Preparing Your OPT Application Materials for Online Filing

In advance of submitting your online OPT application, it is recommended that you prepare the following digital files:

- OPT recommendation I-20 (issued no more than 30 days ago for Pre-/Post-Completion OPT applications, and no more than 60 days ago for STEM applications)
- Your passport bio page
- Your F-1 visa (if applicable)
- A 2"x2" recent passport photo
- Your most recent I-94 record
- Any previous EADs (if applicable)
- Previously issued CPT I-20s and/or OPT I-20s (if applicable)
- Official transcript for the degree upon which your STEM extension application is based (for STEM OPT applications only)

Filing Your I-765 and OPT Application Online

For Pre- and Post-Completion OPT, USCIS must receive your OPT application no more than 30 days after your OPT recommendation I-20 was issued. For STEM OPT, USCIS must receive your OPT application no more than 60 days after the OPT recommendation I-20 was issued.

The following instructions are intended to help answer the most common questions about applying for OPT via USCIS's online filing system. These instructions do not specify every single question on the MyUSCIS online I-765 application. If you have questions that are not answered here, please contact ISS.

1. Create or log into your MyUSCIS online account.
   - Visit How to Create a USCIS Online Account for more instructions.

2. Select "File a Form Online" and choose "Application for Employment Authorization (I-765)".

3. **Getting Started**
   - Select the type of OPT that you are applying for ("what is your **eligibility category**?"):
     - (c)(3)(A) Student Pre-Completion OPT
     - (c)(3)(B) Student Post-Completion OPT
     - (c)(3)(C) STEM Extension
   - Select your **reason for applying**:

- - Generally, "initial permission for employment" is the right choice. If you're not sure, ask ISS.
  - Unless a lawyer or accredited representative is preparing your OPT application for you, no one is **assisting you with this application**.
  - FOR STEM OPT APPLICANTS ONLY:
    - **What is your degree?** "Bachelors" and the CIP code found on your I-20
    - **What is your employer's name as listed on E-verify?** Write your employer's name as listed in the e-verify system (this should also match your I-983).
    - **What is your employer's E-Verify company identification number or a valid E-Verify client company identification number?** Write your employer's e-verify number. This is usually 4 - 7 digits. E-verify number is not the same as EIN. Check with your employer if you do not know your employer's e-verify number.

4. **About You**
   - Provide your current **legal name** as it appears on your I-20 and in your passport
   - Provide a **current US mailing address** that will be valid for 3-5 months (as long as your OPT application is pending.
     - This is the address where USCIS will send your approval documents, including your EAD, and any other mailings. If you expect that your personal US address will not be valid in 3-5 months, you should provide the US mailing address of a trusted friend or family member that will be valid in three months.
     - You may provide the ISS mailing address if you'd like. ISS would receive your mail from USCIS, open it, scan and email a copy of it to you, and you could request to have the original shipped to you.
       - In care of name: International Student Services
       - Address Line 1: 893 West St
       - Address Line 2: Box SA
       - City: Amherst
       - State: Massachusetts
       - ZIP code: 01002-3372
   - If you provide a current US mailing address that differs from your **current physical address**, you must confirm this and provide your current US physical address.
   - When providing your **date of birth**, keep in mind that MyUSCIS uses a MM/DD/YYYY format.
   - When providing your **Form I-94 Record number**, be sure to refer to your most recent I-94 record.
   - Your most recent **date of arrival** in the US should match the date on your most recent I-94 record.
   - Your most recent **place of arrival** should be the place where you most recently entered the US (often, but not always, this is a US airport or land border crossing).

- ○ Your **status at last arrival** is likely "F1 - Student, Academic Or Language Program."
- ○ Similarly, your **current immigration status or category** is "F1 - Student, Academic Or Language Program."
- ○ Your **SEVIS Number** can be found on your current I-20.
- ○ You likely do not have an **A-number**.
- ○ If this is your first online application to USCIS, you do not (yet) have a **USCIS account number**.

5. **Evidence**
   - ○ Upload a **2X2 photo** (a 2"x2" recent passport photo).
   - ○ Upload your most recent **Form I-94 record** (not your I-94 travel history).
   - ○ Upload any previous EADs (if you have previously been approved for OPT), a copy of your passport, and a copy of your F-1 visa in the **Employment Authorization Document or Government ID section**.
   - ○ Upload any and all previously issued CPT I-20s and/or OPT I-20s in the **Previously Authorized for CPT or OPT** section. *(This is only necessary for Pre- and Post-Completion OPT applications; this is not necessary for STEM OPT applications.)*
   - ○ Upload your newly issued OPT recommendation **Form I-20**. This OPT recommendation I-20 must be no more than 30 days old if applying for Pre- or Post-Completion OPT, and must be no more than 60 days old if applying for STEM OPT. Email ISS if you are concerned that you are too close or are beyond this window.
   - ○ FOR STEM APPLICANTS ONLY:
     - ■ **College degree:** Upload a copy of your official transcript here, showing completion of the degree that is the basis for your STEM OPT extension application.
     - ■ **Institutional accreditation:** Generally, this section can be skipped for Amherst College students. This section is only for STEM OPT applicants who are applying on the basis of a previously earned STEM degree. Unless you completed a STEM degree before your studies at Amherst College, and are applying for the STEM OPT extension in connection with that previous degree, this section is not applicable to you.

6. **Additional Information**
   'Add a response' **only** if you:
   - ○ Previously had a different SEVIS ID number while in F-1 status (for example, you studied in F-1 status, left for a leave of absence, then returned to school with a new I-20).
     - ■ Section: **About You**; Page: **Your immigration information**; Question: **What is your SEVIS number (if any)?**; Additional Information: indicate your previous SEVIS ID and the start and end date of your previous I-20(s).

- ○ Have previously been authorized for CPT or OPT:
    - ■ Section: **Evidence**; Page: **Previously authorized CPT or OPT**; Question: **Previously authorized CPT or OPT**; Additional Information: Whether CPT or OPT, start and end dates of CPT/OPT, whether it was full-time or part-time, pre- or post-completion (if OPT), and academic level (Bachelor's, Master's, Doctorate) at which it was authorized.
- ○ Hold citizenship in three or more countries:
    - ■ Section: **About You**; Page: **Your immigration information**; Question: **What is your country of citizenship or nationality?**; Additional Information: indicate your additional citizenship and upload copies of each passport under the **Employment Authorization Document or Government ID** section of **Evidence**.

7. **Review and Submit**
   - ○ (Optional) *If you want ISS to review your draft I-765 application, select **View Draft Snapshot** to retrieve a copy of your draft I-765 and email to iss@hampshire.edu. Once returned, incorporate any suggestions/edits.*
   - ○ Check that you are submitting your OPT application to USCIS no more than 30 days after the date your OPT recommendation I-20 was issued for Pre- and Post-Completion OPT, or 60 days for STEM OPT. Do not submit your application if it is outside this timeframe. Contact ISS with questions.
   - ○ Verify that all information is correct. Digitally sign and submit your application.

8. **Pay the application fee**
   - ○ Pay the required application fee of $410 via credit or debit card.
   - ○ Once you pay the fee, your OPT application is submitted and no further changes can be made.