



OPT 101: Preparing to File Post-Completion OPT

International Center

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OPT Workshop Overview



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OPT Filing Timeframe

- USCIS allows the OPT application to be filed up to 90 days before the I-20 program end date
 - *The I-20 end date is typically the last day of the last month of your final term of enrollment*
 - *PhD candidates may elect to have the I-20 shortened to the anticipated defense date*
 - *If the I-20 end date is in a future term, it will be shortened as part of the OPT I-20 process*
 - *For example: If your end date is April 30, 2021, but your last term of enrollment is Fall term, your I-20 end date will be shortened to December 31*
- OPT start date must be within the 60 day grace period following the I-20 end date
 - *For example: If you have a December 31 end date, your available OPT start dates are January 1 to March 1*

Filing the I-765

- Download the most recent I-765 Form from <https://www.uscis.gov/i-765> and **carefully read the instructions regarding the appropriate form version**
- Read the [Instructions for completing the I-765 for OPT](#) and [U-M Suggestions for completing the I-765 for Post-Completion OPT](#).
- Let's walk through the I-765!

Documentation to Send to USCIS

- Completed Form G-1145 (<https://www.uscis.gov/g-1145>)
- Completed Form I-765 (<http://www.uscis.gov/files/form/i-765.pdf>)
- 2 U.S. style passport photographs taken within last 30 days. Lightly write name and I-94 number on back in pencil
- Application fee payable to “U.S. Department of Homeland Security”. To confirm current amount refer to www.uscis.gov/i-765 or www.uscis.gov/feecalculator. **Do not pay the biometric service fee.**
- Photocopy of I-20 endorsed for Optional Practical Training (all pages except instruction page). **USCIS must receive your OPT application within 30 days of the OPT I-20 issuance date**
- Photocopies of all previous I-20s from current degree level (all pages except instruction page)
- Photocopy of paper or print-out of electronic Form I-94 (www.cbp.gov/I94)
- Photocopy of most recent F-1 visa
- Photocopy of passport information page (plus extension page if applicable)
- If applicable, photocopies of previous EAD cards issued by USCIS with corresponding OPT I-20s

Troubleshooting OPT Issues



- Please review our summary of [steps](#) you can take immediately after mailing your OPT application to USCIS. These actions are designed to minimize potential complications
- Despite your best efforts, however, it is possible that you may face various [difficulties](#)
- If you face any of these scenarios, or face other complications during the OPT application process, immediately [consult](#) an advisor at the International Center
- Don't fret – many difficulties can be avoided! The majority of OPT applications are approved. Based on USCIS numbers, the approval rate of OPT applications has been 97% for the past five fiscal years.

Troubleshooting OPT Issues

- Receiving your I-765 application back in the mail, and/or seeing in Case Status Online that it was rejected and/or returned - **may need new I-20 from the International Center!**
- Application approval, but the EAD is deemed undeliverable to your U.S. Mailing Address and is returned to USCIS
- Receiving a Request for Evidence (RFE) from USCIS
- Receiving a Notice of Intent to Deny (NOID) from USCIS
- Waiting more than stated [USCIS processing time](#) after filing your OPT application for adjudication (decision of approval or denial) by USCIS
- Application denial
- Application approval and your EAD card arrives, but it contains factual errors such as a misspelled name or incorrect approval dates

Troubleshooting OPT Issues

- USCIS may begin using Signature Confirmation Restricted Delivery as a method of delivery of secure documents, such as EADs.
- Applicants must present identification to sign for their documents upon delivery
- Have the option to designate an agent to sign on their behalf by completing the Postal Service's [PS Form 3801, Standing Delivery Order \(PDF\)](#) or [PS Form 3801-A, Agreement by a Hotel, Apartment House, or the Like \(PDF\)](#).
- **We strongly recommend signing up for [USPS Informed Delivery](#) to receive delivery status notifications**
- Applicants will also have the option to arrange for pickup at a post office at a convenient date and time by going to the USPS website and selecting 'hold for pickup'

OPT Travel- While OPT is Pending



- You must be physically present in the U.S. at the time of filing OPT (for mailing and receipt by USCIS)
- The International Center does not recommend traveling while your OPT application is pending due to number of risks including but not limited to:
 - Rejection of OPT application
 - Mail delivery issues for the receipt notice
 - Request for Evidence
 - Re-entry into the U.S. is always at the discretion of the border official at the U.S. point of entry
 - CBP may request to see the original OPT employment authorization document (EAD) upon entry to the U.S.
 - COVID-19 travel restrictions

OPT Travel- While OPT is Pending

If you must travel, take the following documents with you:

- Passport (valid for at least 6 months into the future)
- Valid F-1 visa stamp in passport (Canadians excluded)
- Original OPT I-20 with travel signature no older than 6 months
- I-765 receipt notice (Form I-797, not email)
- Job offer letter (if available)

If your visa has expired and you need to apply for a new one, there are significant risks associated with international travel:

- Potential visa delays due to security checks
- Visa may be denied without evidence of a job offer
- Check visa appointment availability prior to travel

Check the latest COVID-19 travel restrictions prior to travel:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/travelers/from-other-countries.html>

OPT Travel- After OPT was Approved

- You will receive your EAD card once your OPT application has been approved.
 - *Be sure to check the EAD for accuracy to ensure there were not USCIS errors such as misspelled name, incorrect authorization dates, date of birth, etc.*
- Take the following documents with you when traveling:
 - Passport (valid for at least 6 months into the future)
 - Valid F-1 visa stamp in passport (Canadians excluded)
 - Original OPT I-20 with travel signature no older than 6 months
 - EAD Card
 - Job offer letter or employment verification

Reporting OPT Employment Information

- Submit a copy of your EAD Card to the IC via our [website](#)
- Report new OPT employment and any other employment changes to our [OPT web form](#) within 10 days of any change, this is a required immigration regulation
- Make sure to provide details on your employment regarding how the job relates to your degree, and what your job duties are
- Report your employer's worksite address even if you are working remotely due to COVID-19. Residential addresses not allowed in SEVIS!
- Update your current address and phone number to [Wolverine Access](#) within 10 days of any move
- Using the SEVP Portal is optional

Reporting OPT Employment Information



- Students are only allowed a TOTAL of 90 days of unemployment on post-completion OPT
- SEVP is monitoring your SEVIS record. A “Notice of Failure to Report Optional Practical Training Employer and Exceeding Permissible Period of Unemployment” will be mailed to you if you have not reported employer information and have exceeded 90 days of unemployment
- If you receive the notice, you will have 15 days of notice date to report your employer information. Otherwise, SEVP will set your SEVIS record to “terminated” which may result in loss of your immigration status and a possible deportation from the US

Reporting OPT Employment Information



- Keep documentation of all OPT employment information during the duration of your OPT
- Obtain an employment verification letter at the end of your employment
- Comply with U.S. income tax requirements and obtain social security number, if needed
- Continue to use and check your UMICH email regularly while on OPT when communicating with the International Center

Health Insurance Coverage on OPT

- You are required to maintain health insurance while on OPT.
 - U of M International Student Health Insurance
 - Automatically enrolled after your I-20 program end date
 - Employers Health Insurance
 - Submit the “International Health Insurance Waiver Request Form (OPT)” from our [website](#)
 - Alternative Private Insurance Plan
 - Must submit an insurance waiver form to get approval
- If you obtain a new I-20 endorsed for OPT but never end up mailing an application to USCIS, you must inform the International Center that you did not file for OPT. Otherwise, you will continue to be charged for the U of M health insurance.

Abandoning OPT

Fill out and submit a [Departure Form](#) for any of the following reasons:

- Departing from the U.S. with no intention of returning to continue your OPT
- Reaching 90 days of unemployment under OPT

Submission of the departure form will allow the International Center to complete your F-1 SEVIS record and end your U of M health insurance

DO NOT submit the departure form, and contact the International Center, if you are abandoning OPT but plan on staying the U.S. in the following cases:

- Transferring to another institution
- Change of status
- Change of education level



Thank you!
Questions?