Post-OPT Empowerpoint Overview

Introduction

- OPT Application = 2 steps.
- Your OPT application is one of many at both the ISSO and at USCIS.
- They are processed in the order they are received. Takes USCIS an average of 90 days.
- You can’t control how long the process takes, job offers, or the rules.
- You have the power to make this process easy!

Three Tips to Maximize Your Post-OPT Success

Tip 1: Apply Early
- Apply 90 days before your program end date.
- There are many benefits to applying early -- logistics, well-being, and travel.
- Don’t Procrastinate! The later you apply, the higher the risk of potential problems.
- You do not need a job offer to apply for Post-Completion OPT! Even if you have a job offer, it won’t speed up the process at all.

Tip 2: Choose a start date and stick with it!
- The start date is where you begins. You can’t submit an OPT application without it.
- You have to choose your OPT start date within the 60 days following your program end date.
- You can’t change your start date once your application has been submitted.
- Consider all factors when deciding your start date: Do you have a job offer? Do you want to travel? Unemployment time?
- Watch our short video for some helpful hints: https://isso.columbia.edu/.
- Video takeaways: There's not one right answer on the “best start date” -- you choose a date that's best for you within a range. Choose your date wisely and be OK with your choice!

Tip 3: Use ISSO website and trust it
- Trust ISSO. Your friends don’t always have the right answer.
- Use our website. Everything you need is here: http://bit.ly/optemployment
- The ISSO website is reliable and up to date.
- Website is 24/7 and is mobile friendly.
- Web topics: Eligibility, Types of Employment, How to Apply, Mailing Instructions, Sample forms, & Travel
- After you get your EAD continue to use our website to stay informed and report OPT updates.

Helpful Information

Post-OPT Links
- ISSO Homepage: https://isso.columbia.edu/

Terms
- **Optional Practical Training (OPT)** = Allows you to remain in the U.S. in F-1 status after you complete your academic program with permission to work in your field of study.
- **Employment Authorization Document (EAD)** = Card showing OPT approval and dates needed to begin legal employment in the U.S. Can take USCIS 90 days or more to process.