OPT Timeline

- Earliest date you can submit OPT application to USCIS (allow up to 90 days for processing by USCIS)
- Final deadline: OPT application must arrive at USCIS by this date (allow up to 90 days for processing by USCIS)
- Due to the 14-month limit, if you submit your application towards the end of the allowed application period, you may lose part of your 12 months eligibility.
- 90 days before graduation
- Graduation: last day of final semester
- 60 days after graduation
- Your OPT start date can be as early as the day after graduation or as late as 60 days after graduation. You request your start date in your application. Depending on when you mail your application, you might or might not receive your requested OPT start date.
- 12-month OPT authorization period; varies depending on requested start date, application submission date, and USCIS processing time.
- 14 months after graduation
- OPT expires; 60-day grace period begins
- Latest possible grace period ends
OPT Application Process

**Step 1**
- Go to the SD Mines OPT webpage for instructions

**Step 2**
- Complete OPT Recommendation form with your advisor, then make an appointment with the Ivanhoe International Center
- Complete and bring the I-765 and G-1145; put electronic copies on flash drive for possible editing
- Send OPT application within 30 days of the date of the signature on the I-20.
- Allow 90 days for processing by the USCIS.

**Step 3**
- Receive I-797 Receipt Notice with case number
- Allow two to three weeks from date of submission to USCIS for paper receipt notice to arrive. You should receive electronic notification when application is received.
- Keep I-797 in a safe place. DO NOT DISCARD! This may be required at a later date.

**Step 4**
- Receive EAD (Employment Authorization Document)
- Allow 90 days from receipt date on Receipt Notice for EAD to arrive