

Here are some important notes from the Fall 2021 MS and PhD information session:

- You may submit your post-completion OPT application beginning October 1<sup>st</sup>. However, the Department of Homeland Security will be releasing a new version of the Form I-765 on October 2<sup>nd</sup>, 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 can assist you with completing the Form I-765 and assembling application documents. Duke Visa Services also recommends waiting to submit your application through Terra Dotta (TDS) until you have contacted them. Students can access the TDS Portal via this link [https://tds.visaservices.duke.edu/index.cfm?FuseAction=Students.Apply&Program\\_ID=10007&RequiredProfile=1](https://tds.visaservices.duke.edu/index.cfm?FuseAction=Students.Apply&Program_ID=10007&RequiredProfile=1).
- To obtain a recommendation letter for your application, MS students may request one from me by emailing me at [kelsey.liddle@duke.edu](mailto:kelsey.liddle@duke.edu). PhD students can contact their program coordinators:
  - BME: Danielle Giles, [danielle.giles@duke.edu](mailto:danielle.giles@duke.edu)
  - CEE: Ruby Nell Carpenter, [rubync@duke.edu](mailto:rubync@duke.edu)
  - ECE: Angela Chanh, [angela.chanh@duke.edu](mailto:angela.chanh@duke.edu)
  - MEMS: Michell Tampe, [michell.tampe@duke.edu](mailto:michell.tampe@duke.edu)
  - MatSci: Katie Krieger, [katie.krieger@duke.edu](mailto:katie.krieger@duke.edu)
- Before recommendation letters can be provided you must first apply for graduation in DukeHub. The deadline to apply for Fall 2021 graduation is October 15<sup>th</sup>.
- The official graduation date for Fall graduates is December 30, 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 can leave the U.S. and re-enter with no change of documents before December 30, 2021.
- 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 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 and report your employment, your OPT will be revoked.
- If you are approved for OPT after the EAD start date you requested in your application, then your official EAD start date will be the date that you were approved for OPT.

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- 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](#).
- Engineering students are eligible for the STEM extension. Applications for the STEM extension should be submitted before the EAD end date.
- Your degree program's CIP code is noted on your I-20.
- There is a 60-day grace period after the end of OPT for graduates to exit the U.S. or change status.
- Duke Visa Services recommends you 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. You will need to update your address within 10 days of your employment start date.
- Applications are not processed more quickly if you list an earlier start date. The OPT application process cannot be expedited.
- If you are interested in only applying for the H-1B visa and not OPT, you can work with your employer to apply.
- You may list Duke Visa Services' office address as the mailing address in your OPT application. This is recommended if you know that you will move after you submit your application.
- 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.
- Visa Services recommends visiting the website <https://studyinthestates.dhs.gov/> if you would like a guide to filling out forms.
- The visa advisor for CEE MS and PhD students is Francois Masuka, [francois.masuka@duke.edu](mailto:francois.masuka@duke.edu).
- The visa advisor for BME, ECE, MEMS and MatSci MS and PhD students is Pamela Billie, [pamela.billie@duke.edu](mailto:pamela.billie@duke.edu).

Thank you,  
Kelsey

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