What to Expect after Mailing Your OPT Application
(Your Responsibilities & Maintaining F-1 Status)

After mailing your OPT application to USCIS, it is important that you read and understand the information presented below. More detailed information can be found on the HIO website here: [http://www.hio.harvard.edu/optional-practical-training-opt](http://www.hio.harvard.edu/optional-practical-training-opt)

### AFTER MAILING

- Maintain your FedEx/UPS/USPS proof of delivery, confirming that your OPT application was received by USCIS. You must have proof of delivery if you wish to take any subsequent action on your case.
- You should receive **three (3) pieces of mail** from USCIS: an I-797 notice of receipt, an I-797 notice of approval, and, ultimately, the official EAD card. Review the information carefully on all documents.
- You can check your OPT application’s status at [https://egov.uscis.gov/casestatus/mycasestatus.do](https://egov.uscis.gov/casestatus/mycasestatus.do)
- You may start working only **AFTER** you receive the physical EAD and the start date has commenced.
- You are not permitted to work on campus between your graduation date and the start date of your EAD.
- **Contact your HIO advisor immediately if:**
  - You do not receive your USCIS receipt notice within 60 days of submitting your OPT application
  - You receive a Request For Additional Evidence (RFE) from USCIS
  - Your OPT application is returned to you by USCIS
  - There is incorrect information on your EAD card.

### OPT REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

*Failure to report your employment information is a violation of your F-1 status* and will have serious repercussions on your current and future U.S. immigration benefits and visa applications. The SEVIS system will calculate unemployment dates and **will terminate your SEVIS record for exceeding the 90-day unemployment limit**. You **MUST** timely report all employment you undertake while on OPT to the HIO via the HIO’s Post-Completion OPT Reporting Form.

- **Report the following changes within 10 days by using the HIO’s Post-completion OPT Reporting Form:** [http://www.hio.harvard.edu/post-completion-opt-reporting-form](http://www.hio.harvard.edu/post-completion-opt-reporting-form)
  - New OPT Employment
  - Changes to your OPT employer’s name, address, dates of employment, etc.
  - Change of U.S residential address

- **Notify your HIO advisor directly via email if:**
  - You **permanently** depart the U.S. before the end date of your OPT EAD card
  - You decide after mailing the OPT application that you no longer wish to pursue OPT
  - You change your visa status from F-1
  - You change your name or country of citizenship (or dependent’s names/citizenships)

- **REMEMBER:** You have a maximum period of **90 days of unemployment** that you can accrue from the start date listed on your EAD card.

More details about your **mandatory reporting requirements** for post-completion OPT can be found here: [http://hio.harvard.edu/optional-practical-training-opt](http://hio.harvard.edu/optional-practical-training-opt)
TRAVEL

Travel during the COVID-19 pandemic is rife with complications. Harvard University is prohibiting any University travel and strongly discouraging personal travel. Before traveling, always consult your HIO advisor and review updates in the HIO’s comprehensive FAQ here: https://hio.harvard.edu/coronavirus

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>When are you traveling and re-entering the U.S.?</th>
<th>What’s your OPT application status?</th>
<th>Documents you need to re-enter the U.S.:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| BEFORE graduation or I-20 program end date    | PENDING                           | ✓  
• Valid Passport  
• Valid F-1 visa  
• Valid travel signature on most current I-20  
• I-901 SEVIS Fee receipt |
| AFTER graduation or I-20 program end date     | PENDING                           | ⊗  
The HIO does NOT recommend travel during this time. |
| AFTER graduation or I-20 program end date     | APPROVED                          | ✓  
• Valid Passport  
• Valid F-1 visa  
• Valid travel signature* on most current I-20  
• I-901 SEVIS Fee receipt  
• EAD  
• Proof of OPT employment |

- Travel signatures while on OPT are only valid for 6 months.
- If you need a new travel signature contact your HIO advisor
- Travel and re-entry to the U.S. is permitted with all the necessary documents any time after you have received your EAD from USCIS.
- Do NOT enter the U.S. using another visa status (e.g., ESTA or B tourist visa, etc.) as this will nullify your OPT application and F-1 immigration status.

REMEMBER: OPT is an extension of your F-1 status and you will remain under Harvard’s F-1 visa sponsorship. Please be sure to continue to read HIO travel emails even after you graduate and are working on OPT. Additional travel information can be found on the HIO website here: http://www.hio.harvard.edu/travel-post-completion-opt-or

The HIO provides general guidance on your OPT/STEM OPT application based on information obtained from reliable sources and reflecting our years of experience in working with students. We make every attempt to ensure that we provide you with the most up-to-date information available. Any advice provided to you by our office (as well as the information in this packet) does not constitute legal advice, however. The OPT application is a personal application for which you are responsible; the application preparation and USCIS case decision will vary depending on the facts at issue in your particular case. The HIO does its best to provide you with the most current guidance, but please be mindful that USCIS may change its interpretation of these policies, procedures, regulations, and eligibility requirements at any time. The HIO is not responsible for any errors or omissions, or for the results obtained from USCIS.