

Choosing a start date for OPT

You are allowed to choose a start date any time within the 60 days following your graduation date or your last day of registration (whichever is earlier). There are many overlapping time constraints which affect your OPT application (see OPT timeline illustrated below). When choosing the start date for your OPT card, the most important priorities to weigh are:

1. Choose the earliest day that you might want to start working (you cannot begin working BEFORE the start date on the EAD card and until you receive the card). What if someone offers you a job with the stipulation that you start the day after graduation? Plan for any possibility.

[PLEASE NOTE: on-campus work authorization ends when your registration ends, so if you want to continue in an on-campus job once you are no longer registered, that job must be in your field, and you must have received your EAD card.]

2. If you want the latest possible day to start your work authorization, the latest day you may choose as your start date for the OPT card is 60 days after your graduation or last day of registration (whichever is earlier).

REMEMBER: You may NOT change these dates after you apply for OPT.

