



Form I-765 Instructions for Post-Completion Optional Practical Training (OPT)

Background

USCIS Form I-765 can be used by F-1 students to apply for optional practical training (OPT) work authorization. The instructions below are specific to post-completion OPT applications only.

The information contained in this document is simply to provide general assistance with form completion. It does not serve as formal legal advice. **You are responsible for accurate completion of any forms you submit to USCIS.**

Gather Required Documents

Before starting your I-765 application, gather the following documents:

- **2x2 U.S. style passport photo of yourself taken within the last 6 months.** See [the information on the U.S. Department of State website](#) for applicable photo requirements. You may wish to use the [Department of State photo tool](#) to validate your photo.
- **Most recent form I-94.** In most cases, you can download your I-94 electronically from [the U.S. CBP I-94 website](#). On the website, select the option **Get Most Recent I-94**. The information provided under the *View Travel History* option on the I-94 website is not your I-94 and does not need to be submitted with your I-765.

If you were approved for an in-country change of status to F-1 via USCIS form I-539 and you have not traveled outside of the United States since your approval, your F-1 I-94 will be located on your change of status approval notice (form I-797).

Note that your I-94 should show a *Class of Admission* of *F-1* and an *Admit Until Date* of *D/S*. If the I-94 retrieved through the website does not show *F-1* and *D/S* as appropriate and if you are certain that you do not have a more recent paper I-94, please consult with an international student advisor before submitting your I-765.

- **Scan of biographic page of current passport.** Your passport should be unexpired. Biographic page should show your picture, name, date of birth, and passport expiration.

- **Scan, both front and back, of any previous Employment Authorization Document (EAD) card(s) if applicable.** You only need to provide this if you were previously issued one, for example if you were previously authorized for another period of OPT.
- **Scan of OPT I-20 issued by the CMU ISSS office.** On your OPT I-20, please verify the following before submission:
 - Verify the program of study information on page one. There may be slight variation in how your major(s) is/are worded on your I-20 from your actual CMU major/program.
 - Verify that your I-20 is properly endorsed for OPT, found under *Employment Authorizations* on page two:
 - OPT type = Post-Completion OPT
 - Full/Part-Time = Full Time
 - Start and end dates are listed as you requested them.
 - Verify that the OPT recommendation was not issued more than 30 days in the past and more than 90 days before the program end date on page one.
 - Verify that your I-20 is signed by the listed international student advisor.
 - Make sure to sign and date the I-20 where indicated on page one, using the format MM/DD/YYYY for the date.

If there are any issues with your OPT I-20, please contact the ISSS office for assistance before filing with USCIS.

- **Scan of all I-20s showing any previous periods of authorization for CPT and/or OPT.** Be sure to include pages one and two of each I-20.

File formatting requirements:

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

Submit Online Form

1. Go to <https://myaccount.uscis.gov/sign-in>. If you already have a USCIS online account, sign in using your credentials. If you do not already have a USCIS online account, select the option **Create an account** and follow the prompts.
2. Click on **File a Form Online** under **Select What You Want To Do**.
3. Select **I-765 Application for Employment Authorization**.
4. For **Would you like to request Premium Processing Service?** select **Yes** or **No** as appropriate. Note that premium processing requires an additional filing fee of \$1,965 (as of February 2025).
5. Answer the following questions on the form:
 - a. **What is your eligibility category?** → Select **c(3)(B) for post-completion OPT**. Also verify that this is the category OPT listed on page two of your I-20 under *Employer Authorization*.
 - b. **Reason for applying** → Select **initial permission to accept employment**.
 - c. **Have you previously filed Form I-765?** → Select the appropriate answer. If yes, upload your previous employment authorization document (EAD) under the *Evidence* section later in the application when prompted.
 - d. **Is someone assisting you with completing this application?** → Select the appropriate answer. Most students should select **No** unless you have an attorney or employer representative helping you prepare your application.
 - e. **What is your current legal name?** → Record your name as shown in your passport.
 - f. **Have you used any other names since birth?** → Please be sure to include any other names you have used. These are usually names listed on formal/legal documents such as maiden names, married names no longer in use, or names listed on passports, visas, bank accounts, your birth certificate, state/government ID cards, Social Security card, etc.
 - g. **How may we contact you?** → Answer as appropriate.

- h. **What is your current U.S. mailing address?** → **THIS ADDRESS IS VERY IMPORTANT.** List the address where you would like your documents mailed to, including your EAD card and, if applicable, Social Security card. If you are listing a friend or family member's address, enter their name in the ***In care of name*** box.

The address you provide here should be secure and able to receive mail under your name or the named *in care of* person for at least the next six months. EAD cards are not forwarded even if you change your address with the U.S. Postal Service. Likewise, changing the mailing address after filing, while theoretically possible, may result in delivery issues. Resolving delivery issues with EAD cards can be complicated and is best avoided by providing an accurate and reliable address here.

DO NOT use the CMU ISSS office address for your mailing address.

- i. **Is your current mailing address the same as your physical address?** → Select the appropriate answer. If you answered *No*, list your physical address.
- j. **What is your gender?** → Answer as appropriate.
- k. **What is your marital status?** → Answer as appropriate.
- l. **What is your city, town, or village of birth?** → If your passport lists your place of birth and the place in question is a city, town, or village, use that place here. Otherwise, enter the city, town, or village in which you were born.
- m. **What is your state or province of birth?** → If your passport lists your place of birth and the place in question is a state or province, use that place here. Otherwise, enter the state or province in which you were born.
- n. **What is your country of birth?** → Answer as appropriate.
- o. **What is your date of birth?** → Answer as appropriate. Make sure to use the U.S. date format of MM/DD/YYYY.
- p. **What is your country of citizenship or nationality?** → List all countries where you are currently a citizen or national.
- q. **What is your Form I-94 Arrival-Departure Record Number (if any)?** → You should likely enter a value here. Instructions on finding your most recent I-94 are

listed [above](#). The I-94 number is listed on the I-94 itself.

- r. **Date of arrival** → List the date you last entered the U.S. Make sure to use the U.S. date format of MM/DD/YYYY.
- s. **Place of arrival** → Select the port of entry where you arrived using the provided select list. Note that U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) preclearance is available at some foreign airports. As a result, your port of entry may, in fact, be outside of the U.S.
- t. **Status at last arrival** → Select F-1 – F1 – Student, Academic or Language Program, unless you obtained F-1 status via an in-country change of status through USCIS, in which case you should select the status granted to you at the time of arrival.
- u. **What is the passport number of your most recently issued passport?** → Answer as appropriate.
- v. **What is your travel document number (if any)?** → If you entered a passport number in the previous question, you will most likely leave this blank. In some situations, travelers may be issued a travel document by their country in place of a valid passport. If that applies to you, enter your travel document number here. This is not common.
- w. **What is the expiration date of your passport or travel document?** → Be sure to list the expiration date of your most recently issued passport. This is true even if your F-1 visa is in a prior passport. Make sure to use the U.S. date format of MM/DD/YYYY.
- x. **What country issued your passport or travel document?** → Answer as appropriate.
- y. **What is your current immigration status or category?** → Select F-1 – F1 – Student, Academic or Language Program
- z. **What is your Student and Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS) Number (if any)?** → Enter the information directly from your I-20. The SEVIS ID is listed on the top left corner of your I-20 and starts with “N00...”
- aa. **What is your A-Number?** → Most students should check ***I do not have or know my A-number***. However, if you have been issued an A-number from a previous

EAD such as OPT or as part of the green card process, please list your A-number. The A-number is the USCIS # listed on your previous OPT EAD card, if applicable.

bb. **What is your USCIS Online Account Number?** → Most students should check ***I do not have or know my USCIS Online Account Number.*** You may have a USCIS Online Account Number 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.

cc. **Has the Social Security Administration (SSA) ever officially issued a Social Security card to you?** → Answer as appropriate.

dd. **Do you want the SSA to issue you a Social Security card?** → Answer as appropriate.

If you already have a Social Security card from prior employment (e.g. on-campus employment), you do not need to request a new card.

If you do not have a Social Security card and would like to apply for one now:

- i. Select **Yes**.
- ii. Select **Yes** to the **Consent for Disclosure**.
- iii. Provide your parents' birth names as indicated.

6. For the **Evidence** section, upload the documents as indicated. See [the information above](#) for specific document requirements/specifications. **Do not forget to upload these documents.**

- a. 2X2 passport style photo.
- b. I-94 Arrival and Departure Record.
- c. Employment Authorization Document or Government ID.
- d. Previously Authorized CPT or OPT. If uploading, use the **Additional Information** options on the next screen to explain the evidence. See examples below.
- e. I-20, Certificate of Eligibility for Nonimmigrant Student Status (OPT I-20)

7. For **Additional Information**, add a response if:

- a. **You were previously authorized for CPT.** This includes any authorizations granted during the program you are about to complete as well as any periods granted for any past programs at any degree level including programs at other U.S. institutions. For each CPT authorization, include the following:
- i. Whether the period of authorization was full time or part time.
 - ii. The start and end dates of approval (MM/DD/YYYY for dates).
 - iii. The degree level at the time of authorization. This information is available on the CPT I-20 that was printed at the time of authorization.

Sample Format

CPT Authorizations: Part-time, 01/10/2021 – 05/15/2021, PhD Full-time, 05/15/2020 – 08/31/2020, Master's Full-time, 01/10/2017 – 05/15/2017, Bachelor's
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- b. **You were previously authorized for OPT.** For each past period of OPT, include the following:
- i. Specify pre-completion, post-completion, or STEM OPT. This is listed on your EAD card or I-20 corresponding to the period in question.
 - ii. The approved start and end dates of each period (MM/DD/YYYY for dates). This is listed on your EAD card corresponding to the period in question.
 - iii. The degree level for which OPT was granted. This is listed on the I-20 corresponding to the period in question.

Sample Format

OPT Authorizations: Post-Completion, 06/01/2021 – 05/31/2022, Bachelor's

- c. **You have previously used other SEVIS ID numbers for study in the United States.** Provide that information here. For each SEVIS ID, indicate the SEVIS ID number itself, degree level (if applicable), and corresponding status/category.

Sample Format

Previous SEVIS IDs: N0005554823, Bachelor's, F-1 Student N0008675309, J-1 Research Scholar
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8. Use the **View draft snapshot** option to review and save your application. **Make sure that you have answered all required questions completely and accurately.** The form will not prevent submission even if responses for some required questions are missing. Therefore, do not rely on the form telling you what you are missing. Double and triple check. Once you submit your application, you cannot make any corrections.
9. Check the box ***I can read and understand English, and have read and understand every question and instruction on this application, as well as my answer to every question.***
10. Read the attestation and check the box ***I have read and agree to the applicant's statement.***
11. Provide your digital signature in the box by typing your full legal name.
12. Select your payment information and proceed with the payment prompts. The filing fee can be made by bank account (ACH), debit card, or credit card.

After Submission

You will receive confirmation that your I-765 was successfully submitted. Following completion, you should also be able to review your I-765 receipt notice in your online USCIS account and track the status of the application. Please note that the ISSS office does not have access to any additional information regarding the status of your application. Expect your application to take **at least** 90 days to process if you did not request and pay for premium processing.