January 6, 2021

**Important Information About Delayed OPT Application Receipts**

Due to COVID-19, USCIS is taking 7 – 9 weeks to send out receipt notices and process payments for the applications. *If you used a trackable mail service, please consider it a reliable confirmation of delivery.*

If you applied for a STEM extension and your EAD card expires before your receipt notice is received, please be aware that you can continue working for up to 180 days after that expiration date while your application is pending. You will have to stop employment once the 180th day is reached if you have not yet received approval of your STEM OPT application.

Please note that there have been 4 federal holidays that can cause both mail and processing delays.

- Veterans Day - November 11
- Thanksgiving - November 26th
- Christmas - December 25th
- New Year’s Day - January 1, 2021

You can check one of the following confirmations to see if your application has been received. These confirmations usually come before the paper receipt notice:

1. **Processed payment (you can check the status of the money order by contacting the money order provider).**
2. Confirmation email from G-1145 form.
3. Confirmation text from G-1145 form.

If you have not received any of the 3 confirmations listed above, please contact the USCIS Contact Center. They may be able to assist you, or they may encourage you to continue waiting.


We know this is a stressful time but urge all OPT applicants to be patient. Please understand that this delay is being experienced by every OPT and STEM OPT applicant who has applied for an EAD card since October 2020. These unexpected delays are brought about by COVID-19.