



OPT APPLICATION SUBMISSION INSTRUCTIONS

Once you have received your OPT I-20 from the Dashew Center, please sign the bottom of page 1 and either make copies of pages 1 and 2 to include with your OPT application (if submitting your application by mail), or save your I-20 PDF document with an electronically reproduced original signature (if submitting your application online).

Please keep your OPT I-20 in your records. The OPT I-20 is your new I-20 and replaces your previous I-20. Please retain all of your previous I-20s in your records as you will need them in case you apply for further U.S. visa benefits (you do not need to submit previous I-20s to the Dashew Center).

Submitting your OPT Application to USCIS

USCIS is now accepting OPT applications by mail and online.

To File Online:

As of 4/12/2021, USCIS has made the online filing of the I-765 Form available to F-1 students applying for OPT. Please note that the Dashew Center does not have step-by-step instructions for filing OPT applications online, so please follow the instructions provided by USCIS if you choose to submit your application online.

To file your application online, please visit <https://www.uscis.gov/i-765> and click on the blue 'File Online' button. The link will redirect you to a new page with instructions on how to create a USCIS account.

Once you have created a USCIS account, please select that you would like to file the I-765 Form to apply for OPT – this will redirect you to the online I-765 Form. The questions on the online I-765 form will match the questions on the [PDF I-765 Form](#), but will appear in a different order. It is recommended that you review the following Slides 22-43 of the [OPT Workshop](#) to prepare your I-765 Form, even if you will be submitting your application online.

You will see that you must upload supporting documents to complete your online application. Please until you receive your OPT I-20 from the Dashew Center before submitting your OPT application online, since the OPT I-20 is a required supporting document. Incomplete applications will be denied by USCIS.

Once you submit your completed OPT application online, you will be issued an application receipt number and will be able to access your application receipt notice through your USCIS account. Your EAD card will be mailed to the U.S. mailing address provided on your I-765 Form.

To File by Mail:

Please prepare your OPT application for submission to USCIS in the following order:

- [I-765 Form](#) (with a hand-signed, original signature in black ink)
 - USCIS requires that you submit the most recent edition of the form with your OPT application. Do not save the form locally to complete or submit at a later time. If you submit an older version of the form, your application will be denied.
 - On 9/29/2020, a U.S. District Court issued a preliminary injunction on USCIS' Fee Schedule and Changes to Certain Other Immigration Benefit Request Requirements rule. USCIS will continue to

accept the 8/25/20 edition of the I-765 Form and \$410 filing fee for applications postmarked on or after 10/2/2020 until further notice.

- 2 U.S. style passport photos. Please see [U.S. Style Passport Photo Guidelines](#)**
 - Write your name and SEVIS ID number on the back of each photo (do not use ink pens as they can smear)
- \$410 check or money order made payable to 'U.S. Department of Homeland Security'**
 - Write your date of birth and SEVIS ID number on the **front** of the check in the memo section
 - Do not sign or write anything on the back of the check. USCIS will not be able to cash the check if there is any writing on the back of the check.
 - Ensure that your check will be valid and you have sufficient funding in the account at the time USCIS receives your application
 - Personal checks expire in 90 days; money orders do not expire
- 1 copy of your current I-94 Admission Record**
 - **Electronic I-94:** Access and print record here: <https://i94.cbp.dhs.gov/i94/#/home>
 - **OR Paper I-94:** Please copy front and back sides
- 1 copy of your most recent U.S. entry stamp in passport**
 - If you did not receive an F-1/DS entry stamp for your most recent entry, print your [Travel History page](#)
- 1 copy of your passport biographical page**
- 1 copy of your OPT I-20**
 - USCIS must receive your OPT application within 30 days of your OPT I-20 issue date. Applications received by USCIS more than 30 days after your OPT I-20 issue date will be denied.
- 1 copy of all CPT I-20s (if applicable)**
 - All CPT authorization periods must be noted on page 7 of the [I-765 Form](#)
- 1 copy of any previous EAD cards**
 - Previous employment authorization periods must be noted on page 7 of the [I-765 Form](#)
- 1 copy of any previous I-20s and/or DS-2019s with a different SEVIS ID number**
 - Only submit copies of I-20s and/or DS-2019s that have SEVIS ID numbers that do not match the SEVIS ID number on your current I-20
 - These SEVIS ID numbers must be noted on page 7 of the [I-765 Form](#)

USCIS Mailing Instructions

Please mail your OPT application materials in the order listed above to the USCIS Chicago Lockbox:

For U.S. Postal Service (USPS):

USCIS
PO Box 805373
Chicago, IL 60680

For FedEx, UPS, and DHL deliveries

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

Please ship your application to USCIS using a courier service with mail tracking. The Dashew Center uses FedEx service. If you need USCIS' phone number to process your OPT application shipment, please use: 800-375-5283.

What Are the Next Steps?

Receive your Notice of Action Receipt Notice:

- For applications submitted by mail: you will receive a *Notice of Action* receipt in the mail (to the 'Mailing Address' you provided on your I-765 Form) from USCIS approximately 3-4 weeks from the date your OPT application was received by USCIS. This receipt notice will include your application receipt number.
- For applications submitted online: you will be issued an application receipt number immediately after submitting your application online and will be able to access your application receipt notice through your USCIS account.

You can check the status of your OPT application with your application receipt number on the [USCIS Case Status](#) page.

Receive your EAD card:

- You will receive your Employment Authorization Document (EAD) card in the mail to the mailing address provided on your I-765 Form approximately 3-4 months from the date your OPT application was received by USCIS.
- Once your OPT application has been approved and your OPT start date has been reached, you will receive an email from SEVP with a link to create a [SEVP Portal](#) account. Follow the instructions provided in the email to create your account within 14 days of receiving the email (the link will time out after 14 days). If you are locked out of your SEVP Portal account, please email OPT@saonet.ucla.edu for assistance.