After You Have Applied for Optional Practical Training (F-1 Students)

USCIS often takes over 90 days to process OPT applications; we suggest you plan accordingly. The International Center has no influence over how quickly your OPT application is processed by USCIS.

- **Recommended Steps to Minimize Complications**
- **Exceptions and Problems**
- **Travel outside the U.S. and Reentry**

**Recommended Steps to Minimize Complications**

**After Filing the OPT Application**

- **USPS Informed Delivery**[1] – We recommend signing up for USPS Informed Delivery for the mailing address listed on your I-765 application in order to receive notifications of incoming mail before it is delivered. This is particularly helpful to receive advance notification of the mailing of your OPT EAD before delivery. If you have listed a friend or family member’s address for the mailing address on the I-765, please discuss with them the details of setting up a USPS Informed Delivery account.

- **Create a USCIS Online Account**[2] – Even if you have paper-filed your OPT application, creating a USCIS Online Account will enable you to monitor the latest updates with your application. Your paper-filed applications can be added to your USCIS Online account to view case status and history, send secure messages, view notices, upload additional evidence, and respond to Requests for Evidence.

- If you paper-filed the application and paid by personal check, monitor your bank account and note the date the check cleared. This helps confirm your application was properly filed with USCIS.

- If you paper-filed the application, monitor your courier service’s tracking number to verify the delivery of the application to USCIS

**When You Receive Form I-797 Receipt Notice in the Mail**

- Be sure to keep a copy of the I-797 receipt permanently in your personal files.

- Verify that the name and mailing address are printed 100% correctly on receipt notice. If there is any error, email icenter@umich.edu[3] for advice.

- If you paper-filed the application, login to your USCIS Online Account[4], go to ‘My Account,’ and select ‘Add a paper-filed case’ to add your I-797 receipt notice to your online account. This will allow you to see case status and history, send secure messages, view notices, upload additional evidence, and
respond to requests for evidence (if applicable) for your application.

When Case Status Online Reflects “Approved”

- Check your USCIS case status online using your I-797 receipt number at uscis.gov or through your USCIS Online Account to obtain your USPS tracking number once USCIS has mailed your EAD card.
- If someone else is receiving the EAD on your behalf, alert that person that a piece of mail should be arriving soon and to notify you as soon as it arrives. If that person will be mailing you the EAD, please be sure that they use a method of delivery that provides a tracking number.
- Take any steps possible to ensure delivery of your mail. If you live in an apartment complex, check that your name is on your mailbox. If you have roommates, alert them you are expecting something important.

When You Receive the I-797 Approval Notice and EAD

- Make a copy of the Approval Notice and EAD (front and back) for your records
- Provide a scanned copy of your EAD card to the International Center by selecting the ‘Submit EAD Card’ form on the OPT Reporting section of our website.
- Remember: You are not authorized to begin employment until the start date on the EAD has been reached, even if you have the card in hand.
- To maintain compliance with F-1 regulations during OPT, you will need to understand and comply with a variety of ongoing reporting requirements.
- For a summary of post-completion OPT requirements visit: Requirements for While You are on Post-Completion OPT.
- For a summary of STEM OPT requirements visit: Requirements for While You are on STEM OPT.

Exceptions and Problems

If You Change Your Mind about Applying for OPT

If for any reason you decide you do not want OPT, you must take immediate action to prevent your I-765 application from being adjudicated by USCIS (i.e. approved or denied).

Write (but do NOT send!) a letter to USCIS requesting your I-765 application be withdrawn:

- Note “Re: I-765 Withdrawal” on the letter
- Include biographical information to identify yourself, including name, date of birth, and SEVIS ID number
- If you have received the Form I-797 (Receipt Notice) from USCIS, include the receipt number in your letter
- Request that the Form I-765 application for Optional Practical Training be withdrawn and include a short statement of why you are withdrawing your request
- Date and sign
- Email icenter@umich.edu with your full name, UMID, and receipt number (if applicable). Indicate that you mailed your I-765 and want to withdraw your OPT application. Attach your letter to USCIS to the email and a copy of your Form I-797 Receipt Notice (if available).

An International Center advisor will contact the USCIS Service Center which is processing your OPT
application and request the withdrawal of the application. If the withdrawal is successfully processed, in a few weeks USCIS will send a confirmation letter to the address you listed on the I-765 indicating your application has been withdrawn. Keep this letter in your records.

**If You Do Not Receive Receipt Notice within 30 Days (For Paper-Based Filing)**

In the unlikely event that your paper OPT application delivery is delayed, returned as undeliverable, missing, etc., contact your courier service to first determine the problem and follow the recommended instructions. If you determine that your I-765 has not reached USCIS, contact an International Center advisor for advice.

If you filed your OPT application online, the receipt notice should be available immediately in your USCIS Online Account.

For paper-filed applications, in some cases, it may take USCIS up to 6 weeks to put a Receipt Notice in the mail after your application is received. However, if you have not received your receipt notice in the mail within 30 days after OPT filing, we recommend that you take the following steps:

1. Identify evidence of the application being properly filed, if you have not already done so.
   - Examples include utilizing the courier service’s tracking number for your OPT application to verify delivery confirmation to USCIS, and if you paid by personal check, you should work with your bank to see if the check has been cashed. If you are able to locate an image of the cashed check, your USCIS receipt number may be printed on the cashed check.
   - If neither apply, please contact an International Center advisor for assistance.
2. If you have confirmed evidence of filing, try to determine whether the receipt notice has already been delivered. Double check your stacks of mail and ask roommates, neighbors, the apartment complex manager, etc.
3. Call the USCIS Customer Service Center at (800) 375-5283. Ask for your receipt number if you have not already received it by text or e-mail. If they are able to locate your case, have USCIS verify that they have the correct mailing address on file.
4. If you are able to obtain the receipt number, enter it on the USCIS.gov website under ‘Check your case status’ to obtain the latest information on your application.
5. Submit the online form to report that you ‘Did not receive notice by mail’ in order to have the receipt mailed out to you.
6. If your receipt number cannot be retrieved or USCIS case status does not give indication of the status of the receipt notice, email lockboxsupport@uscis.dhs.gov to inquire about the status of your receipt notice. Include your name, date of birth, and date your I-765 was delivered to USCIS.

If you require additional assistance, contact an International Center advisor.

**If You Receive Notice from USCIS Requiring Additional Action**

If any of the following happen, contact an International Center advisor immediately for advice:

- You receive a Request for Evidence (RFE) in the mail or see in Case Status Online that one was sent. In order to best advise you on the next steps, an advisor will request to see a copy of the RFE.
- You receive your I-765 application back in the mail or see in Case Status Online that it was rejected and/or returned. The International Center may need to cancel and reissue your OPT I-20 in this situation if the OPT recommendation has expired.
Either of the above are an indication that additional action is required for your OPT application. No progress will be made on your application until USCIS receives the necessary documentation from you.

The allowable time period to respond to an RFE or rejected application is limited and will be indicated on the materials from USCIS. If you fail to respond by the deadline, your application will be denied.

**If Your Application is Denied**

If USCIS denies your application, they will mail you a notice of denial. This will document the reason for denial. To best assess your options, please contact an International Center advisor as soon as possible since the denial impacts your legal status in the U.S. An advisor will request to see a copy of the denial notice to best advise you on the next steps.

**If Your EAD Does Not Arrive**

USCIS will send the EAD using regular, first class USPS mail. From the time Case Status Online indicates your request was approved, you should expect to wait a week or more for delivery of the EAD.

If you suspect a problem in the delivery of your EAD:

- First take any possible steps to determine whether the EAD has already been delivered to your address. Double check your stacks of mail and ask roommates, neighbors, the apartment complex manager, etc.
- Check your Case Status Online to see if there is an update regarding the status of your EAD. If not, call the USCIS customer service number and ask if your EAD was “returned undeliverable,” meaning sent back to USCIS. Keep detailed records of your conversation with the customer service agent, including the date you called, any number the agent gave you, and the advice you were given.
- Email icenter@umich.edu with a detailed account of the situation and steps you have already taken, including notes from your conversation with USCIS customer service. An advisor will respond with advice.

Please be aware there is usually little, if anything, the International Center can do to intervene in cases of an EAD not delivered. You may ultimately need to apply for a replacement of the lost card and pay the fee again.

If your EAD was returned undeliverable or lost in the mail, you can expect significant delay in obtaining the card. If you have a job offer, you may wish to speak with your employer regarding beginning employment with the receipt notice from a pending replacement EAD application with USCIS. Current I-9 employment verification policy allows individuals to begin employment with the receipt notice for the replacement application, noting that the original EAD must be presented to your employer within 90 days of presenting the receipt.

**If There is a Mistake on Your EAD**

If there is any problem on your EAD, email a scanned copy of the card with a description of the exact problem (name misspelled, wrong dates, etc.) to icenter@umich.edu. An advisor will respond with advice.

- Remember, the dates on the card determine when you are authorized to work, even if they are not the dates for which you intended to apply.
If for any reason USCIS approves the I-765 for post-completion OPT after the start date you requested, the start date should be set as the date the application was approved.

**Travel Outside the U.S. and Reentry**

For important information on international travel after you've mailed the I-765, refer to [Travel Advisory](https://internationalcenter.umich.edu/travel-advisory).

**Source URL:** https://internationalcenter.umich.edu/students/f1-students/opt-after

**Links**

[3] mailto:icenter@umich.edu  
[7] https://internationalcenter.umich.edu/students/f1-students/on-opt  
[8] https://internationalcenter.umich.edu/students/f1-students/stem-opt  
[9] https://internationalcenter.umich.edu/advising-hours  
[10] https://egov.uscis.gov/e-request/Intro.do  