



Princeton University – Davis International Center

Optional Practical Training (OPT)

Post-Completion Follow-Up Information

F-1 POST-OPT APPLICATION STATUS

You should receive a USCIS receipt notice to the mailing address on your I-765 within the next 3-4 weeks. The receipt notice will include a receipt number in the upper right-hand corner. This receipt number is your OPT application tracking number. *If you do not receive a physical receipt notice within that time, please email the Davis IC at puvisa@princeton.edu.* You will also receive updates on your case in your USCIS Case Status online in addition to notices in the mail.

F-1 EMPLOYMENT AUTHORIZATION DOCUMENT (EAD)

Once you receive your OPT Employment Authorization Document (EAD) from USCIS, please make sure to check all the information on the card is accurate. Should there be any errors on the card, notify the Davis IC at puvisa@princeton.edu. We strongly advise that you make a digital copy of the card to keep in your records.

Please use caution should your EAD card have to be mailed once received. If you need your EAD mailed to you by a friend, family member, or roommate, we recommend using a courier such as FedEx or UPS that provide expedited shipping and tracking information. *A lost EAD will require a new OPT application for a replacement card including a new filing fee and up to or beyond 90 days of processing.*

TRAVEL

Students may travel prior to their program completion date according to the general [travel guidance](#) for F-1 students.

Traveling abroad after your program completion date, but before your Post-OPT is approved and you have the OPT EAD in hand, may be risky. The F-1 regulations do not directly address this issue. Although some students with a pending Post-OPT application have had success re-entering the U.S. with a copy of the USCIS OPT Receipt Notice, others have had difficulties. Please consult with your [International Student Advisor](#) at Davis IC before making travel plans.

- **Travel Documents**

- Valid passport with a valid F-1 visa stamp (Canadian citizens are exempt from the visa requirement)
- Valid I-20 with travel signature no older than 6 months
- Post-OPT EAD (Employment Authorization Document)
- Employment letter stating job title, job description, beginning/end dates, and salary (recommended, but not required)

- **Travel Signature**

- **Travel signatures are only valid for 6 months while on Post-OPT. The signature should be no older than 6 months old at time of re-entry into the U.S.**
- If you need a new travel signature while on Post-OPT, you may request one through [TigerNav](#) using the “I-20 Request” form under the “F-1 Student Services” category. After graduation, please log in using your University ID, DOB, and Password/PIN. The login page has an option to re-email you your Password/PIN if needed.

- **Expired F-1 Visa**

- Students who need a new F-1 visa are advised to talk with their [International Student Advisor](#) BEFORE making any travel plans.

USCIS PROCESSING TIME

Processing times of OPT applications fluctuate throughout the year. It may be up to or beyond 90 days. Students may not begin working until their EAD has arrived and the authorized start date listed on the EAD. Current processing times may be found [here](#).

Premium processing is now available for OPT applications where you can pay an additional fee to have USCIS take “adjudicative action” on the case within 30 days, as outlined on USCIS’s [website](#). The premium processing fee is in addition to the filing fee.

PERIOD OF UNEMPLOYMENT WHILE ON POST-OPT

A job offer is not required to apply for Post-Completion OPT. However, students should remember that maintenance of F-1 status during Post-Completion OPT is dependent upon employment. Students are allowed a maximum of 90 days of unemployment. Each day, including weekends and holidays, counts towards this limit. For students reaching the limit of unemployment time, SEVP guidance states that “prior to reaching the limit on authorized unemployment, the student should prepare to:

- Transfer to another SEVP-certified school
- Change Educational Level
- Depart the United States
- Take action to otherwise maintain legal status.”

During this time, employment may include self-employment, interning, or volunteering in a position directly related to your major area of study. More detailed information about employment requirements while on OPT can be found under section 12 of our [website](#).

REPORTING REQUIREMENTS WHILE ON POST-OPT

While on Post-Completion OPT, you continue to be in F-1 status and under Princeton University’s visa sponsorship. You must report any change of residential address, contact information, and employment information, including any interruption or change in employment to our office within 10 days of the change.

Please visit Item 15 on our [OPT page](#) for further details and instructions for reporting requirements.

Any update to employment information will result in the issuance of a new I-20 within ten (10) business days that will be sent electronically.

NEW IMMIGRATION STATUS REPORTING WHILE ON POST-OPT

Upload proof (e.g. copy of H-1B visa, copy of H-1B Approval Notice, copy of a Permanent Resident or “green” card, I-94 record etc.) of your new status to [TigerNav](#) using the “Student Document Upload” form under the “F-1 Student Services” category, and we will update your record. After graduation, please log in using your University ID, DOB, and Password/PIN. The login page has an option to re-email you your Password/PIN if needed.

Contact the Davis International Center with any questions at puvisa@princeton.edu or at 609-258-5006

davisic.princeton.edu | Last Updated January 2024