USCIS Announces New Flexibility for OPT Applicants Affected by Recent USCIS Delays

U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) has announced some temporary changes in response to recent delays which have affected many F-1 international students applying for Optional Practical Training (OPT).

This will only apply to OPT applications received on or after Oct. 1, 2020, through May 1, 2021.

These changes include:

- **Flexibility on the 14-month OPT period:** USCIS will give F-1 students 14 months from the date of Form I-765 approval to complete their 12 months of post-completion Optional Practical Training (OPT). Normally, students have 14 months from their program completion date (I-20 end date) to complete up to 12 months of OPT. F-1 students requesting post-completion OPT who receive approval of Form I-765 for less than the full amount of time requested because of the delays, can request a correction from USCIS.

- **Refiling following rejection:** USCIS will accept a refiled Form I-765 for OPT and STEM OPT if the original application was (1) received within the applicable time frame (Oct. 1, 2020, through May 1, 2021) and (2) USCIS rejected the application. This measure was put in place because some applicants had missed their window to refile because of the delays.

The USCIS news release [1] has more details. If you have questions after reading this announcement and the news release, please contact an International Student/Scholar Advisor [2] at the International Center. Also, students who receive (for any reason) a rejection of their OPT application or an RFE (Request for Evidence) should consult an International Student/Scholar Advisor for guidance on next steps.

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[2] https://internationalcenter.umich.edu/advising-hours