OPT Application Review

Visa and Immigration Services (VIS)
E5310 Melville Memorial Library
Stony Brook University
(631) 632-4685 | www.stonybrook.edu/visa
Disclaimer:

The I-765 is the F-1 student's individual application and responsibility - the obligation to submit a complete and timely application, as well as the adjudication of the application is between the student and USCIS. Any resources or guidance provided by Visa and Immigration Services as a service to the international students of Stony Brook University should not be considered legal advice.
Topics to be Covered:

1. Preparing Your I-765 Application
2. Filing the I-765
3. What’s Next: Understanding your Reporting Requirements
4. Traveling While on OPT
5. Key Points & Reminders
Preparing Your I-765 Application
You are responsible to prepare the following documents to be sent USCIS:

- **Two passport style photos**, no more than 30-days old
- **$410 Application Fee**: Fee payment in the form of a money order, bank check, cashier’s check, or credit card using Form G-1450, Authorization for Credit Card Transactions found at [www.uscis.gov](http://www.uscis.gov). If paying by check, it be made payable to “U.S. Department of Homeland Security”.
- **Form G-1145**
- Cover Letter
- Completed **Form I-765**, fillable PDF version recommended.
- Form I-20 Recommending OPT signed by your and your advisor
- Copies of all Forms I-20 every issued to you, organized in date order (newest to oldest)
- Copies of the ID & expiration date pages in your **passport**
- Most recent **U.S Visa Stamp** (if applicable)
- Copy of your most recent **admission stamp** (in passport)
- Copy of your **electronic Form I-94**
- Copies of any previous EAD cards (if applicable)
IMPORTANT:

★ Once you have selected your OPT start date, it is very difficult to change and impossible to switch once your request has been approved by USCIS.

★ If USCIS cannot process your request by the start date you have selected, a later start date may be issued.
The G-1145 tells USCIS that you’d like to be informed via text or email that your I-765 was received.

It is your responsibility to confirm that your contact information is correct on the Form G-1145.
General Advice for Completing the Form I-765

1. **Type your I-765**
   - Typing is preferred. Typing helps prevent unclear handwriting from causing errors on your EAD and helps avoid mail delivery problems or delays. Use the fillable PDF I-765 on the USCIS website to type in your answers.
   - If you can’t type your form, clearly print answers in black ink.

1. **Sign your I-765 in black ink**
   - Typed signatures are not acceptable. The government will reject and return I-765s that are not signed.
   - Make sure that your signature fits within the box provided.

1. **Answer all questions fully and accurately**
   - If a question does not apply to you, type or print “NA” (short for ‘Not Applicable’) unless otherwise directed. If a question asks for a numerical response and does not apply to you, write “None”.
   - Include all pages of the Form I-765 along with your supplemental documents. USCIS will reject and return applications that do not include all 7 pages of the Form I-765.
Form I-765

PART I. REASON FOR APPLYING

1.a. Check the box “Initial permission to accept employment.”

PART 2. INFORMATION ABOUT YOU

1.a.: List your Family Name (in all CAPITAL letters)
1.b.: First/Given Name
1.c.: Middle Name (if applicable).

★ If you name does not fit in the fields, state your full name in within page 7, part 6.

Other Names Used:

2.a.-4.c.: Provide all other names you have ever used, including aliases, maiden name, and nicknames. Write “N/A” on all the boxes if you haven’t used another name.
PART 2. INFORMATION ABOUT YOU (CONTINUED)

Your U.S. Mailing Address

5.a. - 5.e.: Enter the address where you wish to receive your EAD Card. This address must be valid for 3-6 months.

Include an “In Care Of Name” if you want the EAD sent to someone other than yourself.

6. If check “no” you are indicating that your U.S. Physical Address differs from your U.S. Mailing Address and therefore you must complete items 7a-7d

U.S. Physical Address

7.a.-7.d. If your U.S. Physical Address differs from your U.S. Mailing Address complete items 7a-7d

Other Information

8. Enter “NONE”

9. Enter “NONE”

10. Gender

11. Marital Status

12. If you have filed an I-765 in the past with your current SEVIS ID# or a different SEVIS ID#, you must indicate such here and provide additional details on page 7.
Form I-765

PART 2: Other Information (continued)

13.a. Has a Social Security Number ever been issued to you?

13.b. If an SSN has been issued, provide 9-digit number.

14. If you don’t have an SSN and want one issued, answer “yes”

15. If you answered “yes” for item 14, you must answer “yes” for item 15, to receive SSN card

16.a.-17.b. If you answered “yes” to items 14-15, provide the information questioned in items 16.a.-17.b.

Your Country or Countries of Citizenship or Nationality

18.a. – 18.b. List all countries where you are a citizen.
PART 2: INFORMATION ABOUT YOU (continued)

Place of Birth
19.a. City/Town/Village of Birth
19.b. State/Province of Birth
19.c. Country of Birth
20. Date of Birth (mm/dd/yyyy)

Information About Your Last Arrival to the U.S.
21.a. 11-digit Form I-94 number (https://i94.cbp.dhs.gov)
21.b. Passport Number
21.c. N/A
21.d. Country that issued your passport
21.e. Passport Expiration Date (mm/dd/yyyy)
22. Date of last entry to the U.S. (mm/dd/yyyy)
23. 3-letter designation for the port of entry listed on your more recent admission stamp.
24. Status of last entry (i.e. F-1 Student)
25. Current Immigration Status (i.e. F-1 Student)
26. 11-digit SEVIS ID# located at the top of your Form I-20

Information About Your Eligibility Category
Field 27: For Post-Completion OPT list (c) (3) (B)
Field 28.a.: N/A
Field 28.b.: N/A
Field 28.c.: N/A

Items 29 to 31.b. do not apply to F-1 students requesting OPT authorization. Leave this section blank.
PART 2: APPLICANT’S STATEMENT & SIGNATURE

Applicant’s Statement
1.a.-2. Select all boxes that apply

Applicant’s Contact Information
3. Local U.S. phone number.
4. Local U.S. cell/mobile phone number
5. Email address you check everyday.

Applicant’s Signature
7.a. Applicant’s signature in black ink
7.b. Date of Signature (mm/dd/yyyy)

Sign in Black Ink
PART 4: INTERPRETER’S CONTACT INFORMATION

3.a. – 7.b. The sections requesting interpreter and/or attorney information should not be completed unless you have commissioned a professional to assist in filing this request.

PART 5: INTERPRETER’S CONTACT INFORMATION

1.a. – 8.b. The sections requesting interpreter and/or attorney information should not be completed unless you have commissioned a professional to assist in filing this request.
Form I-765

If you need extra space, use Part 6. Additional Information (page 7 of Form I-765)

- Use Part 6 to provide all previously used SEVIS numbers, and/or evidence of previously authorized CPT or OPT.
- Provide the Page Number, Part Number, and Item Number to which your answer refers.
- Even if you do not need the extra space, include the blank page with the rest of your application materials.

PART 6: ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

1.a. Family Name (Last Name)
1.b. Given Name (Family Name)
1.c. Middle Name (if applicable)

- Provide all previously used SEVIS numbers and evidence of any previously authorized CPT or OPT and the academic level at which it was authorized.

- If you need extra space to provide additional information within the application, (i.e. if you name or address didn’t fit the fields provided, or if you are providing details about a previously filed I-765.)

- Be sure to indicate the Page Number, Part Number and Item Number to which your answer refers to and sign and date each sheet.
Immigration Documents

You are required to include photocopies of the following with your I-765:

- **Previously Issued I-20s**: Provide copies of all Forms I-20 ever issued to you
- **Current Form I-94**: Copy of your I-94 card stapled within your passport, or downloaded from CBP's website (I94.cbp.dhs.gov/I94)
- **Passport**: Including the identity and expiration pages
- **U.S. Visa Stamp** (if applicable)
- **Admission Stamp**: Most recent admission stamp issued at the port of entry upon your latest arrival to the U.S. (in passport)

★ Photocopies of the above documents should be printed on separate pieces of paper.
Passport Style Photos

Two identical passport style photographs, issued within the last 30 days, are required.

Photos must meet the following criteria:
• In color & printed on matte or glossy photo quality paper
• 2 x 2 inches (51 x 51 mm) in size
• Taken within the last 30 days
• Taken in front of a plain white or off-white background
• Taken in full-face view directly facing the camera
• Cannot be the same photos used for your passport or visa.

★ Gently write your name, date of birth and I-94 number on the back of both of your photos.
Application Fee - $410

- You may pay the $410 fee with a money order, bank check, cashier’s check, or credit card using Form G-1450, Authorization for Credit Card Transactions found at www.uscis.gov.

- If paying by check or money order:
  - Make payable to “U.S. Department of Homeland Security”
  - In the memo/notes portion of the check, include your SEVIS ID#
  - Do NOT endorse/sign the back of the check or money order.

- USCIS will reject and return OPT applications if there is not the exact amount of money available to pay the fee when the application arrives at the USCIS Service Center. Do not send a check and plan to add money to your bank account later. Have 100% of the fee money ready when you mail your application to USCIS.

- If using the Form G-1450, be sure to pay attention to detail as any error on the form will result in a processing delay or denial. Make sure that you have enough money/credit available in your account to cover the application fee.

- Cash (paper money) is not an acceptable method of payment.
Important Reminders

• Make sure that you have every I-20 ever issued to you, and that they are signed and dated.

• I-765 must be typed and signed in black ink. Do not cross out or white out any errors.

• Remove all staples from your documents.

• All documents sent to USCIS be single sided as it helps with scanning process so examiners know nothing is missing.

• Make a copy of your entire application (including the shipping label) for your records before mailing it to USCIS.
Filing Your I-765 with USCIS
Submitting the I-765 to USCIS

You are responsible to mail the following documents to USCIS:

- **Two passport style photos**, no more than 30-days old
- **$410 Application Fee**: Fee payment in the form of a money order, bank check, cashier’s check, or credit card using *Form G-1450, Authorization for Credit Card Transactions* found at [www.uscis.gov](http://www.uscis.gov). If paying by check, it be made payable to “U.S. Department of Homeland Security”.
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- Copy of your most recent **admission stamp** (in passport)
- Copy of your **electronic Form I-94**
- Copies of any previous EAD cards (if applicable)

★ All documentation must be receipted by USCIS within **30 days** of the issue date listed on your OPT Form I-20.
★ **$100 International Student Fee** will be charged to your SOLAR account
Filing with USCIS

• Send your application to the respective USCIS Lockbox via FedEx, UPS, or DHL.

• See handout for the appropriate mailing address - you will select the USCIS Lockbox based on the state you indicated for your mailing address (Part 2, Item 5.e.). It is your responsibility to mail to the correct address.

• USCIS must receive your I-765 and supporting documents within 30 days of the date your I-20 was issued.

★ See the flyer in your packet for information on how to use UEMS (eShipGlobal) to purchase and print a shipping label. (Shipping envelopes are will not be provided by VIS)
What’s Next: Understanding your Reporting Requirements
Approval Period

- USCIS takes approximately 3-6 months to process your I-765 Request for OPT.
- USCIS will mail an I-797 Receipt Notice in two to four weeks of receiving your request. The case # listed on Receipt Notice can be used to track the status of your application online at www.uscis.gov.
- The approval dates on your EAD card may be different than what you requested.

★ Keep all original documents issued by USCIS.
★ Not all USCIS Service Centers issue I-797 Approval Notices (i.e. Potomac)
Reporting Requirements

Students on OPT are required to report the following in accessVIS within 10 days:

- Receipt of your I-765, Request for OPT by USCIS
- Approval of your I-765, Request for OPT by USCIS
- Change of contact information (i.e. phone #, email)
- Change of name
- Additions/Changes in employment
- Terminations or interruption in employment

★ Updated I-20’s reflecting changes or additions to employment may be requested by submitting the Pre/Post Completion OPT Reporting form in accessVIS.
SEVP Portal

In 2018, the US government created an online portal for students on Post-Completion OPT to report the following personal and employer information directly to SEVP:

- Add or edit your phone number.
- Add or edit your mailing and physical address.
- Add or edit your employer’s information.

_The use of this portal is optional and does not impact your employment authorization. VIS strongly recommends using accessVIS to report while on Post-Completion OPT._

Upon applying for Post-Completion OPT, Visa and Immigration Services will report to SEVIS the personal email you indicate in the OPT Request e-form.

If approved for Post-Completion OPT, SEVP will use your newly reported personal email address to communicate instructions in setting up your SEVP Portal Account.
Reporting Requirements

Reporting a change of address within 10 days is a requirement of your F-1 status as per federal regulation 8 CFR 265.1. As of March 1, 2019 all changes to your U.S. local address must be done in SOLAR.

Please follow the steps below to report your local address in SOLAR.

1. Login to SOLAR with your Stony Brook University ID number and password.
2. Go to Security and Personal Data then click Addresses.
3. Select Add A New Address to add your local (off campus) address. Even if your address is listed as "Home" or "Mailing", you must still add it as your "Local" address.
4. Verify your address information, and select "Local" under Address Type.
5. Click Save, then OK. Your local address should now appear.

Note: Your local address must be where you sleep (not a P.O. Box).
Failure to Complete Academic Program

*It is important to speak to your VIS Advisor before your program end date if you think you there is any possibility that you may not graduate.*

- If you fail to complete your academic program requirements **AFTER** your I-20 program end date, you MUST contact your VIS Advisor immediately.

- If your OPT request **has NOT been approved** by USCIS, and you contact us immediately there may be a chance to withdraw your request with USCIS.

- If your OPT request **HAS been approved** by USCIS, it is unlikely USCIS will cancel your request and you may lose eligibility time for Post-Completion OPT.

- Termination and Reinstatement to F-1 Status will likely be necessary. Your VIS advisor will provide appropriate guidance.
Withdrawing/Cancelling your OPT Request with USCIS

If you decide NOT to apply for or use your OPT, complete the Ending my F-1 Status form in accessVIS and contact your VIS Advisor immediately. If you fail to notify VIS, your ability to work in the U.S. in the future could be denied.

Request for Evidence (RFE)

Contact your VIS Advisor immediately if corrected and/or additional documentation is requested by USCIS in support of your I-765, as an updated Form I-20 may be necessary.
EAD Errors & Misspellings

- If your Employment Authorization Document (EAD) card contains incorrect information that is due to a USCIS error, you must work with your VIS Advisor to request a new card.

- EAD error correction requests are processed on an expedited basis - current processing time for an EAD error correction request is 45 days.

- It is up to your employer whether they will allow you to continue working while the card is being corrected.
Acceptable Employment

- You are not eligible for any type of employment (on or off campus) until you receive your EAD and the authorized start date listed on your card has been reached. *(This includes any type of training, observation, volunteering, internship, etc.)*

- Employment during OPT must be full-time *(at least 21 hours per week)* and **directly** related to your academic degree program/major.

- Your approved dates of employment may be different from the dates that you requested.

- When reporting your OPT Participation to VIS you are **required** to indicate how your employment is related to your major. **This information will be reported by VIS directly to SEVIS.**
Limited Periods of Unemployment

• You may not accrue more than 90 days of unemployment during Post-Completion OPT.

• The unemployment clock starts ticking as of the start date listed on your EAD card and does not stop until you have reported your OPT Participation in accessVIS by submitting the Pre/Post Completion OPT Reporting form AND your VIS advisor has reported it in SEVIS. Please note that requests may take up to two weeks for processing.

• If you accumulate 90-days of unemployment, your SEVIS record will be terminated.

• We recommend keeping proper documentation for each job you hold, which verifies dates of employment, job description and title, as well as supervisor contact information (Examples: pay stubs, W-2, tax returns).
Travel and Reentry on Post-Completion OPT

Travel outside of the U.S. without your EAD and proof of employment is a risk. It’s strongly recommended that you do not travel while your I-765 is pending with USCIS as it could be deemed as abandoning your request.

Once you OPT has been authorized by USCIS, if you choose to travel outside of the U.S., upon reentry you must be prepared to show the following documents:

- Valid passport with an expiration date that is at least 6-months into the future
- Valid, unexpired F-1 visa (the EAD is not a travel document)
- Valid Travel Signature on OPT I-20 (OPT travel signatures are only valid for 6-months)
- Employment Authorization Document (EAD card)
- Proof of employment (e.g. initial offer letter, pay stubs, employment verification letter)

If you need to renew your F-1 visa while traveling outside of the U.S., in addition to your immigration documents, it is recommended that you have your EAD and proof of employment readily available. It is at the discretion of the U.S. Consulate to grant you a student visa and CBP to allow re-entry to the United States.

★ Students who have received their EAD cards, but have not found employment could encounter difficulties when re-entering the US.
Invalidating Your OPT

Your OPT authorization may be cancelled or invalidated if you:

- Start a new degree program
- Transfer to another institution
- Change or end your status
- Enter the U.S. using any visa other than F-1
- Violate your F-1 nonimmigrant status
- Are unemployed for more than 90 days

★ Contact your VIS Advisor for instructions on how to proceed.
Ending Your F-1 Status

• You have a **60 day “grace period”** after the last day printed on your EAD card. During this time you must depart the U.S., transfer to another U.S. institution, or change your immigration status.

• Report your departure from the U.S. or change of immigration status by submitting the **Ending my F-1 Status** form in accessVIS.

• If you intend to transfer to another U.S. college or institution, submit the **Transfer Out** request in accessVIS. Once your SEVIS record has been released by SBU, your OPT authorization is cancelled and you are no longer authorized to work under OPT.
Key Points & Reminders:

• The I-765, OPT application must be receipted by USCIS within **30 days of your OPT Form I-20 being issued AND no more than 60 days following your program end date.**

• Travel outside of the U.S. while your I-765 Request for OPT is pending with USCIS is a risk and could jeopardize the approval of your application.

• You are **required** to report the receipt **AND** adjudication (i.e. approval/denial) of your I-765 Request of OPT to our office by submitting the **Pre/Post Completion OPT Reporting** form in accessVIS and uploading your Receipt Notice, Approval Notice (if applicable) and EAD card.

• You may **not** work until you **receive your EAD card** and you may only work **within the dates specified on your EAD.**

• You may **not accrue more than 90 days of unemployment** during Post-Completion OPT.

• Your employment while on OPT must be directly related to your **field of study and appropriate to your degree level.**

• A $100 International Student Fee is assessed based on the issuance your I-20 recommending OPT, regardless of whether you use the OPT authorization or not. Failure to submit timely payment of this fee could result in the Bursar reporting your information to a collection agency.
## Contact Us!

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