



OPT Filing: How to Fill in the I-765

This resource is meant to provide you with best practices in preparing an OPT application. Please note that this is not legal advice. You may choose to hire an immigration attorney to assist you with this process at any time. The information contained here is for general information purposes only. The U.S. government may make modifications to the I-765 form and instructions at any time without prior notice.

Do not submit your I-765 to USCIS until you receive the OPT recommendation I-20 and instructions from International Enrollment.

General Tips

We recommend you file the I-765 online. If you are interested in filing using a physical application via the mail, please consult our office first as there are some unique procedures and risks.

You can file the I-765 online by creating a USCIS account at <https://myaccount.uscis.gov/>. More information about filing online is available at <https://uscis.gov/file-online>.

- The online form is the same as the paper version, but the online form logic will show only the relevant questions based on your answers.
- Your answers are automatically saved when you go to a new section and draft forms are saved for 30 days from the last time you worked on your form.
- *Remember to download a copy of your completed I-765 form for your records!*

A screenshot of the USCIS 'Sign In' page. It has a blue header with the USCIS logo and the text 'U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services'. Below the header is a 'Sign In' section with fields for 'Email' and 'Password', a 'Forgot your Password?' link, and a 'Show Password' link. A blue arrow points to a red-bordered button labeled 'Create an account'. Below this is a 'Legal' section with links to 'Department of Homeland Security Consent', 'DHS Privacy Notice', 'Paper Reduction Act Burden Disclosure Notice', and 'Terms of Use'.

Filling in Form I-765 Online

Getting Started

Eligibility Code

Be sure to enter the correct eligibility category:

- **Post-Completion OPT - (c)(3)(B)** (for after graduation or after finishing all coursework)
- **Pre-Completion OPT - (c)(3)(A)** (used before graduation during your program)
- **24 month STEM OPT Extension - (c)(3)(C)** (for STEM degree holders after their first year of Post-Completion OPT)

Only STEM degree holders who are already in their first year of OPT and are applying for the STEM extension should enter (c)(3)(C)!

Premium Processing

Select whether you would like to request Premium Processing.

If USCIS accepts the request, they will take action within 30 calendar days of receiving your application. The premium processing fee is charged in addition to the I-765 filing fee.

USCIS actions can be one of the following:

- An approval notice
- A denial notice
- A notice of intent to deny
- A request for evidence
- Opening an investigation for fraud or misrepresentation

As shown in the screenshot to the right, note that if you choose 'Yes' to this question, you will automatically be sent to Form I-907, 'Request for Premium Processing' after you finish submitting in the I-765 and will be charged the additional fee. You cannot go back and change your answer to this question after you complete the online I-765.

Reason for Applying

Choose 'Initial permission to accept employment' if you are applying for Pre- or Post-Completion OPT.

Only STEM degree holders who are already in their first year of OPT and are applying for the STEM extension should choose 'Renewal of permission to accept employment'.

Previous I-765

Answer based on your immigration history.

Preparer & Interpreter Information

Answer based on your situation.

Put "No" if you prepared the form yourself without an interpreter/preparer's assistance.

I-765, Application for Employment Authorization

Getting Started

- Basis of eligibility
- Reason for applying
- Preparer and interpreter information
- About You
- Evidence
- Additional Information
- Review and Submit

What is your eligibility category?

Warning: You can file your request online only for certain eligibility categories. If your eligibility category does not appear on the drop-down list, you must file a paper [Form I-765](#). If you submit online and are not eligible for one of the listed categories, your application may be denied.

(c)(3)(B) Student Post-Completion OPT

Would you like to request Premium Processing Service?

Premium Processing Service guarantees that USCIS will take one of several possible actions (issue an approval notice, a denial notice, a notice of intent to deny, or a request for evidence) on your Form I-765 within 30 days.

The fee for Premium Processing Service for Form I-765 is \$1,500.

If you request premium processing, you will be asked to complete Form I-907 after you sign your Form I-765. You will then be able to pay for and submit both forms at the same time.

☒ Yes
☐ No

Warning: Form I-765 and Form I-907 will be submitted together. After you sign Form I-765, the form will be locked. You will not be able to make any changes to the form once it is locked. You will immediately be directed to Form I-907 and will be able to pay for and submit both forms after you provide your signatures.

I-765, Application for Employment Authorization

Getting Started

- Basis of eligibility
- Reason for applying
- Preparer and interpreter information
- About You
- Evidence
- Additional Information
- Review and Submit

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

I-765, Application for Employment Authorization

Getting Started

- Basis of eligibility
- Reason for applying
- Preparer and interpreter information

Is someone assisting you with completing this application?

☐ Yes
☒ No

About You

Legal Name

Please put your name exactly as it shows on your passport. Do not enter N/A or Not Applicable if you have no middle/given name, just leave it blank.

Other Names

If you ever legally changed your name, click “Yes” and enter your past names. It’s up to you if you want to share nicknames or aliases. Be consistent across all U.S. government applications!

Your Contact Information

Fill in your contact information.

U.S. Mailing Address

Put a U.S. address where you can receive mail after graduation. If it is not the place where you are currently living, please put your physical address as well. USCIS will not mail anything to you abroad.

Changing your address while your OPT is pending is not recommended! Do not use an on-campus address, as Residence Life will not receive/hold your mail after graduation.

Physical Address

If the same as mailing address, click “Yes”.

If different, click “No” and enter where you are currently physically living at the time of submitting this form.

Describe Yourself & When and where you were born

Make sure all information is accurately entered.

Dates MUST be in mm/dd/yyyy format!

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

What is your city, town, or village of birth?

What is your state or province of birth?

What is your country of birth?

What is your date of birth?

MM/DD/YYYY

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

What is your current legal name?

Your current legal name is the name on your birth certificate, unless it changed after birth by a legal action such as marriage or court order. Do not provide any nicknames here.

Given name (first name)

Middle name

Family name (last name)

Have you used any other names since birth?

Other names used may include nicknames, aliases and maiden names.

☐ Yes

☒ No

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

How may we contact you?

Daytime telephone number

Provide a 10-digit phone number.

Mobile telephone number (if any)

☐ This is the same as my daytime telephone number.

Provide a 10-digit phone number.

Email address

Example: user@domain.com

What is your current U.S. mailing address?

We will use your current mailing address to contact you throughout the application process. We may not be able to contact you if you do not provide a complete and valid address. Please provide a U.S. address only.

In care of name (if any)

Address line 1

Street number and name

Address line 2

Apartment, suite, unit, or floor

City or town

State

ZIP code

Provide a 5 or 9-digit ZIP code.

Is your current mailing address the same as your physical address?

☐ Yes

☐ No

Back

Next

Citizenship

If you have dual citizenship, please put both countries.

I-94 Arrival Information

You can find your I-94 record number and date/place of last entry at: <https://i94.cbp.dhs.gov/I94>. Click 'Get Most Recent I-94' (look at travel history to see place of arrival).

Passport Number

Put the passport number of your most recently issued passport.

Travel Document

Most F-1 students don't have a travel document.

Passport Expiry & Issuing Country

This is your country of citizenship. Don't put the U.S. even if you renewed your passport in the U.S.

Current Status

Choose F-1 student.

SEVIS Number

This is listed on your I-20 at the top. If you have multiple SEVIS numbers, please enter the current one here.

Alien Registration Number

If you have applied for OPT before or other immigration benefits, please put the USCIS number (9 digits) from your EAD.

Have you been issued a Social Security card?

Click "Yes" and enter your SSN if you have one.

If you don't have a SSN check "No".

Do you want SSA to issue a Social Security card?

If you already have the SSN, click "No". If you need a SSN for the first time or lost your SSN card, click "Yes". USCIS will send your information to SSA once they approve your OPT application. The SSN will be issued and mailed to the address you put on the I-765. You should receive the SSN within 7 business days after you receive your EAD. You can also choose to apply for a SSN after you receive the EAD.

What is your A-Number?

☐ I do not have or know my A-Number.

A-

Provide a 7, 8, or 9-digit number. If your A-Number is fewer than 9 digits, the system will automatically add zero(s) after the "A" and before the first digit so there is a total of 9 digits, for example: A-001234567.

What is your USCIS Online Account Number?

Providing your unique USCIS Online Account Number (OAN) helps us manage your account. You may already have an OAN if you previously filed certain paper forms and received an Account Access Notice in the mail. You can find the OAN at the top of the notice; it is not the same as an A-Number.

☐ I do not have or know my USCIS Online Account Number.

Provide a 12-digit Online Account Number.

Has the Social Security Administration (SSA) ever officially issued a Social Security card to you?

☐ Yes

☐ No

Do you want the SSA to issue you a Social Security card?

☐ Yes

☐ No

What is your country of citizenship or nationality?

List all countries where you are currently a citizen or national.

+ Add country

What is your Form I-94 Arrival-Departure Record Number (if any)?

Provide an 11 character I-94 Number.

When did you last arrive in the United States?

List your arrival date, place of arrival, and status at arrival.

Date of arrival (on or about)

MM/DD/YYYY

Place of arrival

Status at last arrival

What is the passport number of your most recently issued passport?

What is your travel document number (if any)?

What is the expiration date of your passport or travel document?

MM/DD/YYYY

What country issued your passport or travel document?

What is your current immigration status or category?

What is your Student and Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS) Number (if any)?

Use the "Additional Information" section to include all previously used SEVIS numbers.

N-

Provide a 10, 11, or 12-digit SEVIS number.

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Evidence

When filling in the online form and uploading documents, please note:

- These file formats are accepted: JPG, JPEG, PNG, PDF, TIF, TIFF
- These file formats are NOT allowed: DOC, BMP, XLSX
- Maximum file size is 6 MB per file.
- Foreign and special characters are not allowed.
- The only characters allowed in document file names are: English letters, numbers, spaces, periods, hyphens, underscores, parentheses.
- Foreign language documents must have a certified English translation.
- Make sure any PDF files are not password protected/encrypted

5 upload files are allowed per section. We recommend naming and uploading each evidence type separately (e.g. Passport copy file named 'passport.pdf' uploaded separately from visa and I-94 files, not combined).

The screenshot below shows where to upload each piece of evidence.

Getting Started

About You

Evidence

2 x 2 photo of you

Form I-94

Employment Authorization Document

Previously authorized CPT or OPT

Form I-20

Additional Information

Review and Submit

Digital U.S. passport photo

I-94

Passport, visa, & Previous EAD card (front & back, if any)

All previous I-20s (each with all 3 pages)

OPT Recommendation I-20

Enter previous SEVIS number & CPT/OPT info (if any)

File name of each upload is shown here

Choose or drop files here to upload

File name	Document	Action
OPT I-20.pdf	Form I-20	Delete

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.
- Upload no more than five documents at a time
- Accepted file name characters: English letters, numbers, spaces, periods, hyphens, underscores, and parentheses
- Maximum size: 6MB per file

Passport Photo of You

- 2 in x 2 in U.S. style passport photo taken within 3 months with white background (note: don't wear glasses).
- Purchase at local pharmacies – ask for a digital photo if possible.
- For digital passport photos, you may also use this website:
<https://tsg.phototool.state.gov/photo>

I-94

You can access your I-94 record at <https://i94.cbp.dhs.gov/i94/#/home>. Click 'Get Most Recent I-94' in the top menu. Enter your name and birth date exactly as it appears in your passport, and your passport number. Click the 'Next' button to access your I-94 and download the PDF.

U.S. Customs and Border Protection

Most Recent I-94

Note to employers, local, state or federal agency granting benefits:

Please visit the CBP I-94 Public Website and click on the tab for "Get Most Recent I-94" to perform a search for the applicant to confirm that the biographic and travel information displayed on this I-94 printout matches the "Get Most Recent I-94" returned results for this applicant. I-94 FAQs: (<https://i94.cbp.dhs.gov/i94/#/faq>)

Admission I-94 Record Number: [REDACTED]

Arrival/Issued Date: 2025 January 21

Class of Admission: F1

Admit Until Date: D/S

Details provided on the I-94 information form:

Last/Surname: [REDACTED]

First (Given) Name: [REDACTED]

Birth Date: [REDACTED] July [REDACTED]

Document Number: BN20 [REDACTED]

Country of Citizenship: B [REDACTED]

Previously Authorized CPT or OPT

- Include all 3 pages of each previous I-20 (including schools other than Hofstra).
- You MUST include those with CPT/OPT, but may want to provide all I-20s just to be safe.

Form I-20

- Upload the OPT recommendation I-20 here. Don't forget to include it, or your application will be automatically rejected!
- *Note your application must be received by USCIS before your grace period ends and within 30 days of the date when your OPT I-20 was issued, whichever is earlier.*

Additional Information

If you had any CPT or OPT before, you need to provide that information in the 'Additional Information' section. Choose the Section, Page, and Question that refers to the eligibility category question as seen in the screenshot to the right.

Then, in the text box enter your CPT/OPT details using the format shown in the example. List the type of work authorization, degree level (Bachelor's, Master's, Doctorate, etc.), start and end dates, and part-time/full-time. If you had OPT before, also include the USCIS number on your previous EAD card.

If you haven't had CPT or OPT before and don't have employment information, you don't need to fill this in.

If you had a different SEVIS number before, you need to choose the Section, Page, and Question that refers back to the question that asked you for your SEVIS number. In the text box, list your previous SEVIS number, the dates during which you used that number, and your degree level (Bachelor's, Master's, Doctorate, etc.) at the time you used that SEVIS number.

Review and Submit

Review your entries carefully before you pay the filing fee. Once you submit payment, you cannot make corrections. When you review your form before submission, print or download a draft snapshot for your records. Double check you uploaded all the materials!

To pay the filing fee you will be directed to Pay.gov, a secure government portal where you can pay by ACH withdrawal from a U.S. bank account, or a U.S. debit card, or accepted credit cards as listed on Pay.gov.

After you pay the fee, your form will be submitted to USCIS. You will receive confirmation the form was submitted. Click on "Go to my cases" to see your case card and receipt notice. All notices will be mailed to the mailing address you provided in the I-765 form and posted to your account, including any requests for evidence (RFE) and decision letter.

The screenshot shows the 'Additional Information' section of the USCIS I-765 application form. It includes three dropdown menus: 'Section' (set to 'Getting Started'), 'Page' (set to 'Basis of eligibility'), and 'Question' (set to 'What is your eligibility category?'). Below these is a text box for 'Additional information' containing the following text: 'CPT/OPT Authorization', 'Degree level', 'Date: mm/dd/yyyy – mm/dd/yyyy', and 'Part-time or Full-time'.

The screenshot shows the 'Check your application before you submit' section of the USCIS I-765 application form. It includes a heading 'Check your application before you submit' and a paragraph: 'Please review your application and check it for accuracy and completeness before you submit it.' Below this is a paragraph: 'We encourage you to provide as many responses as you can throughout the application. Missing or incomplete information may slow down the review process after you submit your application.' Another paragraph follows: 'You can return to this page to review your application as many times as you want before you submit it.' There is a section for 'Your fee' with a blue bar and an information icon, stating 'Your form filing fee is: \$410'. Below this is a 'Refund Policy' section: 'Refund Policy: USCIS does not refund fees, regardless of any action we take on your application, petition or request, or how long USCIS takes to reach a decision. By continuing this transaction, you acknowledge that you must submit fees in the exact amount and that you are paying the fees for a government service.' At the bottom is an 'Alerts and warnings' section with a blue bar, stating: 'You have one or more alerts and warnings based on the information you provided in your application.' A final paragraph reads: 'A red alert means you have incomplete responses or inconsistent data. You cannot submit your application with any alerts.'