

International Student & Scholar Services

Madison Hall | 800 South Main St., MSC 5731, Harrisonburg, VA 22807 | 540-568-5209 | isss@jmu.edu

Optional Practical Training: Pre-Completion OPT

Optional Practical Training (OPT) provides an F-1 visa holder with an opportunity to gain 12 months of employment experience in his/her major area of study (with an option for a 24-month extension for certain STEM majors). The 12 months can be used all at once or in shorter increments during the school year (part-time), summer vacations (part-time or full-time), or after graduation (Post-Completion OPT). Any time you use for Pre-Completion OPT, you will have that amount of time *less* after graduation for Post-Completion OPT. (Example: 3 months of Pre-Completion OPT = 9 months for Post-Completion OPT)

Employment while on OPT must be related to your major field of study. A job offer is not required to apply for OPT, but you must obtain authorization by USCIS prior to beginning employment. OPT is granted for specific dates and cannot be adjusted after it is approved. Once the application is submitted, please allow at least 90 days for processing.

There are three types of OPT: pre-completion, post-completion, and STEM Extension. The information in this document is for Pre-Completion OPT only.

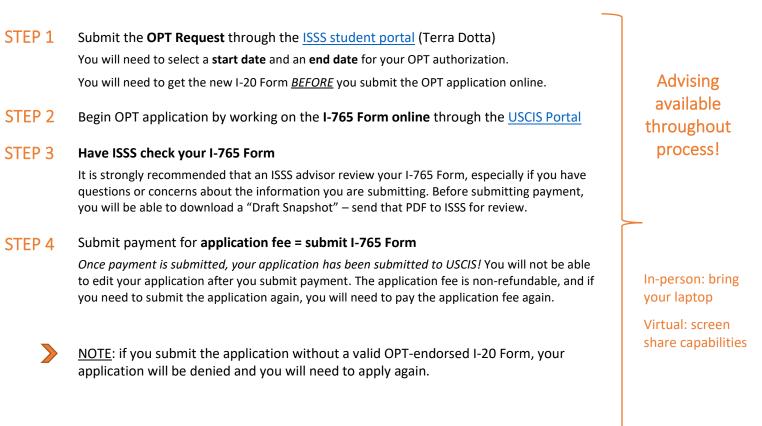
For more information, please visit the USCIS website on OPT.

Pre-completion OPT is used during the F-1 visa holder's program of study (before the program end date on the I-20 form) and is either part-time (during the semester) or full or part-time during annual vacations (e.g. summer break).

<u>To apply for Pre-completion OPT</u>: prepare all of the documents as outlined in this packet. Complete the OPT Request application in the <u>ISSS Student Portal</u> (Terra Dotta) to get your OPTendorsed I-20 Form, in order to complete the OPT application process online.

The government takes at least 3 months to process OPT applications, which is why it is important to *plan ahead!*

Pre-Completion OPT Online Application Process



Documentation checklist for Pre-Completion OPT application online:

- □ Screenshot or PDF of your most recent I-94 Arrival Record, which can be retrieved <u>online</u>
- Scans of front and back of any previous Employment Authorization Document (EAD) card(s), if previously issued
- □ Scan of your academic transcript, as proof of enrollment
- □ Scans of previous CPT-endorsed and OPT-endorsed I-20s, if applicable
- □ Scan of **OPT-endorsed I-20 Form** (you will get this from ISSS)
- Passport-sized photo (2 inches by 2 inches) taken in the past 6 months, not used before
 See additional specifications in application or Completion Guide below.
- □ Credit card, debit card, or bank routing information to pay the \$470.00 application fee



Use the Completion Guide to help you complete the online I-765 application.

After OPT is filed:

You should receive three documents from USCIS:

- 1. Receipt notice (issued immediately after submitting online)
- 2. Approval notice
- 3. EAD Card (normally within 1-2 weeks after receiving the approval notice; scan front and back of the card to ISSS for your immigration file)
- → If you receive an R.F.E. (Request for Evidence), <u>contact ISSS immediately</u>.

Employment Reminders

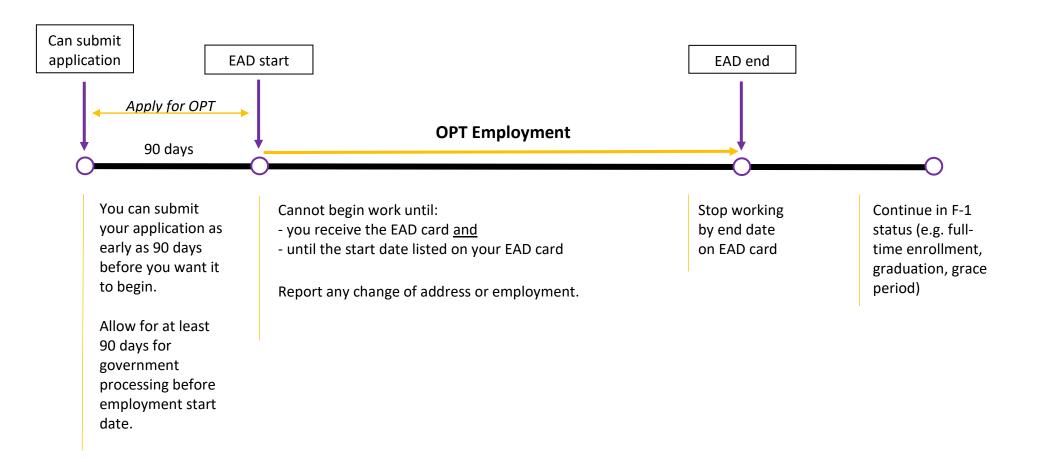
- You <u>MAY NOT</u> work before you receive the EAD card or before the start date on the EAD card.
 You should receive the Employment Authorization Document (EAD) within 3-4 months from the date on the receipt notice. If it is not received in this time, contact ISSS.
- Employment must be directly related to your major field of study.
- → Any violation of these and other employment regulations can cause your immigration status to be terminated.

Reporting Requirements

While on OPT, you will remain in F-1 status under the sponsorship of James Madison University, and as such, you must maintain your immigration status:

- → Report employer name and address, part-time (less than 20 hours per week) or full-time employment (20-40 hours per week), and start date to SEVIS through your <u>SEVIS Portal Account</u> as soon as you start employment.
 - You will need to provide a statement about how employment is related to your major.
- Update your SEVIS record of a change in employment <u>immediately</u> and report all criteria listed above, including end date of previous employment.
- Update MyMadison of any change in address within 10 days.
- Keep all immigration documents safe and in valid status.
- → Any violation of these and other regulations can cause your immigration status to be terminated.

Pre-Completion OPT Timeline

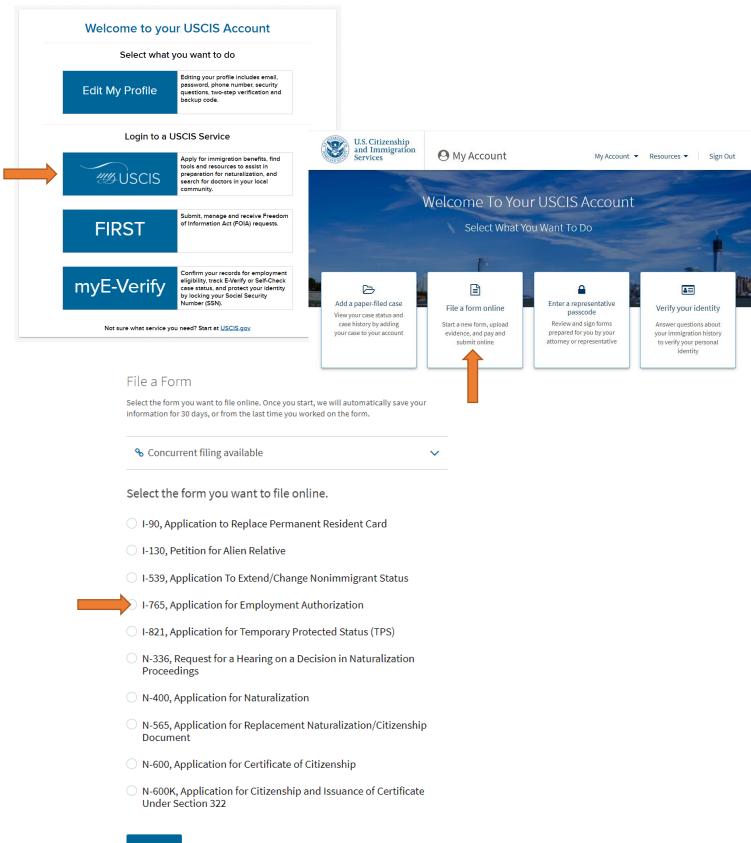


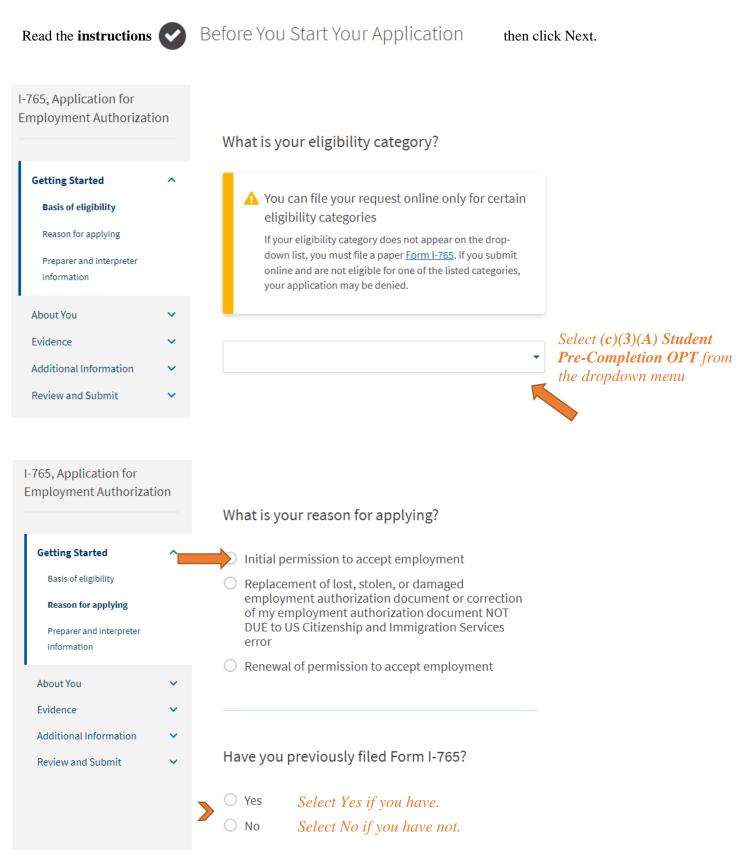
After you have your OPT-endorsed I-20 Form, complete online at https://myaccount.uscis.gov/.

You will first need to create an account.

		and Immigration Services
U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services		Sign Up
Sign In		Your USCIS account is only for you. Do not create a shared account with family or friends. Individual accounts allow us to best serve you and protect your personal information.
		You must provide your own email address below if you are the one who is filing a form online, submitting an online request, or tracking a case.
Password *		Email *
Forgot your Password?	Show Pessword	
Sign In	Show i domota	Email confirmation *
One account for all of your USCIS ne Create an account.	eds.	Your email address is used to log in to your USCIS Account. All USCIS email communications will be sent to this address.
Didn't receive confirmation instructio	ins?	Sign Up
Legal Department of Homeland Security DHS Privacy Notice 	Consent	Already have an account? Sign In
Paper Reduction Act Burden DiscleTerms of Use	osure Notice	Legal
e USCIS system will send you a	a confirmation email .	 Department of Homeland Security Consent DHS Privacy Notice Paper Reduction Act Burden Disclosure Notice Terms of Use
	U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services	
en they will send you a ification code to enter	Enter your v	
ine.	coc	de
	A verification code has be ໝອຍ່ ເທດແນ່ເ @jmu.edu. Pleas you received. If you do not	e enter the code that t receive the code in 10
	minutes, please <u>request a</u>	
	If you have lost access to x enter your backup code in	
	Secure verification code *	

Submit





I-765, Application for Employment Authorizatio	on	Is someone assisting yo application?	ou with completing this	
Getting Started Basis of eligibility Reason for applying Preparer and interpreter information	^	 Yes No 		
About You Evidence Additional Information Review and Submit	\sim \sim \sim	Back	Next	
I-765, Application for Employment Authorizatio Getting Started About You	on V		e gal name? me on your birth certificate, unless it on such as marriage or court order. Do)
Your name Your contact information Describe yourself When and where you were bo Your immigration information Other information		Given name (first name)	Middle name	with your information.
Evidence Additional Information Review and Submit	> > >	Yes Select Yes ij	cknames, aliases and maiden names.	her than those listed above.

I-765, Application for Employment Authorization	
	How may we contact you?
Getting Started 🗸 🗸	Daytime telephone number Complete with your information.
About You ^	
Your name	Mobile telephone number (if any)
Your contact information	This is the same as my daytime telephone number.
Describe yourself	
When and where you were born	Email address
Your immigration information	
Other information	
Evidence 🗸	
Additional Information	
Review and Submit 🗸 🗸	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. Address line 1 Complete with your information.
	Street number and name
	Address line 2
	Apartment, suite, unit, or floor
	City or town State ZIP code
	Is your current mailing address the same as your physical address?
	Select Yes if you live at the address above.
	Select No if you physically live at a different address, and provide that address.
	Back

I-765, Application for		
Employment Authorization	n	
		What is your gender?
Getting Started	~	
About You	~	Complete with your information.
Your name		Female
Your contact information		
Describe yourself		
When and where you were born		What is your marital status?
Your immigration information		
Other information		Single Complete with your information.
		Married
Evidence	~	O Divorced
Additional Information	~	O Widowed
Review and Submit	~	
I-765, Application for Employment Authorizatio	n	
		<i>Complete with your information.</i> What is your city, town, or village of birth?
Getting Started	~	
A have by the		
About You Your name	^	
Your contact information		
Describe yourself		What is your state or province of hirth?
When and where you were		What is your state or province of birth?
born		
Your immigration information		
Other information		
Evidence	~	
Additional Information	~	What is your country of birth?
Review and Submit	~	
		What is your date of birth? Be sure to use the MONTH / DAY / YEAR format!
		- · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · ·
		MM/DD/YYYY

I-765, Application for Employment Authorizati	ion		
Getting Started	~	What is your country of citizenship or nationality? List all countries where you are currently a citizen or national.	Select your country
About You Your name	^		of citizenship from the dropdown menu
Your contact information Describe yourself		+ Add country	
When and where you were be Your immigration information			
Evidence Additional Information	*	What is your Form I-94 Arrival-Departure Reco Number (if any)? <i>Get your most re</i>	ord cent I-94 Record online at:
Review and Submit	~	When did you last arrive in the United States? List your arrival date, place of arrival, and status at arrival.	https://i94.cbp.dhs.gov/I94/
		MM/DD/YYYY Inform Place of arrival Select the U	nation in your I-94 Record

[Section continued.]	Complete with your information.		
	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?		
	What country issued your passport or travel document?		
	>	•	
	What is your current immigration status or category?	Select F-1 Student	
	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.	Enter your SEVIS ID number found on your I-20 Form	
	Back		

I-765, Application for Employment Authorization	
Getting Started About You A	What is your A-Number? Most F-1 students do not have an A-Number. A-
Your contact information Describe yourself When and where you were born Your immigration information Other information	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.
Evidence Additional Information Review and Submit	
	Has the Social Security Administration (SSA) ever officially issued a Social Security card to you?
	Do you want the SSA to issue you a Social Security card? Yes If you do not have a Social Security Number, select Yes. No If you do have an SSN, select No. Back

After you have your OPT-endorsed I-20 Form, complete online at https://myaccount.uscis.gov/.

I-765, Application for **Employment Authorization** Getting Started About You Evidence 2 x 2 photo of you Form I-94 Employment Authorization Document Proof of enrollment Previously authorized CPT or OPT Form I-20 Additional Information Review and Submit

Read the instructions!

2 X 2 Photo Of You

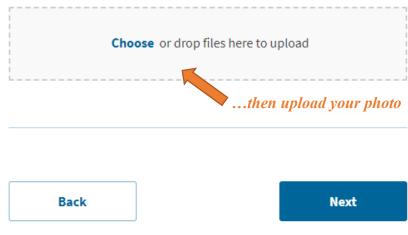
Upload a recent color photograph of yourself that measures 2 inches by 2 inches, with your face measuring 1 inch to 1 3/8 inch from your chin to the top of your head. Your eyes should be between 1 1/8 inch and 1 3/8 inch from the bottom of the photo.

Make sure your whole face is visible, you are facing the camera directly, and the background is white or off-white. Your head must be bare, unless contrary to your religious beliefs.

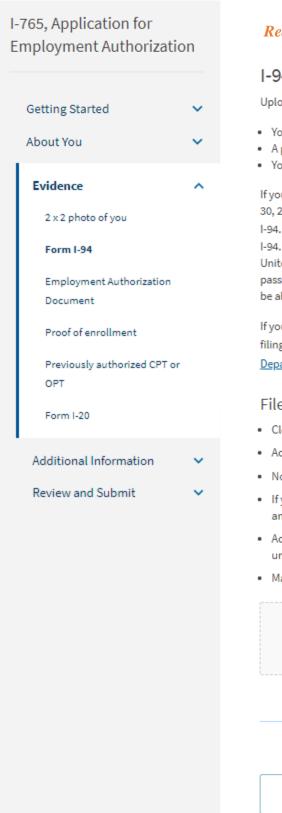
If you need help understanding the photo requirements or want to resize, rotate, or crop your photo, you can use to the Department of State's <u>photo composition</u> <u>tools</u>. Please note that we cannot approve your application without your photo.

File requirements

- Clear and readable
- Accepted file formats: JPG, JPEG, or PNG
- 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.
- Accepted characters: English letters, numbers, spaces, periods, hyphens, underscores, and parentheses
- Maximum size: 6MB per file



After you have your OPT-endorsed I-20 Form, complete online at https://myaccount.uscis.gov/.



Read the instructions!

I-94, Arrival And Departure Record

Upload a copy of one of the following:

- Your Form I-94, Arrival-Departure Record (front and back);
- A printout of your electronic Form I-94; or
- Your passport or other travel document.

If you were admitted to the United States by CBP at an airport or seaport after April 30, 2013, CBP may have issued you an electronic Form I-94 instead of a paper Form I-94. You may visit the <u>CBP website</u> to obtain a paper version of an electronic Form I-94. CBP does not charge a fee for this service. Some travelers admitted to the United States at a land border, airport, or seaport, after April 30, 2013, with a passport or travel document, who were issued a paper Form I-94 by CBP, may also be able to obtain a replacement Form I-94 from the CBP website without charge.

If your Form I-94 cannot be obtained from the CBP website, it may be obtained by filing Form I-102, Application for Replacement/Initial Nonimmigrant Arrival-Departure Record, with USCIS. USCIS does charge a fee for this service.

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.
- Accepted characters: English letters, numbers, spaces, periods, hyphens, underscores, and parentheses
- Maximum size: 6MB per file

Cho	ose or drop files here to u	pload
	the	n upload your I-94
	-	
Back		Next

After you have your OPT-endorsed I-20 Form, complete online at https://myaccount.uscis.gov/.



Read the instructions!

Employment Authorization Document Or Government ID

Upload a copy of your last Employment Authorization document (EAD) (front and back). If you were not previously issued an EAD, you must upload a copy of a government-issued identity document (such as a <u>passport</u>) showing your picture, name, and date of birth; a birth certificate with photo ID; a <u>visa</u> issued by a foreign consulate; or a national ID document with photo and/or fingerprint. The identity document photocopy must clearly show your facial features and contain your biographical information.

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.
- Accepted characters: English letters, numbers, spaces, periods, hyphens, underscores, and parentheses
- Maximum size: 6MB per file

Choose or drop files here to uploadthen upload scans of your previous EAD card, passport main biographic page, or F-1 visa

Back

Next

Four Proof of enrollment No encrypted or password-protected files Proof of enrollment If your documents are in a foreign language, upload a full English translation are the translator's certification with each original document.	I-765, Application for Employment Authorizatio	on	Read the instructions!
About You About You About You Evidence 2 x 2 photo of you Form 1-94 Employment Authorization Document Proof of enrollment Previously authorized CPT or OPT Prom 1-20 Additional Information Additional Information Additional Information Choose academic year at a college, university, conservatory, or seminary approved by the Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) Student and Exchange Visitor Progratics (SEVP) for attendance by F-1 foreign students. File requirements Clear and readable 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 are the translator's certification with each original document. Upload no more than five documents at a time Additional Information Choose or drop files here to upload 			Proof Of Enrollment
About You Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) Student and Exchange Visitor Prograte (SEVP) for attendance by F-1 foreign students. Evidence 2 x 2 photo of you Form 1-94 Employment Authorization Document Proof of enrollment More than five documents at a time Accepted file name characters: English letters, numbers, spaces, periods, hypherunderscores, and parentheses Maximum size: 6MB per file Form 1-20 Choose or drop files here to upload Additional Information Choose or drop files here to upload 	Getting Started	~	
2 x 2 photo of you • Clear and readable Form I-94 • 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 are 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, hypherunderscores, and parentheses • OPT • Form I-20 Additional Information	About You	~	Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) Student and Exchange Visitor Program
 Form 1-94 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 are 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, hypherunderscores, and parentheses Maximum size: 6MB per file Additional Information 	Evidence	^	File requirements
Form 1-94 No encrypted or password-protected files Employment Authorization Document Document If your documents are in a foreign language, upload a full English translation are the translator's certification with each original document. Proof of enrollment Upload no more than five documents at a time Previously authorized CPT or OPT Accepted file name characters: English letters, numbers, spaces, periods, hyphe underscores, and parentheses Form 1-20 Choose or drop files here to upload	2 x 2 photo of you		Clear and readable
 No encrypted or password-protected files If your documents are in a foreign language, upload a full English translation are 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, hypher underscores, and parentheses Maximum size: 6MB per file Choose or drop files here to upload 			 Accepted file formats: JPG, JPEG, PDF, TIF or TIFF
Document Proof of enrollment Previously authorized CPT or OPT Form 1-20 Additional Information	Form I-94		No encrypted or password-protected files
 Proof of enrollment Previously authorized CPT or OPT Form 1-20 Additional Information 	Employment Authorization		If your documents are in a foreign language, upload a full English translation and
Proof of enrollment • Accepted file name characters: English letters, numbers, spaces, periods, hyphe underscores, and parentheses Previously authorized CPT or OPT • Maximum size: 6MB per file Form I-20 Choose or drop files here to upload Additional Information ✓	Document		the translator's certification with each original document.
Previously authorized CPT or underscores, and parentheses OPT • Maximum size: 6MB per file Form I-20 Choose or drop files here to upload Additional Information •	Proof of enrollment		 Upload no more than five documents at a time
Previously authorized CPT or • Maximum size: 6MB per file Form I-20 Choose or drop files here to upload Additional Information •			 Accepted file name characters: English letters, numbers, spaces, periods, hyphens, underscores, and parentheses
Form I-20 Choose or drop files here to upload Additional Information			
Additional Information	091		
Additional Information	Form I-20		
	1		Choose or drop files here to upload
Review and Submit	Additional Information	~	
	Review and Submit	~	then upload your academic transcript
Back			Pack
Back			

I-765, Application for Employment Authoriz	zation	Read the instructions!
		Previously Authorized CPT Or OPT
Getting Started	~	Upload evidence of any previously authorized CPT or OPT and the academic level at which it was authorized.
About You	~	File requirements
Evidence	^	Clear and readable
2 x 2 photo of you		Accepted file formats: JPG, JPEG, PDF, TIF, or TIFF
		No encrypted or password-protected files
Form I-94 Employment Authorizat	ion	 If your documents are in a foreign language, upload a full English translation and the translator's certification with each original document.
Document		 Accepted characters: English letters, numbers, spaces, periods, hyphens, underscores, and parentheses
Proof of enrollment		Maximum size: 6MB per file
Previously authorized	CPT or	
OPT		Choose or drop files here to upload
Form I-20		
Additional Information	~	then upload your <u>previous</u> CPT and/or OPT documents
Review and Submit	~	
		Back Next

After you have your OPT-endorsed I-20 Form, complete online at https://myaccount.uscis.gov/.

I-765, Application for Employment Authorization

Getting Started	~
About You	~
Evidence	^
2 x 2 photo of you	
Form I-94	
Employment Authorization Document	
Proof of enrollment	
Previously authorized CPT or OPT	
Form I-20	
• Additional Information	•
Review and Submit	~

Read the instructions!

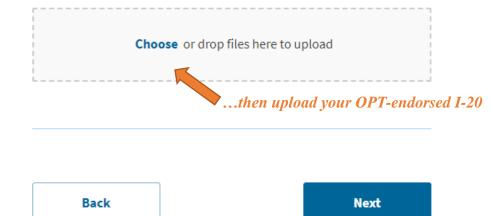
I-20, Certificate Of Eligibility For Nonimmigrant Student Status

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 <u>30 days</u> 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

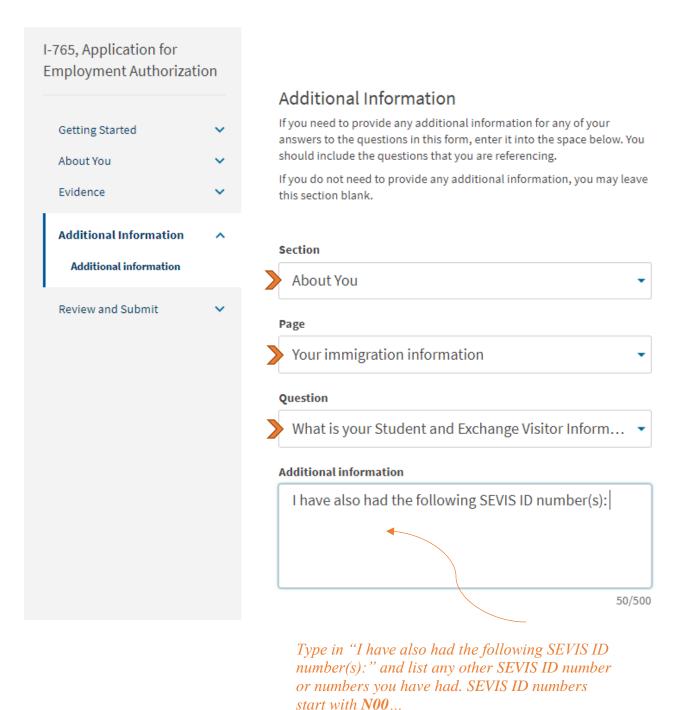
This means that the DSO signature on page 1 of your I-20 cannot be older than 30 days.

- 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.
- Accepted characters: English letters, numbers, spaces, periods, hyphens, underscores, and parentheses
- Maximum size: 6MB per file



After you have your OPT-endorsed I-20 Form, complete online at https://myaccount.uscis.gov/.

If you have had other SEVIS ID numbers, should be included in this section.



After you have your OPT-endorsed I-20 Form, complete online at https://myaccount.uscis.gov/.

Carefully review all of your information before you pay the application fee. Once the fee is paid, you cannot make corrections.

I-765, Application for Employment Authorization			
Getting Started	~		
About You	~		
Evidence	~		
Additional Information	~		
Review and Submit	^		
Review your application			

If you would like an ISSS advisor to review this, download the "Draft Snapshot" and email it to an ISSS advisor before you click submit.

Check your application before you submit

We will review your application to check for accuracy and completeness before you submit it.

We encourage you to provide as many responses as you can throughout the application, to the best of your knowledge. Missing information can slow down the review process after you submit your application.

You can return to this page to review your application as many times as you want before you submit it.

Your fee



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.

Alerts and warnings

You have one or more alerts and warnings based on the information you provided in your application.

A red alert means you have incomplete responses or inconsistent data. You cannot submit your application with any alerts.

This section will also alert you to **missing** or **incorrect information**.



Edit my responses

After you have your OPT-endorsed I-20 Form, complete online at https://myaccount.uscis.gov/.

After you agree to the **Application Statement**, where you digitally sign and submit the form, you will be directed to **pay.gov** site, a secure government portal, to pay for the application fee.

	Pay.gov
USCIS I-765	
Please select a payment method:	
I want to pay with a withdrawal from a checking or savings account (ACH)	
I want to pay with a debit or credit card	
Cancel Continue	

Enter the payment information. Make note of the form type and agency tracking ID at the top. Once you hit "Continue" to pay the fee, your I-765 Form will be submitted.

You will receive a confirmation message that your form has been submitted.

Click on "Go to My Cases" to see your case information and receipt notice.

	USCIS I-765
Review and indicates required	submit payment fields
	Agency Tracking ID: LNJT31CK7SQ1KH
	Payment Amount: \$410.00
	Payment Method: Plastic Card
Ad	count Holder Name: Lee Smith
	Card Type: VISA
	Card Number: **********1111
	Billing Address: 20 Ninian Street
	Billing Address 2:
	City: Springfield
	Country: United States
	State/Province: LA
	ZIP/Postal Code: 39248
	iorize a charge to my card account for the above amount in accordar ard issuer agreement.
	Previous Cancel Continue

All notices will be posted to your account and mailed to the mailing address that you entered:

- Receipt Notice
- Request for Evidence (RFE) *if you receive this, let ISSS know immediately!*
- PDF of completed I-765 Form email to your ISSS advisor to add to your immigration file.
- Decision letter

Let ISSS know if you have any questions during this process!