

Step-by-Step Instruction on OPT Application

PLEASE note:

Dr. Yang is not a DSO yet. All official answers, signatures and approval, etc. must be from Ms. Benson.

Step I: Request your OPT I-20

If you are eligible for OPT, and ready to apply, please talk to your DSO and request OPT. Your DSO will enter your information and recommend in SEVIS. Your DSO will issue you a new I-20 with OPT recommendation. After receiving your OPT I-20, please carefully check on the information for accuracy. Pay more attention to Education Level, Program End Date, DSO Signature, Your Signature, and the new Travel Signature. Report immediately to your DSO if there are any errors.

Step II: Prepare your application materials

Required documents for OPT application

- All documents should be printed or copied single-sided
- U.S. Passport Photos (with name and I-94 number written lightly in pencil on back of each), taken within the past 30 days.
- USCIS Fee of \$410. Check, Money Order, or Credit Card payment made payable to: "U.S. Department of Homeland Security." Write your SEVIS ID in the memo line.
- Form G-1145 to confirm receipt and obtain case number in advance of paper notification: <http://www.uscis.gov/files/form/g-1145.pdf>
- Original form I-765: <https://www.uscis.gov/i-765>
- Copy of OPT I-20 (pages 1-3) issued by your DSO within the past 30 days. Don't forget to sign it!
- Copy of currently valid passport biographical page and F-1 visa stamp, if applicable.
- Copy of expired passport biographical page if you used that document to enter the U.S. most recently.
- Printout of electronic I-94 record (<https://i94.cbp.dhs.gov/I94/>) or copy of paper Form I-94 (both sides).
- Copies of all previous CPT I-20s (from KSU and/or previous schools), if applicable.
- Copies of all previous OPT I-20s and EAD card(s) (from KSU and/or previous schools), if applicable.

- SPECIAL CASES (RARE): If your KSU OPT I-20 shows less than 1 academic year (2 semesters) of enrollment
 - Readmitted/Transfer students – 1) Copies of I-20s from previous Transfer schools and 2) KSU Adviser Transfer I-20 Letter
 - Change of Status students – 1) Copy of Change of Status Approval Notice and 2) Official KSU transcript and 3) KSU Adviser Change of Status letter 27

Gather the Required Documents

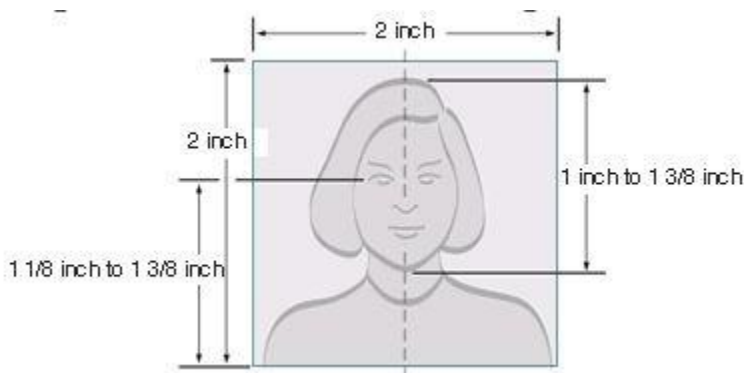
1. Passport Photo Requirements

The photos required to use for the OPT application must meet the specifications of U.S. style passport photos. To see a full description of these specifications, go to the U.S. Department of State website

(https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/passports.html/pptphotoreq/pptphotoreq_5333.html)

.Professional Photography USCIS has been examining passport photos more strictly. I recommend students have their photos taken professionally.

- Submit 2 identical color passport photos taken within 30 days of filing your application. The photos must have a white to off-white background, be printed on thin paper with a glossy finish, and be unmounted and unretouched. The passport-style photos must be 2” by 2”. You must remove your glasses and your head must be bare unless you are wearing headwear as required by a religious order of which you are a member.
- Using pencil or felt tip (soft) pen, lightly print your name and I-94 number on the back of the photo. Do not damage the photo surface by pressing hard while writing.



2. Check, Money Order, or Credit Card

- USCIS Payment Methods: Check/Money Order or Credit Card Payment for \$410.
- Check/Money Order should be made payable to "U.S. Department of Homeland Security" with SEVIS number in the memo line. Money orders can be purchased at banks, post office, and some local grocery stores such as Kroger. Make sure a name and address are printed on the check. If the address has changed, that is fine.
 - Do not use "temporary checks" often issued by the bank when opening a new account. These checks have no name or address in the upper left hand corner.
- For Credit Card payment, submit form G-1450 (<https://www.uscis.gov/sites/default/files/files/form/g-1450.pdf>) authorized payment amount \$410. You may only use a credit card account with a U.S. billing address—no foreign billing address is allowed. You can use cards with Visa, MasterCard, American Express, and Discover. See Pay Your USCIS Fees with a Credit Card <https://www.uscis.gov/forms/pay-a-credit-card>
- MOST OPT DENIALS ARE DUE TO BAD PAYMENTS! IF YOU USE A CHECK OR CREDIT CARD MAKE SURE YOU MAINTAIN SUFFICIENT FUNDS IN THE ACCOUNT.

Credit Card, Personal Check, Cashier's Check, or Money Order:

- Money orders can be bought at many large grocery stores and places like the U.S. Post Office or Kroger.
- Usually you must have a checking account at a bank to either write a personal check or request a cashier's check.
- If you buy a money order or get a cashier's check from a bank, the amount of money written on the document is guaranteed to be available when USCIS processes your application.
- If you write a personal check, you could make a mistake and not have enough money in your checking account when USCIS processes your application fee. USCIS will reject your application!
- If using the Form G-1450, be sure to pay attention to detail as any error on the form will result in a processing delay or denial. Like with the personal check, make sure that you have enough money/ credit available in your account to cover the application fee.



3. Form G-1145

- Attach to the top of the OPT Application Packet
- Use this form to request text and email notification(s) regarding your application. Download the form at <http://www.uscis.gov/files/form/g-1145.pdf>

WARNING! USCIS will rarely contact you by phone regarding the status of your OPT application. If you receive a phone call from a person claiming to work for USCIS or any other government agency, do not provide your personal information to them. Note the person's name, phone number, and email address, and contact your DSO before responding.

4. Form I-765

Download the I-765 form from the USCIS web site (<https://www.uscis.gov/i-765>) and review the I-765 instructions found there. Important: Use the most current version. It is best to download it just before mailing the application since USCIS updates it frequently.

Step III: Complete the Form I-765

These following directions are designed to help you complete the Form I-765 in order to apply for Post-Completion Optional Practical Training (OPT). Please note that the following suggestions are not legal advice and provide a general overview of the most commonly misunderstood items—be sure to complete ALL relevant fields of the Form I-765. Be sure to use the most recent version of the Form I-765 by visiting the USCIS I-765 website (<https://www.uscis.gov/i-765>).

Important General Advice:

1) Type your I-765

- Typing is preferred. Typing helps prevent unclear handwriting from causing errors on your EAD and helps avoid mail delivery problems or delays. Use the fillable PDF I-765 on the USCIS website to type in your answers.
- If you can't type your form, clearly print answers in black ink.

2) Sign your I-765 in black ink

- Typed signatures are not acceptable. The government will reject and return I-765s that are not signed.
- Make sure that your signature fits within the box provided.

3) Answer all questions fully and accurately

- If a question does not apply to you, type or print "N/A" (short for 'Not Applicable') unless otherwise directed. If a question asks for a numerical response and does not apply to you, write "None".
- Include all pages of the Form I-765 along with your supplemental documents. The government will reject and return applications that do not include all 7 pages of the Form I-765.

4) If you need extra space, use Part 6. Additional Information (page 7 of Form I-765)

- Make sure to type or print your A-number (if any) at the top of the sheet.
- Use Part 6 to provide all previously used SEVIS numbers along with evidence of previously authorized CPT or OPT and the academic level at which it was authorized.
- Provide the Page Number, Part Number, and Item Number to which your answer refers.
- Even if you do not need the extra space, include the blank page with the rest of your application materials.

5) Carefully prepare the I-765 fee (see also previous section)

- The government will reject and return OPT applications if there is not the exact amount of money available to pay the fee when the application arrives at the government center. Do not send a check and plan to add money to your bank account later. Have 100% of the fee money ready when you mail your application to the government.

- The check or money order for the fee must be drawn from a bank or other financial institution located in the United States and must be payable in U.S. currency: Do not use a check or money order from a foreign bank with online U.S. accounts. This is most common for Canadian students with U.S. dollar Canadian bank accounts.
- Make the check or money order payable to U.S. Department of Homeland Security. NOTE: Spell out U.S. Department of Homeland Security; do not use initials like “DHS”.
- Dates on a check or money order are critical! Write the current date on the check or money order; do not write a future date.
- Use the standard U.S. date style of Month Day Year (example: June 15, 2018).
- USCIS Form G-1450 (<https://www.uscis.gov/sites/default/files/files/form/g-1450.pdf>) allows you to send your credit card information in place of a check or money order.

I-765 Form Step-by-Step Walk Through

Part 1: Item 1: Reason for Applying

Applicants requesting authorization for standard 12-month post-completion OPT should select “1.a. Initial permission to accept employment”.

Part 2: Information About You:

Part 2: Item 1: Full Legal Name

Write your Family Name in CAPITAL letters. If you can’t fit your full name in the space, see Part 6: Additional Information for instructions. Please write your name exactly as it appears in the Surname/Family Name and Given Name fields on your I-20. Note your I-20 DOES NOT use the Middle Name field!

Part 2: Item 2-4: Other Names Used

Provide all other names you have ever used, including aliases, maiden name, and nicknames. If you have never used another name, write “N/A”

Page 2: Part 2: Item 5: U.S. Mailing Address

Important mail about your OPT application, including your official receipt and Employment Authorization Document (approval card), will be mailed to the address you

write here. If your mail is sent to someone other than yourself, please include an “In Care of Name” as part of your mailing address.

This is very important! The address should be valid for at least 3-5 months, the length of time it will take to process the application. If you have plans to move during this time, use a reliable friend or family member’s address to receive the EAD (indicate this in #5.a.) It is also possible to use a P.O. Box for mailing addresses.

Warning! Government mail will not be forwarded to a new address by the U.S. Postal Service, even if you ask the U.S. Postal Service to forward your mail. The only way to change the address USCIS uses for your OPT-related mail is to submit an official change of address to USCIS using their website tool.

If you listed a mailing address in **Item 6** that is NOT your current physical living address, select “No” and complete #7.a-7.e. with your current physical address. If “Yes,” write “N/A” in #7.a-7.e. Physical address should reflect where you actually live.

Part 2: Item 8: Alien Registration Number (A-Number)

Only use this field if you have an A-number. It is likely that you will not have this number unless you have previously applied for OPT. Do not use your I-94 number in place of the A-Number. Instead, write “None”.

Part 2: Item 9: USCIS Online Account Number

F-1 students do not have a USCIS Online Account Number, write “None”.

Part 2: Item 10-11

The responses to these questions should be straightforward. Please complete them accurately.

Part 2: Item 12: Have you previously filed Form I-765

No: The most common answer for this question is “no”. Students with Curricular Practical Training (CPT) should answer “no”, because there is no EAD card for CPT employment. Students with on-campus jobs also answer “no.”

Yes: Check “yes” only if you have previously applied for an EAD card from USCIS. See the Instructions for Part 6 for more instructions.

Part 2: Items 13-17: related to the Social Security Number

Social Security Number (SSN) #13.a. Check “Yes” if you have been issued an SSN and enter your SSN with one letter in each box. #13.b. Skip this if you don’t already have an SSN. #14. Check “Yes” if you want a new or replacement SSN card and complete. #15-17.b. Check “No” if you do not want a new or replacement SS card. The responses to these questions are straightforward. Please complete them accurately

Part 2: Item18: Countries of Citizenship,

List all as applicable (use Part 6 of the I-765 if needed) or write “N/A” in 18.b if you do not have multiple citizenships.

Part 2: Item19-20: Place of Birth

List the name of the country as it was named when you were born, even if its name has changed.

Make sure your Date of Birth is in the correct format of MONTH - DAY - YEAR.
(01/15/2002 not 15/01/2002)

Part 2: Item 21: Information about Your Last Arrival

Use your current I-94 number. This is at the number found on the electronic I-94 record or on the top left corner of the paper Form I-94 card. I-94 numbers issued prior to May 2019 are 11 characters long and contain only numbers. Example: 01234567890. I-94 numbers starting in May 2019 have a format of 9 numbers, followed by a letter, then another number. Example: 012345678A1.

Passport Information: Enter the information directly from your passport. This passport should match the country on your I-20. In cases where you entered the U.S. on a passport that is now expired, enter the number of your expired passport. (You will provide information on the new passport on pg. 7 of the application.)

Travel Document: Write N/A here.

Part 2: Item 22: Date of Last Entry into the U.S.

Your most recent entry date can be found on your passport admission stamp, electronic I-94 record, or paper I-94 card.

Part 2: Item 23: Place of Last Arrival into the U.S.

Enter the Name of the Port of Entry city from your most recent entry. This information can be found on your passport admission stamp, travel history section of your electronic I-94 record, or paper I-94 card. If you drove across the border, write the name of the city where entered the U.S.

Part 2: Item 24-25: Status at Last Entry and Current Immigration Status

Most OPT applicants will write “F-1 Student” for items 24 and 25. If you have changed from a different immigration category to F-1 status by filing paperwork with the U.S. government, include a copy of your change of status Approval Notice.

Part 2: Item 26: Your SEVIS ID appears on the top left side of your I-20 and starts with N00...

Part 2: Item 27: Information about your Eligibility Category

Write the code **(c) (3) (B)** for eligibility category Post-Completion OPT. DO NOT USE a different code! Even if you have a STEM degree, you are applying NOW for your 12-Month Post-completion OPT, NOT the 24-Month STEM OPT Extension!

Part 2: Items 28–31: Further Questions about your Eligibility Category

Write “N/A” and/or “None” in response fields. These questions are NOT applicable to applying for your 12-month Post Completion OPT. Item 28 is for STEM OPT Extension applicants only.

Part 3: Applicant’s Statement, Contact Information, Declaration, Certification and Signature:

Select 1.a. to indicate that you have read and understood the questions.

Write “N/A” in 1b and Item 2

Items 3-6: Provide your information as requested

Items 7.a.-7.b: Hand sign your name and provide the date of the signature.

NOTE: Your signature must be handwritten in black ink (not typed) and fit inside the box. Signatures that fit will be scanned and printed on your EAD card. If the signature is too big, your application could be delayed.

Part 4-5: Interpreter’s Contact Information, Certification and Signature

Complete all fields with “N/A”, unless an interpreter read and explained every question and instruction to you. This section is for those who use an interpreter or other paid preparer to complete the form.

Part 6: Additional Information

Complete this section only if:

- You do not have enough room to sufficiently answer any of the items contained in Parts 1-5
- You have been approved for CPT in the past
- You have been approved for OPT in the past
- You have used a different SEVIS ID in F-1 status in the U.S. (for example, you attended school for a while, left the U.S. to take a break from school, and returned with a new I-20, you would have a SEVIS ID from your first period of attendance that is different than your current SEVIS ID). Your SEVIS ID is on the top right corner of your I-20, and starts with N00...

If you need to complete this section because one or more of these apply to you, please complete Items 1 and 2 (if applicable). For each of the items listed above, complete **one** box in Part 6. We suggest using the following to complete the Page Number, Part Number, and Item Number for any previous work authorization, as this information is required specific to Category (c)(3)(B) (per the I-765 instructions (<https://www.uscis.gov/sites/default/files/document/forms/i-765instr.pdf> page 4)).

Page 3, Part 2, Item 27

CPT: Please list your CPT approvals. We suggest this format: CPT Authorizations (as a title to the section). Employer; Start date – End date; Part-time or Full-time; Degree level (Bachelor’s, Master’s, or Doctorate). You can find your CPT details on the I-20 that was approved for each period of CPT.

OPT: Please list your past OPT approvals. We suggest this format: OPT Authorizations (as a title to the section). Start date – End date; Degree level (Bachelor’s, Master’s, or Doctorate). Make sure to also include a copy of any previously issued EADs.

Previous SEVIS IDs: Please list your other SEVIS IDs you have used in the past. We suggest this format: Previous SEVIS IDs (as a title to the section). SEVIS ID: N00...; program start date –

program end date; Degree level (Bachelor's, Master's, or Doctorate). (Use **Page 3, Part 2, Item 26** to label your response in Part 6)

If you are using Part 6 to record any information that did not fit in the appropriate section in Parts 1-5, make sure to use the accurate locator. For example, if your family name does not fit in the box provided in Part 2, Item 1.a., in Part 6, you would complete a box as follows, in addition to writing your full, legal, family name.

3. a. Page Number	3.b. Part Number	3.c. Item Number
1	2	1a

You are done with the I-765. Include ALL pages of the Form I-765, even pages that do not apply to you, when you submit your application to USCIS for adjudication. Carefully, you must

- Review all the information on the form for accuracy. You must submit ALL 7 pages of the I-765.
- Make a copy of your completed I-765 application to keep for your records, in case there is a problem with the application.
- Next, gather the required documentation and copies...

Required Documentations to be Submitted (see Page 1)

1. Photocopy of KSU OPT I-20 (all pages):
 - Must be received by USCIS within 30 days of DATE ISSUED on page 1.
 - Original must be signed by your DSO before copying.
 - Original must be signed by the student at the bottom of page 1 before copying.
 - The requested OPT start and end dates will appear on page 2.
 - Do not mail the original I-20.
2. Photocopy of Passport and Visa:
 - Photocopy the passport biographic page with the photo and passport expiration date. Use a valid passport even if it is not the passport you used to enter the US most recently. (You will provide information on the expired passport on pg. 7.)
 - Photocopy the F-1 visa, if applicable; visa does not need to be valid.
3. Photocopy of I-94 Information: The I-94 can be either:
 - An electronic I-94 record. Visit: www.cbp.gov/i94 to access and print your record.

OR

- A paper I-94 card stapled into your passport. Include a copy of both sides, even though the back side may be blank.

OR

- A copy of an I-797 Change of Status Approval Notice which includes a new I-94
4. Photocopy of all previous OPT and CPT I-20s:
- Include copies of all previous CPT and OPT I-20s at KSU and previous schools.
 - Old and new versions of the I-20 are acceptable.
 - Copy **all 3 pages**.
 - Keep the originals for your records.
 - Copies of original I-20s are best, but you may need to request copies of any lost CPT/OPT I-20s.
 - KSU I-20s: request these from DSO when you turn in your OPT Request.
 - Previous School I-20s: contact them directly
 - If you have never used CPT or OPT in the past, you do not need to include previous I-20s.
5. Photocopy of Previous EAD(s), if applicable:
- If an EAD was received in the past, include a copy of the front and back of the card.
 - Can be from OPT approved at a prior institution or different education level.
 - Include previous OPT I-20s and I-797 notice of approval as well if available.

FINANL Steps: Mail your application to USCIS:

Be sure to check all documents for completeness and accuracy.

- Refer to I-765 Instructions.
- Be sure to sign Forms I-20 and I-765.
- Keep a complete copy of your application for your records.
- We do not maintain copies of your OPT applications.
- 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 completed application to the USCIS office that has jurisdiction over the address listed on your Form I-765 (see below):

Mail your package to:

- **For U.S. Postal Service (USPS):**
USCIS
P.O. Box 660867
Dallas, TX 75266
- **For FedEx, UPS, and DHL deliveries:**
USCIS
Attn: NFB AOS
2501 S. State Hwy. 121 Business
Suite 400
Lewisville, TX 75067

If you reside outside of Kentucky, please review the USCIS [mailing instructions](#) to find the correct Lockbox location.

Note: Your OPT application must arrive at USCIS within 30 days of I-20 issuance.

On January 8, 2021, USCIS changed the filing addresses for F-1 student I-765 filings, including F-1 OPT (pre-completion, post-completion and STEM OPT), off-campus employment with an international organization, and off-campus employment due to severe economic necessity. The [USCIS Direct Filing Addresses for Form I-765 page](#), with a Last Reviewed/Updated date of 01/08/2021, now instructs filers to submit these applications to the **USCIS Chicago Lockbox**, at:

U.S. Postal Service (USPS):

USCIS
PO Box 805373
Chicago, IL 60680

FedEx, UPS, and DHL deliveries:

USCIS
Attn: I-765 C03
131 South Dearborn - 3rd Floor
Chicago, IL 60603-5517

Prior to this change, such applications were filed either at the Phoenix or Dallas lockboxes, depending on where the student resided. These changes were made without advance notice, although on the afternoon of Friday, January 8, 2021 USCIS finally posted the following update on the [Form I-765 launch page](#):

"On Jan. 8, we adjusted the filing location for certain foreign students filing Form I-765, Application for Employment Authorization. Please review our [Direct Filing Addresses for Form I-765](#) page to see where you should file your application."

Employment Authorization Document (EAD)

I-797C Notice of Action: You should receive the notice by mail within 2-4 weeks after mailing the OPT application to USCIS.

- The I-797C is very important. If you lose the receipt, it may be very difficult to replace it.
- The I-797C is necessary if you want to:
 - inquire about the status of your OPT application.
 - travel outside the U.S. while your OPT is pending.

Receipt Number: The case number for the OPT application at USCIS. Check the status of the case on the USCIS web site at <https://www.uscis.gov>.

Received Date: Date when USCIS begins processing the application. (It may not be the actual the application was received, but it is when the case was entered into the system.)

Address Information: Verify your name, date of birth, and address on the I-765 receipt notice. If incorrect, contact your DSO immediately.

Contacting USCIS If you have any problems or questions with the OPT application, contact your KSU advisor (DSO) before calling the USCIS Customer Service

WHEN RECEIVED

- Review your EAD card to make sure the information is accurate. If it is not, contact your DSO immediately!
- Present your EAD to employers as proof of your legal work authorization in the US.
- The EAD is a required document for entry to the U.S. during OPT.
- You can **ONLY** work during the dates listed on the approved EAD card- not before and not after!
- Send a copy of your EAD card to your DSO

EAD Errors: What happens if your EAD card has incorrect information on it?

- Wait to receive a job offer so you can show your EAD to your employer. The correction process may require you to mail the incorrect EAD to USCIS. Ideally, you should wait to request the correction after your employer has copied your EAD for hiring purposes.
- To correct the EAD, submit a request through the USCIS website to correct a typographic error.

Track Your Case

Sign up for an account at <https://www.uscis.gov>. This will allow you to receive automatic updates and monitor your case. Click “Check Your Case Status” and then select “Sign Up.”

General Case Tracking: If you don’t sign up for an account, you can still track your case using the “Check Your Case Status” Tool.

Address Changes: If your address changes, you can update it online through the “Change of Address” tool. Keep in mind that address changes can take 10 business days to process, and could jeopardize your OPT EAD delivery. We recommend keeping the same address for your entire OPT processing, if possible.

USCIS Issues: Case Inquiries & Expedites

Case Inquiries & Processing times: You can submit inquiries and requests about your case using the Case Inquiry tool for these issues <https://egov.uscis.gov/e-request/Intro.do>:

- If you don’t receive your receipt notice, EAD or other notifications
- If your case is pending longer than the normal processing time. See current USCIS processing times for Form “I-765” for “Potomac Service Center” here: <https://egov.uscis.gov/processing-times/i765>
- If there is an error on your receipt notice or EAD card

Deal with Application Problems: RFE and Rejection

Application Problems: **RFE and Rejection/Denial** If there is a problem with your application, the USCIS may send you a notice by mail called a “Request for Evidence (RFE).” An RFE does not mean that your application has been rejected. It simply means that you need to send in additional documents before your EAD can be issued.

- **Getting an RFE will delay the processing of your application.**

Rejection/Denial: In some cases, the USCIS will return the entire application to you. If this happens, you must make corrections and send a new application before the end date of your 60-day grace period.

Contact your DSO immediately if you receive an RFE, rejection, or denial. Notify your DSO that your OPT has been rejected or denied! You **MUST** request a **NEW OPT I-20** recommendation from your DSO before you resubmit your OPT application. USCIS must receive your new, complete OPT re-application no later than 30 days after the OPT I-20 **ISSUE DATE** on page 1 of the I-20.

Good Luck!