

Purpose: To purposely plan the application of your OPT to best utilize the time given.

1. Attend an OPT workshop at least four months prior to the last day of your final quarter of registration.
2. Determine which will be your final quarter of registration* and choose your OPT start date. The OPT start date must fall within 60 days of your I-20 expiration date.
3. Submit your OPT application to the IO for 4-5 day processing not to be returned any earlier than 90 days before your I-20 end date.

If your final quarter of registration is...	And your I-20 currently expires on, or will expire on...	You can choose an OPT start date as early as...	Or you can choose an OPT start date as late as...
Summer 2009	8/28/2009	8/29/2009	10/27/2009
	8/29/2009	8/30/2009	10/28/2009
Fall 2009	12/11/2009	12/12/2009	2/9/2010
	12/12/2009	12/13/2009	2/10/2010
Winter 2010	03/19/2010	03/20/2010	5/18/2010
	03/20/2010	03/21/2010	5/19/2010

4. Within four weeks of mailing your application to USCIS you will receive a Receipt Notice containing an application receipt number. Use this number to track the status of your application at www.uscis.gov.
5. OPT processing time at USCIS is approximately three to four months. This is approximate; it can often take longer to receive the EAD card. For up to date processing times visit the current *Processing Times* section at www.uscis.gov.
6. Within the current USCIS processing time your EAD card should arrive at the address listed on your Form I-765.

***TGS students only:**

All (TGS) doctoral students and master's students must be registered at Northwestern University in each of the fall, winter and spring terms until all degree requirements have been completed. Summer term registration is required for students receiving funding and for international students in the last quarter of registration.

Students are considered having completed all degree requirements when they:

- Successfully defend the dissertation;
- Submit the dissertation to the graduate school and receive approval from The Graduate School;
- Submit all accompanying documents (Application for Degree form, Approved Final Exam form, NRC Survey of Earned Doctorates, change of grade forms).

Once all degree requirements have been completed, students are considered "complete" and may not register for any subsequent quarters. Students who finish all degree requirements during the first week of any quarter are not required to register for that quarter.

Please contact TGS Student Services for further registration information.