



# Salve Regina University

OPTIONAL PRACTICAL TRAINING: OPT Basics



# What is OPT?

- OPT stands for “Optional Practical Training.”
- OPT is a 12-month work authorization granted by U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) for off-campus work directly related to your course of study.

# Who can Apply for OPT?

- F-1 Student who has:
  - Maintained valid F-1 status
  - Studied full-time for at least one academic year in the U.S.
  - Must be physically present in the U.S. in order to apply
  - NOT have used more than 1 year of full-time CPT during their current degree level (part-time does not count).
  - NOTE: A job offer is NOT needed to apply for OPT



# How Long Can I Be on OPT?

- Total of 12 months of full-time OPT work authorization per degree level
- STEM ( Science Technology Engineering Math) Fields: 12 months + maybe eligible for an additional 24 months

# When can I use OPT?

- OPT can be used during or immediately following a course of study.
  - During course of study = **pre-completion OPT**
  - After course of study = **post-completion OPT**
  - Or a combination of the two ( pre and post) that does not exceed a total of 12 months.

# What Type of Employment?

- Must be directly related to field of study
- Full time or Part time (20 hours per week)
- Pre-completion OPT:
  - Must be part time during the semester
  - May be full time during summer and breaks
- Post-completion OPT:
  - Must be full time ( over 20 hours a week)



# What counts as “employment” on OPT

- The types of employment allowed during the initial 12-month period of OPT include (these DO NOT apply to the STEM Extension):
- **Paid employment.**
- **Multiple employers.**
- **Short-term multiple employers (performing artists).**
- **Work for hire (commonly referred to as "1099 employment"). Self-employed business owner.**
- **Employment through an agency.**
- **Unpaid employment.**



# What visa status do I have while I am waiting for OPT and while working on OPT?

- During your pending OPT application and after the OPT approval by USCIS, F-1 students will remain in F-1 status under the I-20 sponsorship of Salve Regina.
- OPT is a benefit of your F-1 status and extends your ability to remain in the United States for the purpose of seeking employment in your field of study. This means that you will continue to use your Salve Regina OPT I-20 and F-1 documents to travel and you will still need to get fresh travel signatures from Salve (every 6 months).





# The Application Process

Step 1: Recommendation	Step 2: Applying to USCIS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Bring application materials to the Office of International Programs</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Mail the application to USCIS</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Obtain a new I-20 from Salve's OIP</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• USCIS must receive the application within 30 days of the date that your new I-20 is issued</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Be ready to file application with USCIS when you request your OPT I-20</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Approval Time: Up to 90 days</li></ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Receive Employment Authorization Document (EAD) in the mail. Now you can start working.</li></ul>



# When should I Apply?

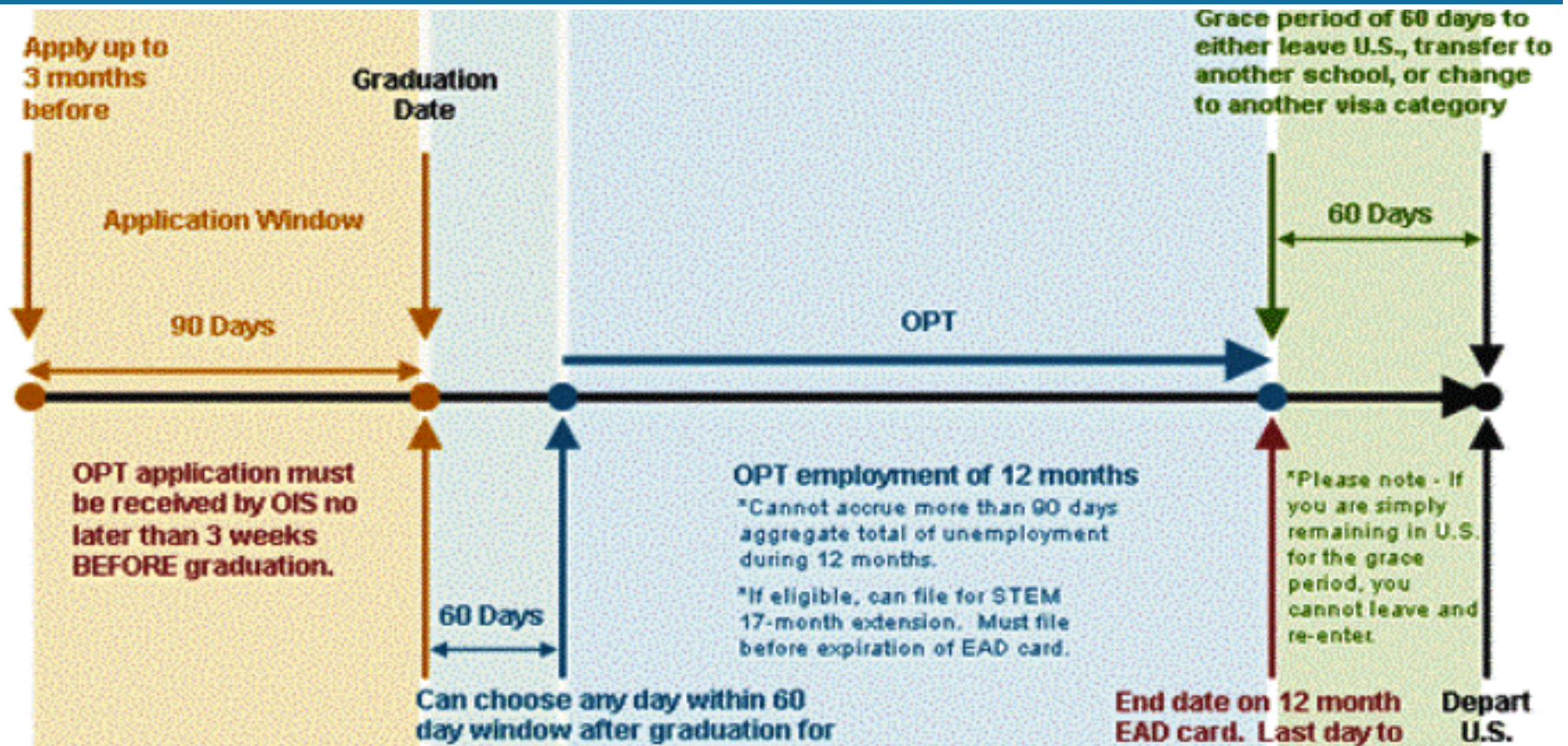
## ➤ Pre-completion OPT

- Eligible to apply 90 days before proposed start date of employment.

## ➤ Post-completion OPT

- Eligible to apply no earlier than 90 days before the program completion date on your I-20.
- No more than 60 days after the program completion date on your I-20 and within 30 days of the issue date on your OPT I-20

# General Timeline



# How do I Apply?

- Watch the OPT Application Tutorial.
- Follow the OPT Application Checklist.
- Make an appointment with the Office of International Programs when all your materials are ready.