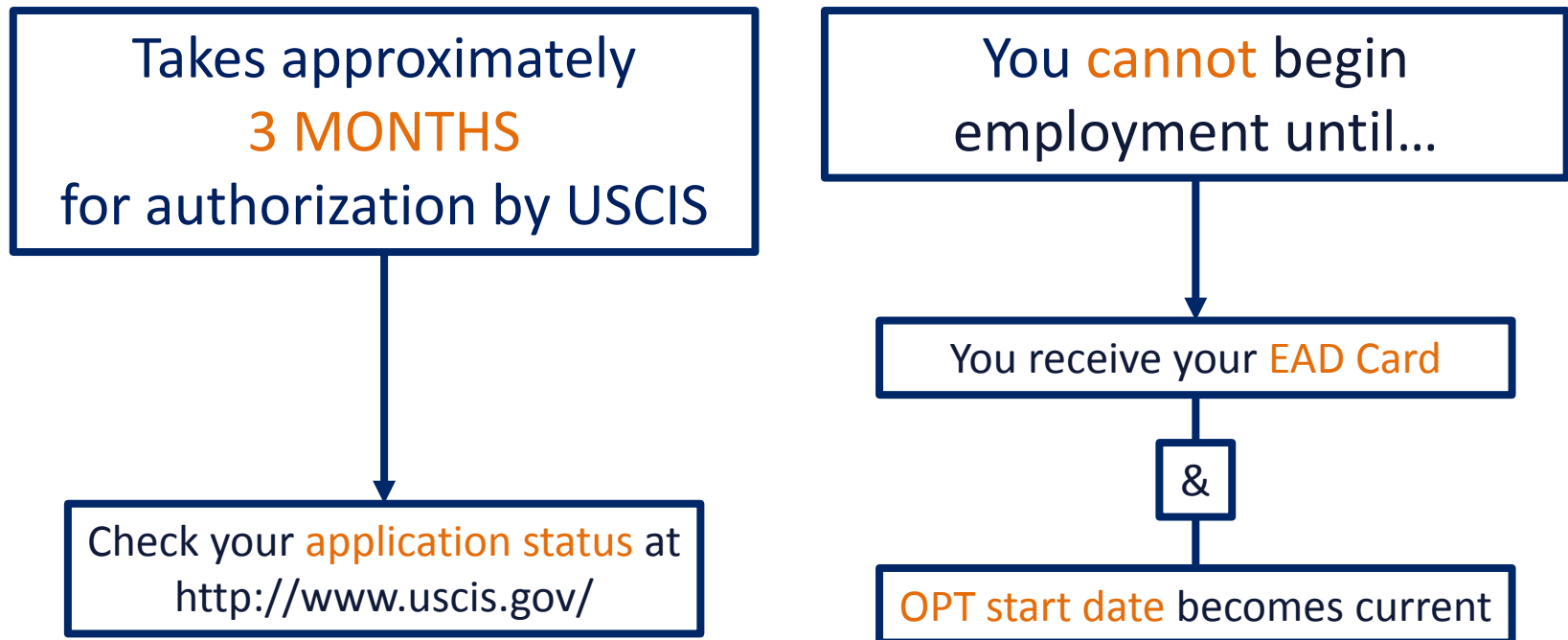
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graph TD; A["You must speak to an ISSS advisor. You may be out of status."] --> B["You may lose your OPT benefit after all."]
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You may lose your OPT benefit after all.

What should I know
when applying?

Key Points to Consider

TIMING



Key Points to Consider

TRAVELING

International travel is **NOT** recommended while on Post-Completion OPT

UNLESS

You are employed in your field of study & have a valid F-1 VISA

If you travel on OPT, you must have the following to reenter the country:

1. **Valid Passport:** Valid 6 months into the future at time of reentry
2. **Valid VISA:** Can be difficult to renew your visa while on OPT
3. **I-20 with OPT recommendation and current travel signature**
4. **Valid EAD**
5. **Employment verification letter:** Must be in field of study

Do I need to do anything
while on OPT?

Reporting Requirements for Standard OPT

OPT Information Form (ISSS 345)

All students on 12-Month OPT are
required to report any change of...

ADDRESS

Please update within
10 days from the move

NAME

Provide a copy of
official documents
to prove the change
Example: Passport

EMPLOYER

Name and Address
of Employer
&
Employment status
or interruptions

Reporting Requirements for Standard OPT

All changes should be
reported through the
ISSS Website

Go to
[ISSS.uconn.edu](https://issss.uconn.edu)

Click on
“Submit Your OPT
Employment Information”

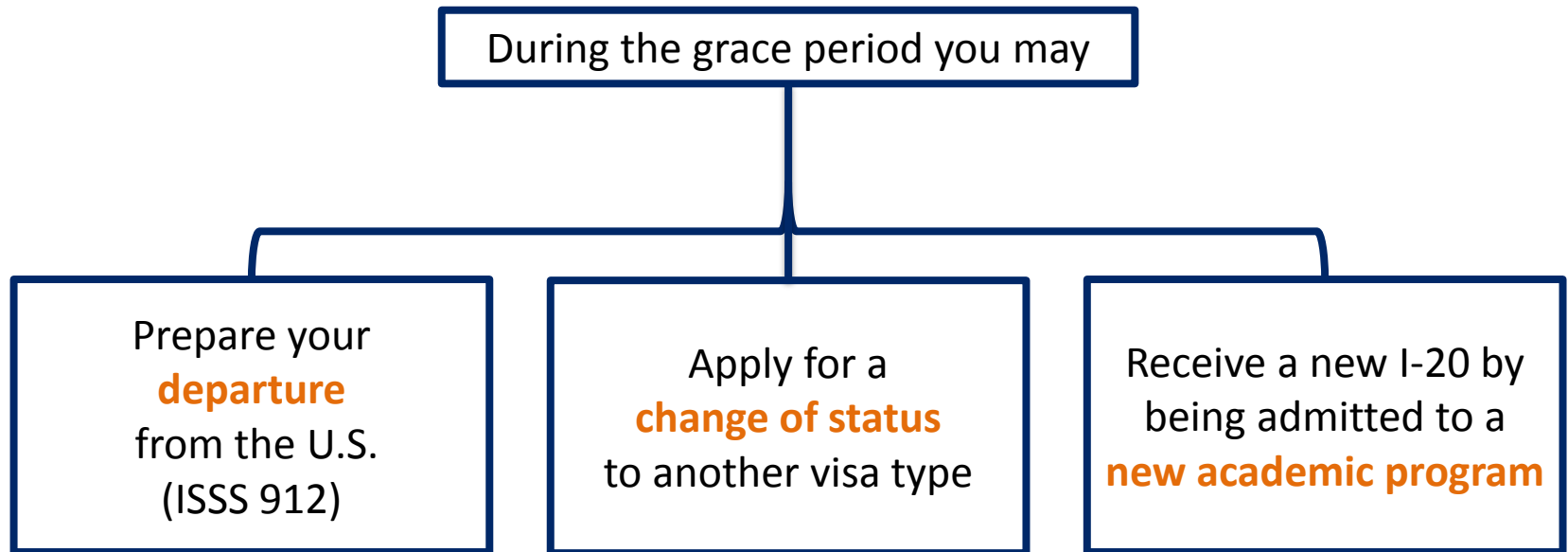
Follow the prompts

The screenshot shows the ISSS website interface. At the top, the UConn logo and navigation menu are visible. Below the header is a large banner image of students performing. The main content area features several service tiles. The 'OPT Information Form' tile, which includes the text 'Submit Your OPT Employment Information', is highlighted with an orange circle. Other visible tiles include 'Request I-20/DS-2019', 'STEM OPT New Ruling Overview', 'Walk-in Advising Schedule', 'Check In', and 'Update Your Local Address'.

What happens when
OPT ends?

60-Day Grace Period

You will have a **60-day grace period** after your OPT expires, meaning you will be able to stay in the U.S. for 60 days.



Your F-1 Status ends on your departure date or on the 60th day of your grace period, whichever is earlier, unless you receive a new I-20 for a new program.

Contact Information

Undergraduate CLAS Students

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Undergraduate students (all other schools), Pharm D

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Graduate Engineering Students

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