Authorization:

- A new Form I-20 will be issued to you with OPT dates.
- Upon USCIS approval of your request for OPT, you will be issued an Employment Authorization Document (EAD).

Since it can take up to 4 months for the USCIS to process your request for OPT, timely submission of your application to the Intercultural Center will help avoid loss of OPT time. OPT may be authorized for up to one year and can be extended for additional 17 months. To be eligible for the 17 month OPT extension, you must have completed a degree in Sciences, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM degrees) and included on STEM degree program list. It is illegal to begin employment until you receive the EAD and you are only permitted to work within the dates specified. You may work for more than one employer and/or change employers during your period of authorized OPT. The employment you select for your OPT must be directly related to you major field of study and commensurate with your educational level. While on OPT, you are still in F-1 status and subject to F-1 regulations. Students are permitted to engage in part-time study while on OPT, but please note that beginning a new full-time educational program will cancel your OPT. Transferring your SEVIS record to another school during OPT automatically cancels your OPT.

Traveling and OPT:

Travel outside the U.S. prior to the receipt of the EAD may constitute an abandonment of the OPT application, causing it to be cancelled and prohibiting your re-entry to the U.S.

If you travel during your OPT, you will need:

- A properly endorsed I-20 (within the last 6 months)
- Your EAD
- Letter of Employment
  - On company letterhead and signed by a company official
  - Stating a brief job description showing relation to your current major
  - Stating dates of employment: beginning & ending (must match EAD)
  - Stating the number of hours per week: full or part-time

Upon expiration of your EAD/OPT, you have a 60-day grace period during which you must depart the US, obtain a new I-20 for further study, extend the duration of your OPT or secure another immigration status.