• Choose OPT start date. OPT start date must be within 60 days of program completion date. i.e. if you will graduate in Spring, you will need to pick a date between June 10th and August 8th

• Complete Carleton OPT Application Form

• Your academic advisor will need to write a letter including your major and their recommendation that you pursue employment in the U.S.

• Obtain OPT Recommendation from Advisor

• Complete I-765, G-1145, check/money order for $410, passport photos, and copies of your passport, visa, I-94, all previous I-20s and any EAD (see checklist)

• Prepare OPT Documents

• Bring all application materials from checklist to your appointment
• Make a COPY of your OPT I-20 to mail with application. Keep the original I-20.

• Schedule Appointment

• Make 2 copies of your ENTIRE application as submitted to USCIS
• Make sure that OIIL scans your application as well

• Make Copies

• Send your application to USCIS preferably via courier service so you can confirm delivery
• USCIS needs to receive your application within 30 days of I-20 issuance

• Submit Application to USCIS

• Within 3-5 weeks you should receive a receipt notice I-797 with a case tracking number. If you do not receive this, contact OIIL

• Confirm Receipt

• Once you receive EAD card, make sure that your name and date of birth are correct on your EAD card

• Check EAD Card for Errors

• Once the start date on your EAD card arrives, you may begin working in your field of study
• Be sure to report your employment to OIIL within 10 days of beginning work

• Begin Working

• You MUST begin working within 90 days of your OPT start date
• Report all employment and/or address changes to OIIL within 10 days

• Report Employment/Address Changes