



# Applying for 12 Month Post Completion OPT Using the Online USCIS Portal

International Student and Scholar Services

Updated: 2/21/2022

## Disclaimer:

**Please note that this tutorial provides guided recommendations. All images used are samples. Information contained within should not be considered legal advice. Please remember that it is ultimately your responsibility to ensure the application materials you submit to USCIS are completed correctly.**

**This tutorial may change over time; please do not download this document, and instead access it newly each time at the Sac State ISSS website**



## OPT Application Process Overview

1. Attend an OPT Application Workshop
2. Online applicants only: Start the online process but DO NOT submit.
3. Send application documents (PDF format) to your ISSS Advisor
4. Your ISSS advisor will schedule an appointment with you to review then send you a OPT I-20 via email
5. Submit supporting documents and OPT I-20 to USCIS either online or via mail
6. Wait for USCIS to adjudicate
7. After approval, report updates according to the Responsibilities and Reporting Requirements Form

**This tutorial describes Step 2 - 5 ONLY**



## Prepare Your Documents

1. Ensure you have items D – E as described on the 12 Month OPT Application and Instructions document

2. Prepare items D – E for upload.

### File Formats

Photos: JPG, JPEG, or PNG

Documents: JPG, JPEG, PDF, TIF, or TIFF

Maximum size per file: 6MB

You can upload 5 documents at once, and there is no limit to the number of files you can upload in total

Foreign language documents must have official English Translation

### Allowable Characters in file names

English letters

Numbers

Spaces

Periods .

Hyphens -

Underscores \_

Parentheses ( )

\*\*\*\*Do not use special characters



## Create or Login to your USCIS Online Account

3. Create or Login to your USCIS Online Account following the instructions on their website. If you applied for OPT online in the past, you may already have an account

2 step authentication is used, and you will choose which way you prefer this to be verified (text vs email)

Each account is unique to 1 person - you cannot have 2 people using 1 account

Resources:

<https://www.uscis.gov/file-online/how-to-create-a-uscis-online-account>

[www.uscis.gov/file-online](https://www.uscis.gov/file-online)



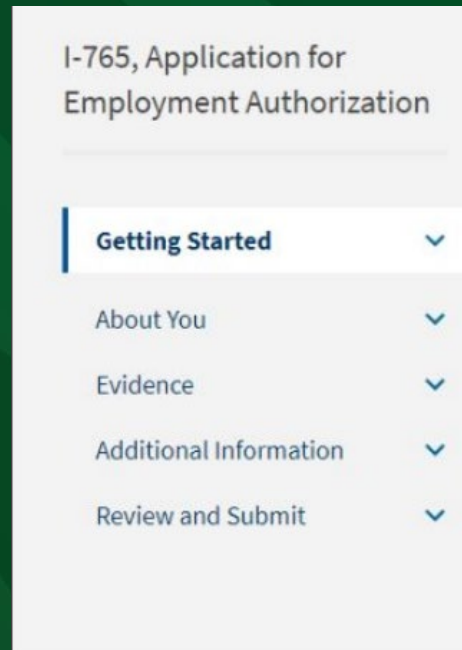
## The Online Application

4. Read official instructions for completing Form I-765: <https://www.uscis.gov/i-765>

5. Once Logged in to your USCIS account, click “File a form online”

6. The online application has multiple sections to complete.

The \$410 application fee will be paid in the “Review and Submit” section



I-765, Application for  
Employment Authorization

- Getting Started
- About You
- Evidence
- Additional Information
- Review and Submit



## The Online Application

7. Select “Application for Employment Authorization (I-765)”
8. Under “What is your eligibility category” select c(3)(B) Student Post-Completion OPT
9. Under “What is your reason for applying” select “Initial permission to accept employment”  
  
“Replacement” is only if your EAD was lost or stolen. Please contact your ISSS before selecting this option. “Renewal of permission to accept employment” refers to the 24 Month STEM OPT Extension.
10. Under “have you previously filed Form I-765” select “yes” or “no”. If you have been authorized for OPT at another education level for example, the answer is “yes.”
11. Under “Is someone assisting you with completing this application” select “no”, unless an attorney, preparer, or interpreter is helping you file. Sac State ISSS advisors are not attorneys, preparers, or interpreters.



## The Online Application

12. Enter your name as shown on your passport. If you have used other names, either formally or informally, indicate “yes” and enter them on the application.
13. Write a U.S. mailing address where you will be able to receive documents for the next 3 to 4 months. Do not use the IPGE address or other Sac State office address.

The address can be someone else’s (e.g. friend or family). In this case, write the full name of the person whose address you are using in “In care of name” box.

If your mailing address and physical address are different, answer “no” to the next question and enter your physical address.

14. Fill out your biographical information throughout the next section of the application





## The Online Application

15. Continue to fill out your immigration information using your I-94 and passport

To download your I-94 go to: <https://i94.cbp.dhs.gov/>

If you entered the U.S. on another status other than F-1 and completed a change of status with USCIS, write the status you last entered under “status at last arrival”

F-1 students do not have a travel document, so this field may be left blank.

Your current immigration status should be “F-1 Student”

Enter your current SEVIS ID (begins with N). You may find this at the top of your I-20. Use the “Additional Information” section to provide any previously used SEVIS ID numbers, if applicable.



## The Online Application

16. You will only have an A-Number if you have previously filed a petition with USCIS (OPT, for example). This number is also called your “USCIS #” and can be found on a previously issued EAD (if any).

You will only have a USCIS Online Account Number if you previously filed an online application with USCIS. Check “I do not have or know my USCIS Online Account Number” if you never filed online before.

17. Select “yes” and enter your Social Security Number. If you do not have an SSN, you may select “no” and apply for one along with your OPT application. You should receive an SSN in addition to your OPT EAD. This is issued by mail usually within a couple weeks of EAD issuance.
18. Under “2 x 2 Photo of You”, upload your photo using the file requirements. See item D on the 12 Month OPT Application and Instructions document for details.



## The Online Application

19. Obtain your I-94 and upload. Your I-94 can be found at <https://i94.cbp.dhs.gov/>. If you changed your status to F-1 while inside the United States (using Form I-539), your I-94 will be located on the bottom of your I-797 Approval Notice.
20. Under “Employment Authorization Document or Government ID” Upload the following:
  - Image of biographical page of your most recent passport. The bottom numbers (Machine Readable Zone) must be visible
  - Image of your F-1 visa. If you do not have an F-1 visa, upload your I-797 Approval Notice. Canadian citizens do not have F-1 visas.
  - Image of previously issued EAD cards, front and back



## The Online Application

**21. Under “Previously Authorized CPT or OPT” Upload the following:**

**-CPT: Upload a copy of the I-20 you received with the CPT Authorization**

**-OPT/STEM OPT: Upload a copy of the EAD card(s) you received from USCIS**

**If you have not had either CPT or OPT, click Next to Continue**



## The Online Application



**STOP HERE.** Send items A – E to your ISSS Advisor. Your advisor will schedule an appointment with you to review, then issue an OPT request I-20.

Once you have your OPT request I-20, proceed to the next slide.

If you proceed without your OPT request I-20 your OPT will be denied by USCIS.



## The Online Application

Once you have your OPT request I-20, double check that you are within your application window. Your application must be received by USCIS within 30 days of issuance by ISSS, or before the end of your 60 day grace period, whichever is sooner. If your application is received by USCIS outside this timeframe, your OPT will be denied.

Also ensure you are only filing with just one method (online OR mail). Do not file using both methods!



## Finishing the Application

22. Upload your OPT request I-20. This must be signed and dated by you in ink.

If you do not have an I-20 with an OPT recommendation **STOP HERE** and go back two slides.

23. Additional Information

You may need to provide additional information in this section with additional evidence. Please see examples of situations that may apply below. If any of these apply, discuss with your ISSS Advisor. If none apply, click Next.

Examples:

- You Filed Form I-765 previously but it was withdrawn or denied
- You have ever been in status with a different SEVIS ID
- You entered the U.S. overland and your I-94 does not reflect entry
- If you hold dual citizenship
- You entered the U.S. in a different status (not F-1) and changed to F-1 from within the United States



## The Online Application

24. Check your application and fix all alerts and warnings. Ensure that the application is showing the correct filing fee of \$410. You will be able to pay by ACH withdrawal from your savings/checking account or by credit/debit card.
25. Under “Your application summary” section, save a copy of your application by clicking “view draft snapshot.” This is a good time to double check all of the information in your application.
26. Under “your statement” section, read and confirm the statement. Type your full level name under “applicant’s signature” and click “next”
27. Once you have confirmed you are within your application window, make payment and submit your application.

After you complete payment at pay.gov you should see a screen which confirms “you successfully submitted your I-765” and receive an email from pay.gov with your payment confirmation. Make sure you save these for your records.





# Congratulations!

You have submitted your OPT application! You may follow the progress of your application by viewing “Your Cases” in your *myUSCIS* account and clicking on Case Status, Case History, or Documents for application history/receipt.

Follow the procedures as outlined in the Responsibilities and Reporting Requirements Form and contact ISSS with any inquiries at [intlprg@csus.edu](mailto:intlprg@csus.edu) or (916) 278-6686.

