

Hello! My name is Alec Jokubaitis, and on behalf of the Office of International Student Services, I would like to welcome you to this video explaining the recent USCIS announcement extending flexibilities to certain OPT applicants.

In this video, we will briefly cover the following topics:

We will go over some background on this decision,

Explain how to know if you are eligible to apply,

And if you are eligible, go over how to apply.

If you would like to learn more about any of these topics, we have a link to our [website](#) in the description of this video containing lots more information.

In recent months, USCIS has been processing OPT applications at a slower rate, with receipt notices taking weeks and even months to be issued.

On February 26, USCIS issued a notice describing new flexibilities to existing rules as an option for certain students who have been affected by these delays.

These Flexibilities fall into two large categories.

First, allowing for a full twelve month OPT period for applicants, even those who had their OPT period shortened due to USCIS delays.

Second, students whose applications are rejected have a larger window of time in which to refile a corrected application.

Who is eligible to take advantage of these flexibilities? Students who applied for post-completion OPT whose applications were received by USCIS between October 1, 2020 and May 1, 2021, inclusive, are eligible. If you submitted an application between October 1, 2020 and February 26, 2021, you may need this correction. Applications received after February 26, when this directive was issued, and May 1 should be processed with these new flexibilities in mind.

First, we will look at the OPT period corrections. If you are eligible based on the date USCIS received your application, check your EAD card to see if you were approved for a full twelve month period. If you were approved for fewer than twelve months, you may proceed with the correction request.

You will apply to USCIS to have your EAD card corrected due to a USCIS error. We have more detailed instructions at the link in the video description. You will need three things to apply: your EAD card with the incorrect dates, a detailed explanation of the issue, and supporting documentation. ISS will be able to provide you with a template to use for your explanation letter. You can find that on our [website](#). The template has two pages: the first page

contains instructions, while the second contains a template for you to follow when writing your own letter.

Once you have those documents, you will send them along with your EAD card to USCIS. It is important you send your actual EAD card, not a copy. Be sure to make a copy of your EAD for your records. USCIS will then reissue your card with updated dates, at no additional cost to you.

We strongly recommend shipping your documents using a service that gives you a tracking number. We link to the mailing instructions from our [website](#).

Next, we want to talk about students who had an OPT application rejected. If you had a post-completion OPT or STEM extension application that was rejected by USCIS, and they received your application between October 1, 2020 and May 1, 2021, you are able to refile your application with corrections as long as it is received before May 31, 2021. If this applies to you, and you are considering refiling, please reach out to an ISS advisor first to discuss your application, and to ensure everything is corrected before you refile.

ISS staff members still have questions about USCIS' announcement and we're sure you do too. As we learn more we will update our [website](#)- please be sure to check that regularly- so here are just a few points to get started:

o **Can I work while the replacement EAD is in process?**

Yes, you can work. Requesting a replacement EAD does not invalidate your current authorization dates. Be sure to make a copy of the original EAD issued to you before you send it to USCIS as part of the correction process.

If you are currently employed, you should let your employer know about your plans to have your EAD reissued to you and provide your employer with the new EAD when it arrives.

If you are not yet employed or plan to start a new job while your EAD is being reissued, definitely discuss this with your employer and explain that you have a copy of your old EAD. Remember, your authorization to work is not being invalidated by requesting the new EAD; however, your employer needs to be comfortable with the documentation you can present to demonstrate your eligibility to work.

o **How do I prove my authorization to work since I have to return the EAD to USCIS in order to get the corrected one issued?**

Definitely make a copy of your original EAD before you send it to USCIS. This card is proof of your authorization to work during the specific dates printed on the card.

o How long will it take to get the replacement?

At this time, USCIS has not indicated any processing timeline for these requests. You should anticipate that it may take several weeks to receive your new card.

o How will I know if USCIS has received my request and is processing it?

USCIS has not provided information about plans to communicate with students filing for corrections. ISS recommends that you send your documentation using a delivery service that provides a tracking number. This tracking information will confirm that your request has reached USCIS.

o How will USCIS notify me that my request has been authorized and that my new EAD is being sent to me?

USCIS has not provided information about plans to communicate with students about the issuance of new EADs or how they will be mailed.

o To which USCIS address do I send my documentation?

The mailing address for the Service Center responsible for your application is printed in the lower left corner of your OPT receipt notice.

As you consider your options, it is important to note that if you want to have your OPT period amended, it is ultimately your responsibility to complete this request. ISS is able to help you with it, but we cannot file it for you. No correction will be made automatically; you need to submit a request to start the process.

ISS staff hopes that USCIS will provide more information soon. ISS is also waiting for further guidance regarding how this process affects information in SEVIS. In the meantime, we will try our best to assist you with your correction request.

You are always welcome to reach out to staff by emailing international@case.edu with your questions or to request an appointment and we will do our best to help. You can find more information by visiting our [website](#). Thank you for watching, and have a great day.