

# GUIDE TO APPLYING FOR OPT

## DOCUMENTS TO COMPILE

- [Form G-1145, E-Notification of Application/Petition Acceptance](#) – (recommended)  
<https://www.uscis.gov/g-1145>
  - To receive an e-Notification when your Form I-765 has been accepted
  - Attach it to the front of the application
  
- [Two US Passport-Style Photos](#)
  - Taken recently
  - Lightly print your name on the back of each photo with a pencil
  - Individuals should not wear glasses when posing for their photos
  
- [I-765 Application Fee](#)
  - Look up current fee <https://www.uscis.gov/forms/our-fees>
  - Personal check or money order payable to “U.S. Department of Homeland Security”. Do not abbreviate.
  
  - Do not use starter checks (those that do not have your name/address printed)
  
- [Form I-765, Application for Employment Authorization](#) <https://www.uscis.gov/i-765>
  - Type or print legibly in black ink
  - For “I am applying for” select “Permissions to accept employment” for a new application
  
  - For item #3, make sure the address you list on this form will be accurate for at least 90 days as this is where USCIS will send your Receipt Notice, Approval Notice and EAD. If you will use a reliable friend or family member’s address, please make sure to use the C/O notation, (C/O Mary Smith, 123 Main St.)
  
  - In the Eligibility Category write:
    - (c) (3) (A) for pre-completion OPT
    - (c) (3) (B) for post-completion OPT
  
- [Photocopies of all I-20’s](#)
  
- [Copy/Print out of Form I-94, Arrival-Departure Record](#)
  - [www.cbp.gov/i94](http://www.cbp.gov/i94) or copy of the I-94 card (front and back)
  
- [Photocopy of passport bio page](#)
  
- [Photocopy of F-1 visa](#) (citizens of Canada and Bermuda are exempt)
  
- [Photocopy of all previous EADs](#) (if applicable)
  
- [Signed and updated I-20 with authorization for OPT](#) (will receive from DSO, at meeting, after all above items have been compiled)

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### **TO DOUBLE CHECK**

- Check all documents for completeness and accuracy.
- Be sure to sign Forms I-20 and I-765.
- Make a complete copy of your application for your records.
- All documents should be single-sided. Do not use staples.
- Keep a copy of your express mail receipt and money order receipt, if applicable.
- Mail your completed application to the USCIS office that has jurisdiction over the address listed on your Form I-765.

### **Important OPT Reminders:**

- For pre-completion OPT, you can file the Form I-765 up to 90 days before being enrolled for a full academic year, as long as the OPT will not begin until after you have completed a full academic year. If you have been enrolled for a full academic year, you can file the Form I-765 up to 120 days prior to the requested OPT start date.
- For post-completion OPT, you can file the Form I-765 up to 90 days before your program end date and no later than 60 days after your program end date.
- The Form I-765 must be received by USCIS within 30 days of the date your advisor made the OPT recommendation in SEVIS (see page 1 of the printed Form I-20 for the date).
- If you move and do not provide USCIS with your new address, your EAD will be returned to USCIS. To change your address, submit an online Form AR-11 to USCIS, and ask your DSO to update SEVIS.
- Your OPT employment must be directly related to your field of study and cannot begin until you have the EAD card in hand (and the start date has arrived).
- F-1 status is dependent upon full-time employment or volunteer service while on post-completion OPT. You cannot accrue more than 90 days of unemployment while on post-completion OPT. If you are close to 90 days, consult with your DSO.
- You will need to continue to update your DSO with address changes and changes in employment while on post-completion OPT.