UCLA **Dashew Center**
for International Students & Scholars

106 Bradley International Hall
417 Charles E. Young Drive West
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OPT APPLICATION SUBMISSION INSTRUCTIONS

If submitting your OPT application online, once you have received your OPT I-20 PDF from the Dashew Center, print, sign, and date the bottom of page 1 (the Student Attestation section) before uploading pages 1 and 2 of the OPT I-20 to USCIS.

If submitting your application by mail, sign and date the bottom of page 1 (the Student Attestation section), make copies of pages 1 and 2 of the signed OPT I-20 to include with your OPT application materials.

Please keep your OPT I-20 for your records. The OPT I-20 is your latest 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 Materials to USCIS

USCIS accepts OPT applications online or by mail.

Here are tips from Department of Homeland Security to help you avoid USCIS processing delays with your OPT application.

You can request premium processing for either online or mailed OPT applications. If you would like information about USCIS' Premium Processing of OPT applications, please visit the USCIS website here.

IMPORTANT NOTES:

- **USCIS must <u>receive</u> your completed OPT application materials within 30 days of the issuance date listed on page 1 of your OPT I-20. Applications received by USCIS later than 30 days from the issuance date on page 1 of the OPT I-20 will be denied.**

- **USCIS must <u>receive</u> your completed OPT application materials before your 60-day grace period ends. The 60-day grace period begins after your "program end date" listed on page 1 of your OPT I-20. Applications received by USCIS after the 60-day grace period will be denied.**

To File Online:

To file your OPT application online, please visit https://www.uscis.gov/i-765 and click on the blue 'File Online' button. Then, look for the online "I-765 | Application for Employment Authorization" and choose the category "(c)(3)(B) – F-1 student, post-completion OPT."

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 paper I-765 Form, and the online I-765 form will provide helpful

instructions as you progress through the application. Additionally, it is recommended that you review the [I-765 Online Filing Guide](#) with USCIS before preparing your online I-765 Form.

You must first receive your OPT I-20 from the Dashew Center before submitting your OPT application materials to USCIS. 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 MyUSCIS account. If your OPT application is approved, your EAD card will be mailed to the U.S. mailing address that you 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.

☐ **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
  - o 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
  - o 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 passport biographical page**

☐ **1 copy of your OPT I-20**

- USCIS must <u>receive</u> your completed OPT application materials within 30 days of the issuance date listed on page 1 of your OPT I-20. Applications received by USCIS later than 30 days from the issuance date on page 1 of the OPT I-20 will be denied.
- USCIS must <u>receive</u> your completed OPT application materials before your 60-day grace period ends. The 60-day grace period begins after your "program end date" listed on page 1 of your OPT I-20. Applications received by USCIS after the 60-day grace period 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 (if applicable)**

- 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:

<u>U.S. Postal Service (USPS)</u>

Attn: I-765 C03
P.O. Box 805373
Chicago, IL 60680-5374

<u>FedEx, UPS, and DHL deliveries:</u>

USCIS
Attn: I-765 C03 (Box 805373)
131 South Dearborn – 3rd Floor
Chicago, IL 60603-5517

Please ship your application to USCIS using mail tracking. If you need USCIS' phone number to process your OPT application shipment, please use: 800-375-5283.

USCIS Mailing Instructions for Premium Processing

If you are requesting premium processing services for Form I-765, you must also file Form I-907, Request for Premium Processing Service.

Before you file the Form I-765/I-907 package, check USCIS's How Do I Request Premium Processing page to ensure that the requested eligibility category is eligible for premium processing.

<u>U.S. Postal Service (USPS):</u>

USCIS
Attn: I-907
P.O. Box 805501
Chicago, IL 60680

<u>FedEx, UPS, and DHL deliveries:</u>

USCIS
Attn: I-907 (Box 805501)
131 South Dearborn, 3rd Floor
Chicago, IL 60603-5517

Please ship your application to USCIS using mail tracking. 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 online, you will be issued an application receipt number immediately after submitting your application online and will be able to check your application status through your MyUSCIS account.

- 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. You can check the status of your OPT application with your application receipt number on the USCIS Case Status page.

Receive your EAD card (if approved):

- You should receive your Employment Authorization Document (EAD) card in the mail to the mailing address provided on your I-765 Form approximately 3-4 weeks from the date your OPT application was approved by USCIS.

- If 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 expire after 14 days). If you are locked out of your SEVP Portal account, please email OPT@saonet.ucla.edu for assistance.

- F-1 students on OPT are required to update their employment and contact information via the SEVP Portal. If there are changes to your contact or employment information, you must update your SEVP Portal within 10 days of the changes.

Has your OPT application been pending for more than three months without update?

If you submitted your OPT application online to USCIS, you can see your status update by logging into your MyUSCIS. You can also message USCIS via the MyUSCIS portal.

If you mailed your OPT application to USCIS, you may submit an e-Request Case Inquiry to USCIS. You may also contact USCIS to request a status update. To contact USCIS, please visit the USCIS Contact Center.

Note: Do not contact USCIS multiple times as it will slow down the process. Please note that the application is under your name and Dashew Center cannot contact USCIS on your behalf.