

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) OPT Filing During Covid-19

Q. I am at my last semester of study and am planning to finish the semester from home country. Will I maintain my status?

A. Last semester students, as well as other continuing students, will NOT jeopardize their immigration status taking classes online from their home country.

Q. This is my last semester. I want to leave and come back later. Would I be able to apply for OPT once I am back to U.S.?

A. Yes, as long as you are in status (see above) and you are back to the U.S. by the end of the semester.

Q. I have applied for OPT, my application is pending with USCIS. Can I leave with no ramifications? Will my departure affect the OPT approval?

A. Yes, you can leave, but you need to re-enter by the end of the semester. It is imperative since the program end date listed on your I-20, processed for OPT, is the last day of the semester.

Q. While my OPT application is pending, and I am back home, how would I know if USCIS needs any additional information for adjudication process?

A. You must check regularly your case status online on the USCIS website here: <https://egov.uscis.gov/casestatus/landing.do>. This way you will know the progress of your case. If there is a notification that they mailed a request for evidence to you, you should ask a friend/relative to check your mailbox. Those things are normally time-sensitive.

Q. Do I need to wait until I receive a receipt notice from USCIS about OPT filing? Can I leave as soon as I mailed the OPT packet?

A. We recommend to wait until you receive I-797C – Receipt Notice. The Receipt Notice has your unique case number, which you will need for checking status of the case online or any further inquiries. If you must depart and have not received the I-797C yet, reach out to us later. We might be able to locate the case # through your SEVIS record.

Q. What if the U.S. closed the borders, and I am not able to return before the end of the semester?

A. The situation is evolving every day. At this point, we don't know about future travel restrictions. Currently there are [Coronavirus Travel Bans by Presidential Proclamation](#). It is unclear at this point whether any of it will be extended for indefinite time. Please take this into consideration.

Q. What are the deadlines to apply for OPT?

A. OPT application deadlines have not changed. You may find the dates listed on our [website](#).

Q. I submitted my request for OPT, when can I expect it to be processed?

A. 4-5 business days. However you should expect delays given a high volume of emails and students request amid the crises.

Q. Since ISS is working remotely now, how will I be able to get my OPT I-20? Will you mail it?

A. We are uploading a scanned copy of your signed OPT I-20 next to your ISS Connect record. You will receive detailed instructions in the email once your OPT record is created in SEVIS.

Q. I have one remaining class in summer I, but my commencement is in May. Am I spring graduate?

A. No, you are considered as a summer I graduate. However, if you departed due to the current crisis, and want to apply for OPT, you must come back for summer I class(es), enroll in physical presence class, and apply for OPT then. That is contingent, however, to the situation with travel and whether SEVP Policy will continue to allow continuing students to take the classes entirely online.