

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

Attention: USCIS is currently taking 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.

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Steps to Minimize Complications

After Mailing the I-765

- Make a copy for your records of the receipt from the post office showing the tracking number.
- Set up email notifications at usps.com with tracking number to monitor when your application is received by USCIS.
- In the unlikely event that delivery is delayed, denied, returned, missing, etc., call USPS customer service to determine the problem and follow recommended instructions. If you determine that your I-765 has not reached USCIS, contact an International Center advisor for advice.

After the I-765 Is Received by USCIS

- Print page from usps.com showing that application was received on or before your I-20 end date and keep in your records.
- If you paid by personal check, monitor your bank account and note the date the check cleared. This will confirm receipt by USCIS.

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

- Make a photocopy for your records.
- Sign up for email updates at USCIS website using Receipt Number.
- Verify that name and mailing address are printed 100% correctly on receipt notice. If any error, email icenter@umich.edu ^[1] for advice.

When Case Status Online Reflects “Approved”

- 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. Remind the person to put it in a new mail envelope rather than forwarding to you.
- 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.
- DO NOT notify USPS to hold mail, forward mail, or process a change of address until you receive the EAD.

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
- Submit a scanned copy of your EAD card to the Interantional Center using [our online form](#) [2]. We will keep a copy of the EAD in your record in the International Center.
- Remember: You are not authorized to begin employment until the start date on the EAD arrives, even if you have the card in hand.

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
 - 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
 - If you have received the Form I-797 (Receipt Notice) from USCIS, include the case number in your letter
- Email icenter@umich.edu [1] with your full name, UMID, and case number (if you have already received a Receipt Notice from USCIS). Indicate that you mailed your I-765 and want to withdraw your OPT application. Attach your letter to USCIS to the e-mail and a copy of your Form I-797 Receipt Notice (if you have it).
- An International Center advisor will contact USCIS Service Center which is processing your OPT application and request the withdrawal of the application. The Service Center may have additional instructions for you to follow before they officially withdraw your application. The advisor will let you know if this is the case.
- 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 original and a photocopy in your records.

If You Do Not Receive Receipt Notice within 4 Weeks

- There are a few possible reasons your Receipt Notice has not arrived:
 - USCIS did not mail it yet. They may take up to 6 weeks to put a Receipt Notice in the mail after your

application is received.

- Your Receipt Notice was “returned undeliverable.” This means the Post Office was unable to deliver the letter to your address and they mailed it back to USCIS. USCIS keeps it for a short time and then destroys it.
- The Receipt Notice was lost permanently before delivery (e.g. delivered to the wrong address) or after delivery (e.g. accidentally discarded as junk mail).
- To try and recover your receipt notice after you have waited four weeks, start with these steps:
 - First do what you can 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.
 - Email lockboxsupport@dhs.gov [3] to inquire about the status of your receipt notice. Include your name, date of birth, and date your I-765 was delivered to USCIS.
 - Call the USCIS National Customer Service Center at (800)375-5283 and ask for your receipt number. If you are able to obtain it, enter it on the USCIS.gov website under Case Status on the left hand side. You can often gain helpful information this way.
- You may find that one or both of the above steps solve your problem. For example:
 - USCIS might tell you the Receipt Notice was not mailed yet and to wait a little longer.
 - The Receipt Notice might have been returned undeliverable and USCIS still has it. Check that USCIS has the correct address on file, and if so, ask them to re-send it.
- Contact icenter@umich.edu [1] in the following circumstances:
 - You followed the instructions above and have not received an email reply after a week and you were unsuccessful in obtaining the receipt number by phone.
 - You find out the receipt notice cannot be re-sent and you would like advice on international travel.
 - The address on file with USCIS is no longer correct.
- A note on international travel
 - The official guidance from Customs and Border Protection (i.e. the border officers) is that students should carry the Receipt Notice itself for re-entry while the OPT is pending.
 - If your situation requires you to travel and attempt re-entry without a Receipt Notice, we recommend carrying a print-out from USCIS Case Status online showing the status of your case.

If You Receive Notice from USCIS that Something Is Wrong

- If any of the following happen, call or email International Center immediately for advice:
- You receive a Request for Evidence (RFE) in the mail or see in Case Status Online that one was sent
- You receive your I-765 application back in the mail or see in Case Status Online that it was rejected and/or returned
- Either of the above are an indication that something is seriously wrong with 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 your I-765 is denied, the duration of your legal F-1 status reverts to being defined as the lasting through the I-20 end date plus 60 days grace period

If you are still within the grace period, you may stay in the U.S. for the remainder of the 60 days
If the grace period has already elapsed, you should depart the U.S. without delay

The chances for successfully appealing an I-765 denial are low. If you believe you were denied in error, contact an International Center advisor or private immigration attorney at once.

If Your EAD Does Not Arrive

USCIS will send the EAD using regular, first class 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.
- 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 [1] 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 contact your employer to make arrangements for delaying your start date. Remember, you may not work until you have the EAD in hand, even if the Case Status Online shows your case was approved.

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 [1]. 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 after the OPT start date you requested, the start date will be set as the date the application was approved. USCIS will not adjust the end date; therefore, your OPT period will be less than 12 months. This is unfortunate, but not a mistake. There is no remedy possible in this situation.

Travel Outside the U.S. and Reentry

For important information on travel after you've mailed the I-765, refer to [Travel Advisory](#) [4].

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

Links

[1] <mailto:icenter@umich.edu>

[2] <https://internationalcenter.umich.edu/resources/forms/employment-authorization-document>

[3] <mailto:lockboxsupport@dhs.gov>

[4] <https://internationalcenter.umich.edu/travel-advisory>