

Here are some important notes from the Fall 2021 MEM and MEng information session:

- You may submit your post-completion OPT application beginning October 1st. However, the Department of Homeland Security will be releasing a new version of the Form I-765 on October 2nd, and Duke Visa Services recommends checking the [USCIS website](#) for this latest version and using that in your application.
- The Form I-765 can now be submitted electronically. Duke Visa Services has not gone through the electronic submission process before, but they can assist you with completing the Form I-765 and assembling application documents.
- To obtain a recommendation letter for your application, you may request one from me by emailing me at kelsey.liddle@duke.edu. Before I can provide the letter you must first apply for graduation in DukeHub. The deadline to apply for Fall 2021 graduation is October 15th.
- The official graduation date for Fall graduates is December 30, 2021.
- The earliest start date you could list on your EAD is December 31, 2021.
- Students with an F-1 visa have a 60-day grace period after graduation where they may stay in the U.S. The last day of this grace period for Fall 2021 graduates is February 28, 2022.
- The latest you may apply for post-completion OPT is within the 60-day grace period. Visa Services recommends not waiting until the very end of the grace period to submit your application.
- It may take 3-4 months for your application to be processed, so use your best judgment to decide when you will apply.
- You must be physically present in the U.S. to apply for OPT.
- You must have completed 2 consecutive semesters of full-time study in the U.S. to be eligible for OPT. If you go on a leave and are outside the U.S. for 5 months or more, you will need to complete 2 more semesters of full-time enrollment to become eligible for OPT.
- Even if you arrived to the U.S. late in the semester, as long as you were enrolled full-time for that semester it may be counted toward your OPT eligibility.
- Use a bank check or a money order to pay the application fee rather than a personal check.
- Duke Visa Services recommends visiting FedEx for the 2 photos required for the application.
- You can use electronic copies of your I-20 for the application, but include all pages.
- You do not need to have a job offer to apply for OPT. However, if you receive OPT and are not employed within 90 days of your EAD start date, your OPT will be revoked.
- Once you do receive a job offer, your employer will need to provide a description of your job and how it relates to your field of study. Details on what information the employer needs to provide are available on the [Duke Visa Services website](#).
- Your employer can help with your I-9 form. Duke Visa Services cannot help with this unless you are working for Duke.
- Duke Visa Services recommends maintain evidence of each job you do through OPT, such as job title, employer name, employment dates, etc.
- You should update your address information after leaving Duke through the [Duke Visa Services website](#), not through DukeHub.
- Applications are not processed more quickly if you list an earlier start date.
- While your OPT application is pending you can remain in the U.S., but that time will be deducted from the 12 months allotted for work through OPT. If you leave the U.S. before your OPT begins, you will need your EAD and a valid visa to re-enter.

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- Visa Services recommends visiting the website <https://studyinthestates.dhs.gov/> if you would like a guide to filling out forms.
- If you want to get a head start on compiling your OPT application materials, contact Betty Henderson at betty.henderson@duke.edu.

Thank you,
Kelsey

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