Cal Poly Humboldt.

International Programs • College of Extended Education & Global Engagement

STEM OPT Application Checklist – Online Filing

1) **Gather complete packet (scan items cleanly – see directions in this packet):**
   - ❑ Scan of one full-color U.S. passport-style photograph. Photos <u>must</u> be taken within the last 30 days, measure 2 inches by 2 inches, and have a plain white or off-white background.
   - ❑ Scan of your passport identity page (and any renewal pages) and I-94 printout (https://i94.cbp.dhs.gov/)
   - ❑ Scan of any previously issued I-20s if they show work authorization OR a different SEVIS ID (1st and 2nd page; do not copy instruction page).
   - ❑ Scan of the front and back of any previous EAD cards (i.e. previously done OPT)
   - ❑ Completed Form I-765 **DRAFT**. Important: follow completion directions included in this packet; you will create an account at https://myaccount.uscis.gov/ – **you will fill out the application, download, and email our office (international@humboldt.edu) a draft for review. DO NOT SUBMIT your application until we have met.**
   - ❑ Completed Form I-983 Training Plan: https://studyinthestates.dhs.gov/stem-opt-hub/additional-resources/form-i-983-overview. You will need to work with your current employer to complete this form.

2) **Email your draft I-765 along with the I-983 to international@humboldt.edu to request STEM OPT I-20. Your documents will be reviewed for completeness and a new STEM OPT I-20 will be created and emailed to you. DO NOT submit your application without it.**

3) **Next Steps**
   - ❑ **Print and physically sign** the I-20 sent to you showing your STEM OPT recommendation. Upload a scanned copy of the first and second pages of your new I-20 to your draft application. Review your application, ensure all required materials are uploaded, and submit **within 30 days** of receiving your new I-20.
   - ❑ **After submission, return to your pending applications to download your application receipt (see included screenshots). Email a copy of your application receipt** to international@humboldt.edu when received (formal receipt; no copy of the confirmation email is needed).
   - ❑ <u>Sign up for Informed Delivery</u> by USPS at https://informeddelivery.usps.com. This will help you track the expected arrival of your EAD card.
   - ❑ You will receive notices from USCIS when there is movement on your case, including notification of when your EAD card is mailed. Notify the International Programs office immediately if your card is not received within 3 days of its expected arrival, according the USPS Informed Delivery notice.
   - ❑ If you receive a Request for Evidence (RFE), please contact us immediately for assistance.
   - ❑ **Email a copy of your new EAD card and I-797 approval notice** to international@humboldt.edu when received.

Reporting Employment:
   - • You must report any changes to your contact or employment information (including breaks in employment) within 10 days. To report changes, complete the OPT Reporting Form OR report directly in the SEVP OPT Portal. You will be emailed login information AFTER your OPT has been approved and the start date has been reached. Learn more and review the User Guide at https://studyinthestates.dhs.gov/create-an-sevp-portal-account.
   - • Your OPT will end if you accrue a total of 90 days of unemployment (counted from the start of your OPT period) or if you transfer your SEVIS record to another school.

**IF YOUR APPLICATION IS REJECTED OR DENIED FOR ANY REASON, CONTACT US IMMEDIATELY.
DO NOT RE-APPLY ON YOUR OWN.**

STEM OPT Application Checklist – Online Filing

Completion Guide for filling out I-765 Application Form. Please go to https://www.uscis.gov/i-765 to complete instructions issued by USCIS. It is advised that you read these instructions, including the penalties section, in addition to using the guide below to properly complete your application. It is your responsibility as the applicant to ensure that all information on the application is correct and valid.

General Information:
Make sure to select that you are applying for **(c)(3)(C) – 24-Month Extension for STEM Students** when starting your application. If this is your first online application to USCIS, you may need to create an account at https://myaccount.uscis.gov. You may find it useful to review the help materials at https://www.uscis.gov/file-online before getting started. **If you already have a USCIS account, you should start this new application under that existing account.**

Part 1: Select 1.a. "Initial permission to accept employment"

Part 2:

- **Name:** Please write your name exactly as it appears on your I-20. If your name will not fit, fill it in as much as possible, and then upload a page as "other evidence" spelling your name correctly. If you used previous names, including nicknames in <u>official</u> records or documentation, complete these sections on the application as needed. Do not list nicknames that you did not use on official records.

- **Address:** *Your U.S. Mailing Address* is where the receipt notice and EAD card will be mailed. This address must be valid for at least 3 months, and may be a P.O. box address. If you are using a friend or family's address, indicate the person's name in the "In Care of Name" line. This person must be listed with the U.S. Postal Service as living at that address. If you listed a mailing address that is NOT your current physical living address, then you must indicate this, and provide your current physical address in the appropriate section.

- **Social Security Number.** If you already have an SSN, indicate this and provide the number. If you do not already have an SSN, indicate this, then select "yes" to both follow up questions to give USCIS the ability to share your information with the Social Security Administration and create your card. You will need to provide your mother and father's names as well.

- **Information About Latest Arrival.** Complete this section using information from your I-94, passport, and I-20. Note that your SEVIS number is found at the top of your current I-20.

Part 6: Additional Information – MUST be completed if you had been issued a different SEVIS ID previously AND/OR completed practical training (CPT/OPT). It is recommended that the cover letter on page 3 be attached.

- **Page, Part and Item Number.**
  - If you are asked to reference a page number, write "3" in the space provided.
  - If you are asked to reference a part/section number, write "2" in the space provided.
  - If you are asked to reference an item number, write "26" in the space provided.

- **Explanation of previous work.** List all SEVIS ID numbers, level (i.e., associates or bachelors), and whether CPT or OPT was done. If CPT or OPT was done, explain the opportunity.
  - <u>Example 1:</u> Student studied for bachelor degree, but did not do practical training. Returned to U.S. later to study at CPH and has done CPT. Answer would look something like this: *"Previous SEVIS ID N0001234567, bachelor degree, no CPT or OPT. Current SEVIS ID N0012345678, master degree, CPT from 5-1-18 to 8-30-18, at Regeneron for internship requirement, 40 hr/wk."*
  - <u>Example 2:</u> Student studied at CPH and has done CPT practical training. Answer would look something like: *"SEVIS ID N0001234567, bachelor degree, CPT internship requirement, 5-1-18-8-30-18, Regeneron, 20 hrs/wk."*

Screenshots to guide you through the OPT Online Application

Create your account at https://myaccount.uscis.gov.

If you need them, there are online help guides available at www.uscis.gov/file-online.

Screenshots to guide you through the OPT Online Application

Log in to an existing account OR click "Create an Account" to set up your account. **Bookmark this page for easy use later!** If you are setting up an account for the first time, use a **personal non-Humboldt email** that you will have access to forever. That way, you do not need to recreate an account after you graduate.

Once you have logged in, click on "File a form online" to begin your application process.

Screenshots to guide you through the OPT Online Application

Our Online Forms

- 11 forms available through USCIS online account
- Form I-765 is near the bottom of the list
- Note the eligibility categories

Select the form you want to file online.

○ Application to Replace Permanent Resident Card (I-90)

○ Request for a Hearing on a Decision in Naturalization Proceedings (N-336)

○ Application for Naturalization (N-400)

○ Application for Replacement Naturalization/Citizenship Document (N-565)

○ Application for Certificate of Citizenship (N-600)

○ Application for Citizenship and Issuance of Certificate Under Section 322 (N-600K)

○ Petition for Alien Relative (I-130)

○ Application To Extend/Change Nonimmigrant Status (I-539)

● Application for Employment Authorization (I-765)

Only certain F-1 students seeking optional practical training (OPT) may file Form I-765 online. This includes:

- Pre-completion OPT - (c)(3)(A) eligibility category;
- Post-completion OPT - (c)(3)(B) eligibility category; or
- a 24-month extension for STEM students (students holding a degree in science technology, engineering, or mathematics) - (c)(3)(C) eligibility category.

U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services

Select "Application for Employment Authorization (I-765)" from the drop-down list.

Form Overview

U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services

I-765, Application For Employment Authorization

Certain foreign nationals who are in the United States may file Form I-765, Application for Employment Authorization, to request employment authorization and an Employment Authorization Document (EAD). Other foreign nationals whose immigration status authorizes them to work in the United States without restrictions may also use Form I-765 to apply for an EAD that shows such authorization.

Foreign nationals may also apply for a Social Security number and card on Form I-765.

If you are a lawful permanent resident, a conditional permanent resident, or a nonimmigrant only authorized for employment with a specific employer under 8 CFR 274a.12(b), do not use Form I-765.

Learn more about employment authorization.

✔ Before You Start Your Application

Eligibility

Only certain F-1 students seeking optional practical training (OPT) may file Form I-765 online. This includes:

- Pre-completion OPT - (c)(3)(A) eligibility category;
- Post-completion OPT - (c)(3)(B) eligibility category; or
- a 24-month extension for STEM students (students holding a degree in science technology, engineering, or mathematics) - (c)(3)(C) eligibility category.

▪️ Eligibility

🔟 Application fee

📄 Required evidence

📶 Biometrics requirements

◉ How to track your case

↩ Requests for evidence

👆 Getting a decision

Review the information on this page carefully. It will tell you everything you need to file online. **Make sure you have all the items on the list of required evidence prepared before starting your application**. Answer the form questions in order – do not skip ahead. The form has conditional logic that will display the next set of questions according to your answers. **Go in order so that you only see the questions you need to complete. The form will autosave your answers in each section**.

Screenshots to guide you through the OPT Online Application

Viewing Janna Evans ((G... ⌄

Filling Out the Form—Getting Started

U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services

Who Can Submit Form I-765 Online?

Initial release of online I-765 is limited to students in these categories:

- (c)(3)(A) Student Pre-Completion OPT
- (c)(3)(B) Student Post-Completion OPT
- (c)(3)(C) STEM Extension

What is your eligibility category?

c(3)(A) Student Pre-Completion OPT
c(3)(B) Student Post-Completion OPT
c(3)(C) STEM Extension

All other categories *must submit a paper* form I-765

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You will be applying for **(c)(3)(C) 24-Month Extension for STEM Students**. Make sure that you select this category.

Screenshots to guide you through the OPT Online Application

Filling Out the Form—Getting Started

What is your reason for applying?

- Initial permission to accept employment
- Replacement of lost, stolen, or damaged employment authorization document or correction of my employment authorization document NOT DUE to US Citizenship and Immigration Services error
- Renewal of permission to accept employment

Have you previously filed Form I-765?

- Yes
- No

- Why are you applying?
- Did you submit Form I-765 previously?

You must select **"Renewal of permission to accept employment."** If you have ever filed form I-765 before (even if it was denied), you must say "Yes."

Remember: you can only apply for STEM OPT if you have not already done STEM OPT at this or a higher educational level. **If you have already done STEM OPT at the same level (i.e. associate or bachelor), or have done STEM OPT previously at a higher level, do not apply. You are not eligible and will not be refunded.** If you did not disclose this to our office, and have already received your OPT I-20, please contact us immediately to cancel your recommendation and discuss your next steps.

The next sections in the application will ask information about you. You will need your I-94, passport, and I-20 to complete the immigration information section. You will generally not have an A-number, but if you have filed a USCIS form online before, you may have a USCIS account number. If not, it's okay to leave these blank.

If you do not have a social security number (SSN) already issued, you can apply for it at the same time as you apply for your EAD card! As a STEM OPT applicant, you should already have a SSN.

Note: do not say yes if you were already issued an SSN and have simply misplaced your card. Contact your local Social Security Office to apply for a replacement document (noncitizens must apply for replacement cards in person).

Screenshots to guide you through the OPT Online Application

Filling Out the Form—Evidence

U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services

All F-1 I-765 applicants must provide:

- Passport-style photograph
- I-94 card, travel document, or electronic I-94
- Most recent EAD, if you have one, or government-issued photo ID
- Proof of enrollment at SEVP-certified school

***Other evidence depends on student's category. See this checklist for details:
www.uscis.gov/forms/filing-guidance/checklist-of-required-initial-evidence-for-form-i-765-for-informational-purposes-only

For the government-issued photo ID, upload your passport picture page. You will see it listed that your "DSO must enter STEM OPT recommendation in SEVIS within 30 days before you submit I-765" – this will be done once you submit your draft I-765 and I-983 to our office. **Do not submit your application until we have reviewed and processed your request and have issued the STEM OPT I-20. You will be preparing a draft of your I-765 for review at this time.**

Upon completion of our review, you will be given an I-20 showing your OPT recommendation. **Your I-20 must be printed and physically signed (in ink) before uploading.** Do not electronically sign or insert a digital signature on an I-20. This must be uploaded or your application will be denied.

Review the formatting requirements required for your uploads (see next page). It is your responsibility to format your documents properly for USCIS, according to their instructions.

Screenshots to guide you through the OPT Online Application

Filling Out the Form—Formats

U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services

- Photos: JPG, JPEG, or PNG
- Documents: JPG, JPEG, PDF, TIF or TIFF
- Foreign language documents must have English translation
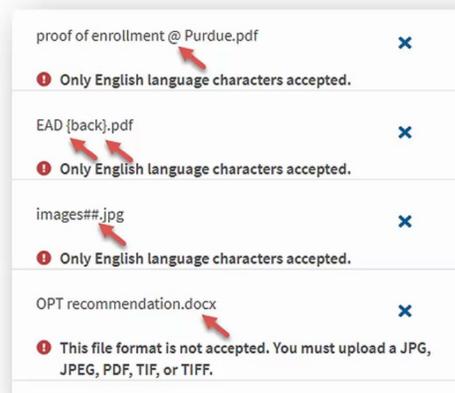- Maximum size: 6 MB per file

NOT ALLOWED
foreign characters
.doc or .bmp files
special characters
NOT ALLOWED

ق Æ $
Ñ & 国
.bmp .doc
@
.xlsx

Filling Out the Form—Formats

U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services

The only characters allowed in document file name are:
- English letters
- Numbers
- Spaces
- Periods .
- Hyphens -
- Underscores __
- Parentheses ( )

***Do NOT use special characters

proof of enrollment @ Purdue.pdf ✕
❶ Only English language characters accepted.

EAD {back}.pdf ✕
❶ Only English language characters accepted.

images##.jpg ✕
❶ Only English language characters accepted.

OPT recommendation.docx ✕
❶ This file format is not accepted. You must upload a JPG, JPEG, PDF, TIF, or TIFF.

If you use a formal scanner/copier, you will be creating documents. Documents must be in PDF, JPG/JPEG, or TIF/TIFF formats only. Photos taken with a camera must be formatted as a JPG/JPEG or PNG only. **When naming your documents, use English only.** Characters in other languages will cause your file to be rejected. The only characters accepted in your titles are periods [.], hyphens [-], underscores [_] or parentheses [( )]. Do not use any special characters.

Examples of proper formatting are: FamilyName_FirstName_OPTI20.pdf
FamilyName_FirstName_Passport.jpg

It is highly recommended that you do not take pictures. We recommend scanning your documents from a scanner/copier machine and uploading clean clearly-legible PDFs, free of shadows, and with nothing in the "background" – no fingers, tabletops, other paperwork, etc.

Screenshots to guide you through the OPT Online Application

Before moving to payment, the application will check for errors, and will notify you if you may need to edit your response. **Errors will NOT be checking your answers for accuracy – you must make sure that the data you provided in your application is correct**. An "error" simply means you may have missed something on the application or formatted something incorrectly. If an error is highlighted in **red,** it must be corrected before you can submit your application. A yellow error calls your attention to something that *may* need correction. Review it to make sure your information is correct. If it is, you can submit without changing your response.

STOP: DO NOT move to the next step of payment and submission of your application. You will be preparing a draft of your I-765 for review at this time.
Download the draft snapshot and send it to our office at international@humboldt.edu
After reviewing your draft I-765 and I-983, you will receive an email either asking for corrections, or with confirmation of STEM OPT recommendation. After you have received your STEM OPT I-20, and uploaded it to your application, proceed to the submission and payment page.

Screenshots to guide you through the OPT Online Application

Filling Out the Form—
Applicant's Declaration & Certification

U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services

Applicant's statement
You must read and agree to the statement below.

☑ I can read and understand English, and have read and understand every question and instruction on this application, as well as my answer to every question.

☑ I have read and agree to the applicant's statement

Applicant's signature

You must provide your digital signature below by typing your full legal name. We may deny your application if you do not completely fill out this application or fail to submit required documents. We will record the date of your signature with your application.

Enter your full legal name here

You will electronically sign your I-765. This is the only electronic signature allowed (again, your I-20 copy must show a signature signed physically, in ink). You will then be directed to pay.gov to pay your application fee.

Screenshots to guide you through the OPT Online Application

Filling Out the Form—Paying the Fee

- After you agree to the applicant statement, you will be directed to pay.gov, a secure government portal
- Pay by ACH withdrawal, or debit or credit card
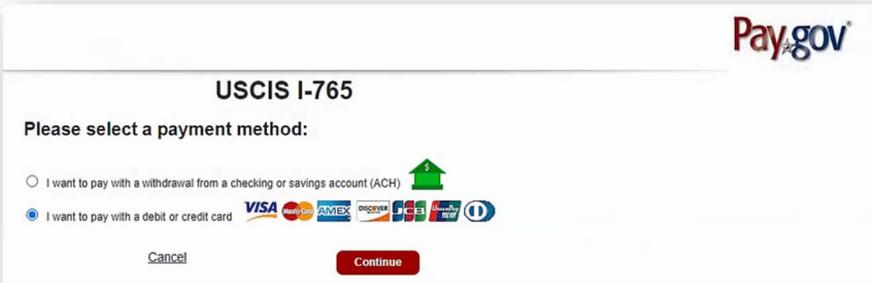
USCIS I-765

Please select a payment method:

○ I want to pay with a withdrawal from a checking or savings account (ACH)
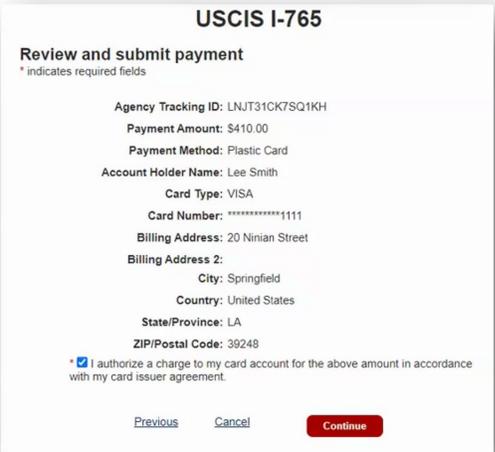
● I want to pay with a debit or credit card

Cancel   Continue

Filling Out the Form—Paying the Fee

- Enter payment information
- Note the form type and agency tracking ID at the top
- When you hit "Continue" to pay the fee, your form will be submitted

USCIS I-765

Review and submit payment
* indicates required fields

Agency Tracking ID: LNJT31CK7SQ1KH
Payment Amount: $410.00
Payment Method: Plastic Card
Account 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

* ☑ I authorize a charge to my card account for the above amount in accordance with my card issuer agreement.
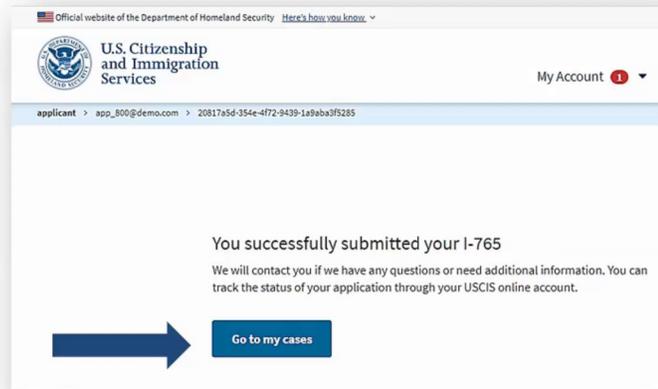
Previous   Cancel   Continue

You may pay by bank transfer (ACH) or via a debit/credit card issued by a U.S. bank. The U.S. billing address provided must match the details on your bank/credit card account.
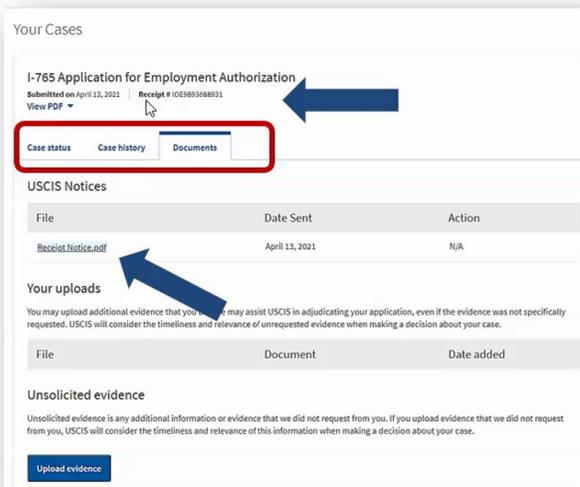
Screenshots to guide you through the OPT Online Application

Make sure that you have completed submission. A confirmation will be displayed on the screen, and you will immediately get a receipt notice with your case number. Click "Go to my cases," then click "Documents," to download and send your receipt to international@humboldt.edu (please include your full name and ID number when emailing). If you receive an RFE, speak with us before responding.

Screenshots to guide you through the OPT Online Application

If you previously paper-filed, you can link your paper-filed case to your account after you receive your receipt. You can then see all notices in the account after that step, just as if you had filed online.