FILING YOUR OPT APPLICATION ONLINE

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

Campus and Student Life
International Affairs

Overview

Effective 4/12/2021, the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) began accepting online applications from F-1 students filing Form-I-765 if you are applying for **Pre-completion OPT**, **Post-completion OPT** or **STEM OPT**. USCIS's news release regarding this announcement can be accessed here.
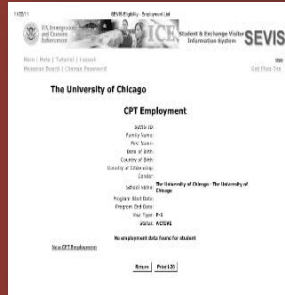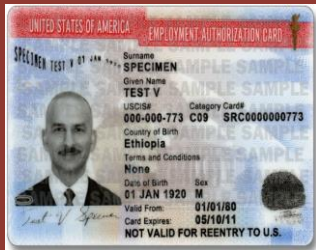
The information below serves as a general guide to submitting your OPT application online. Please note that this guide does not, and is not intended to, constitute legal advice.

➢ You may only file Form I-765 online from within the U.S.

➢ Students who are applying for Initial OPT or STEM extension _**must**_ request an I-20 with OPT Recommendation from OIA _**before**_ starting the online application process. Failure to obtain an I-20 with OPT recommendation from OIA will result in _**denial**_ of your OPT application.
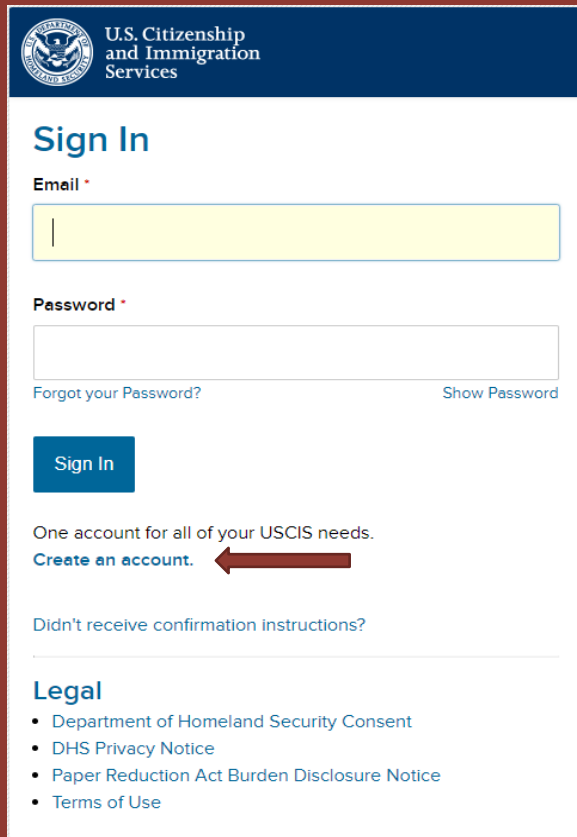
STEP 1: Gather Digital Versions of Your Supporting Documents

□ New passport photo that meets the U.S. government passport photo standards

□ Most recent I-94

□ Identity page(s) of your passport (page that has your photograph and biographical information)

□ I-20 with OPT recommendation on page 2

    o Sign your OPT I-20 at the bottom of page 1

    o USCIS must receive your application within 30 days of our OPT recommendation. This date can be found next to the OIA advisor's signature on Page 1.

□ First/Oldest UChicago I-20

□ Screenshot from SEVIS of previously granted UChicago CPT (you will get this from OIA with your new I-20)

□ Copies (front and back) of all previous EAD(s) issued to you for F-1 OPT, if applicable

□ ***STEM OPT applicants only:*** If you are currently on ***active OPT*** and applying for the STEM extension, you must also upload a copy of your official transcript for the degree on which your STEM extension will be based.

Visit https://myaccount.uscis.gov/ to create your USCIS account. Detailed instructions on how to create a USCIS account can be found here.

After you have logged in to your USCIS account, click on **"My Account"** and select **"File a form online"** from the drop-down menu. Select **"I-765, Application for Employment Authorization"** to start populating your form.

Getting Started

❑ Basis of Eligibility

   o **(c)(3)(A) Pre-completion OPT** – select this option if your requested OPT start date occurs ***before*** the program end date listed on your I-20

   o **(c)(3)(B) Post-completion OPT** – select this option if your requested OPT start date occurs ***after*** the end date listed on your I-20, or after completion of course requirements for MA/PhD students

   o **(c)(3)(C) STEM Extension** – select this option if you are currently on valid post-completion OPT and eligible to apply for STEM extension based on your degree

      STEM OPT applicants only (c)(3)(C):

         o What is your degree?
         o What is your employer's name as listed in E-verify?
         o What is your employer's E-verify company identification number or a valid E-verify client company identification number?

What is your reason for applying?

○ Initial permission to accept employment
○ Replacement of lost, stolen, or damaged employment authorization document or correction of my employment authorization document NOT DUE to US Citizenship and Immigration Services error
○ Renewal of permission to accept employment

Have you previously filed Form I-765?

○ Yes
○ No

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Is someone assisting you with completing this application?

○ Yes
○ No

Back **Next**

Getting Started

❑ **Reason for Applying?**

o What is your reason for applying?
  ► Select "Initial permission to accept employment"

o Have you previously filed Form I-765?
  ► If you have previously filed an I-765, select "Yes". If you have not previously filed an I-765, select "No".

❑ **Preparer and Interpreter Information**

o Is someone assisting you with completing this application?
  ► Select "No"

U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services

I-765, Application for Employment Authorization

Getting Started ⌄

About You ⌃

> **Your name**
>
> Your contact information
>
> Describe yourself
>
> When and where you were born
>
> Your immigration information
>
> Other information

Evidence ⌄

Additional Information ⌄

Review and Submit ⌄

***About You**__*

❑ **Your Name**

    o **What is your current legal name?**
- ► Enter your name as it appears on your Form I-20
- ► Have you used any other name since birth? If "Yes", provide the other names you have used. If "No", continue to the next section.

❑ **Your Contact Information**

    o **How may we contact you?**
- ► Enter your daytime telephone number, mobile number and email address

    o **What is your current U.S. mailing address?**
- ► This is where your EAD will be sent. Your must enter an address that will be valid for the next 4-5 months. If your address will change, you can ask a friend, relative or employer if you can add their name and U.S. address. EADs will not be sent abroad. If you use a friend, relative or employer's address, you must write their full name in the "In Care of Name (if any)" field.

    o **Is your current mailing address the same as your physical address?**
- ► Select "Yes" or "No"

I-765, Application for Employment Authorization

Getting Started

About You

Your name

Your contact information

Describe yourself

When and where you were born

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About You

❑ **Describe Yourself**

  o **What is your gender?**
    ► Select the gender as is reflected on your passport

  o **What is your marital status?**
    ► Select your current marital status

❑ **When and Where Were You Born?**

  o **What is your city, town, or village of birth?**
    ► Complete the information as is listed on your passport/birth certificate

  o **What is your state or province of birth?**
    ► Complete the information as is listed on your passport/birth certificate (if it applies to you)

  o **Is your country of birth?**
    ► Complete the information as is listed on your passport/birth certificate

  o **What is your date of birth?**
    ► Insert your date of birth (MM/DD/YYYY)

I-765, Application for Employment Authorization

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About You

❑ **Your Immigration Information**

o **What is your country of citizenship or nationality?**
▶ Insert the name of your country of citizenship. If you hold multiple citizenships or nationalities, select "add country" to ensure all countries of citizenships or nationalities are reflected.
o **What is your Form I-94 Arrival-Departure Record Number (if any)?**
▶ Your I-94 Arrival-Departure Record Number can be retrieved here
o **When did you last arrive in the United States?**
▶ List your arrival date, place of arrival and status at arrival. You can refer to your most recent I-94 for this information
o **What is the passport number of your most recently issued passport?**
▶ Please refer to the biographical page of your passport
o **What is your travel document number (if any)?**
▶ *Note*: most F-1 students would not have a travel document separate from their passport
o **What is the expiration date of your passport or travel document?**
▶ Please refer to the biographical page of your passport
o **What country issued your passport or travel document?**
▶ Please refer to the biographical page of your passport
o **What is your current immigration status or category?**
▶ Select "F1 – Student, Academic or Language Program
o **What is your Student and Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS) Number (if any)?**
▶ Your SEVIS number can be found on the upper left-hand side of your most recent I-20

U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services

I-765, Application for Employment Authorization

Getting Started ⌄

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Your contact information

Describe yourself

When and where you were born

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__About You__

❏ **Other Information**

   o **What is your A-Number?**
- ► You can list your A-number (if you have one) or select "I do not have or know my A-number. *Note*: Most F-1 students will not obtain an A-Number until after being approved for Post-Completion OPT

   o **What is your USCIS Online Account Number (if any)?**
- ► You can list your USCIS Online Account Number (if you have one) or select "I do not have or know my USCIS online Account Number

   o **Has the Social Security Administration (SSA) ever officially issued a Social Security Card to you?**
- ► If you have a Social Security Number, select "Yes" and enter your Social Security Number. If you do not have a Social Security Number, select "No". You will then be asked of you want the SSA to issue you a Social Security Card to which your response will be "Yes". You will need to agree to the "Consent for Disclosure" and provide your father's and mother's birth names (first and last names at birth).

STEP 3: File Form I-765 Online Con't

2 X 2 Photo Of You

Upload a recent color photograph of yourself that measures 2 inches by 2 inches, with your face measuring 1 inch to 1 3/8 inch from your chin to the top of your head. Your eyes should be between 1 1/8 inch and 1 3/8 inch from the bottom of the photo.

Make sure your whole face is visible, you are facing the camera directly, and the background is white or off-white. Your head must be bare, unless contrary to your religious beliefs.

If you need help understanding the photo requirements or want to resize, rotate, or crop your photo, you can use to the Department of State's photo composition tools. Please note that we cannot approve your application without your photo.

File requirements

- Clear and readable
- Accepted file formats: JPG, JPEG, or PNG
- No encrypted or password-protected files
- If your documents are in a foreign language, upload a full English translation and the translator's certification with each original document.
- Accepted characters: English letters, numbers, spaces, periods, hyphens, underscores, and parentheses
- Maximum size: 6MB per file

Choose or drop files here to upload

I-94, Arrival And Departure Record

Upload a copy of one of the following:

- Your Form I-94, Arrival-Departure Record (front and back);
- A printout of your electronic Form I-94 ; or
- Your passport or other travel document.

If you were admitted to the United States by CBP at an airport or seaport after April 30, 2013, CBP may have issued you an electronic Form I-94 instead of a paper Form I-94. You may visit the CBP website to obtain a paper version of an electronic Form I-94. CBP does not charge a fee for this service. Some travelers admitted to the United States at a land border, airport, or seaport, after April 30, 2013, with a passport or travel document, who were issued a paper Form I-94 by CBP, may also be able to obtain a replacement Form I-94 from the CBP website without charge.

If your Form I-94 cannot be obtained from the CBP website, it may be obtained by filing Form I-102, Application for Replacement/Initial Nonimmigrant Arrival-Departure Record, with USCIS. USCIS does charge a fee for this service.

File requirements

- Clear and readable
- Accepted file formats: JPG, JPEG, PDF, TIF, or TIFF
- No encrypted or password-protected files
- If your documents are in a foreign language, upload a full English translation and the translator's certification with each original document.
- Accepted characters: English letters, numbers, spaces, periods, hyphens, underscores, and parentheses
- Maximum size: 6MB per file

Choose or drop files here to upload

Employment Authorization Document Or Government ID

Upload a copy of your last Employment Authorization document (EAD) (front and back). If you were not previously issued an EAD, you must upload a copy of a government-issued identity document (such as a passport) showing your picture, name, and date of birth; a birth certificate with photo ID; a visa issued by a foreign consulate; or a national ID document with photo and/or fingerprint. The identity document photocopy must clearly show your facial features and contain your biographical information.

File requirements

- Clear and readable
- Accepted file formats: JPG, JPEG, PDF, TIF, or TIFF
- No encrypted or password-protected files
- If your documents are in a foreign language, upload a full English translation and the translator's certification with each original document.
- Accepted characters: English letters, numbers, spaces, periods, hyphens, underscores, and parentheses
- Maximum size: 6MB per file

Choose or drop files here to upload

Previously Authorized CPT Or OPT

Upload evidence of any previously authorized CPT or OPT and the academic level at which it was authorized.

File requirements

- Clear and readable
- Accepted file formats: JPG, JPEG, PDF, TIF, or TIFF
- No encrypted or password-protected files
- If your documents are in a foreign language, upload a full English translation and the translator's certification with each original document.
- Accepted characters: English letters, numbers, spaces, periods, hyphens, underscores, and parentheses
- Maximum size: 6MB per file

Choose or drop files here to upload

I-20, Certificate Of Eligibility For Nonimmigrant Student Status

Upload a copy of the Form I-20, Certificate of Eligibility for Nonimmigrant Student Status endorsed by the Designated School Official (DSO). For the (c)(3)(B) eligibility category, your DSO must have entered the recommendation for OPT into your SEVIS record within 30 days of you submitting Form I-765. If you fail to do so, we will deny your OPT request. For the (c)(3)(C) eligibility category, the Form I-20 must have been endorsed by the DSO within 60 days of submitting Form I-765.

File requirements

- Clear and readable
- Accepted file formats: JPG, JPEG, PDF, TIF, or TIFF
- No encrypted or password-protected files
- If your documents are in a foreign language, upload a full English translation and the translator's certification with each original document.
- Accepted characters: English letters, numbers, spaces, periods, hyphens, underscores, and parentheses
- Maximum size: 6MB per file

Choose or drop files here to upload

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Additional Information

If you need to provide any additional information for any of your answers to the questions in this form, enter it into the space below. You should include the questions that you are referencing.

If you do not need to provide any additional information, you may leave this section blank.

+ Add a response

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Evidence

Use this section to upload your passport picture, Form I-94, biographical page of your passport, any previous Employment Authorization Document(s), previously authorized CPT (only if applying for initial OPT), your Form I-20s (including the OPT I-20 signed by you and OIA) and official transcript (if applying for STEM Extension).

STEM OPT application only: If you are applying for STEM OPT based on a prior STEM degree (prior to your most recently earned degree), you will need to upload evidence of institutional accreditation. ***Note that most students do not apply for STEM OPT based on a prior degree***. If you think you are applying for STEM OPT based on a prior STEM degree, please email your OIA adviser.

Review and Submit

Thoroughly review the information reflected on your I-765 and make sure you have included the OPT I-20 signed by you and OIA. You will need to make payment of the current filing fee online prior to submitting your application. Payments can be submitted via credit/debit card or bank account information.

 Note: standard OPT and STEM OPT applicants are **_not_** required to pay a biometrics fee.

What Happens After You Apply?

- ❑ ***Receipt Number:*** After your application is successfully submitted online, you will receive a receipt number immediately. You can check the status of your application by entering this receipt number on the USCIS Case Status Page by logging into your USCIS account.

- ❑ ***Contact OIA if you****:* Have questions regarding your OPT dates, don't graduate as planned, unable to submit your OPT application within 30 days of OPT recommendation on your I-20, receive an RFE or rejection.

- ❑ ***OPT Processing Time***: Currently, USCIS may take between 3-5 months (from the receipt date) to process your OPT application. Once your application is approved, you will receive your EAD at the address listed on your I-765.

- ❑ ***Responsibilities While on F-1 OPT***: All F-1 students who engage in Post-completion OPT, including STEM Extension, must fulfill certain regulatory reporting requirements. For detailed information regarding responsibilities while of F-1 OPT, please visit the OIA's website Consequences of not fulfilling your reporting requirements could lead to termination of your F-1 status and immediate departure from the U.S.