

**Post-Completion Optional Practical Training (OPT): Guidance for I-765 Application, Filing, and Mailing**

**International Student and Scholar Services | Middlebury College**

<http://www.middlebury.edu/international/iss> (go/iss/) | 802-443-5858 | [iss@middlebury.edu](mailto:iss@middlebury.edu)

To apply for Optional Practical Training (OPT), ISSS will review your Middlebury OPT application and issue an updated I-20 with an OPT recommendation on it for inclusion with your OPT application to USCIS. In completing your applications, ISSS offers the recommendations and best practices below; this is NOT legal advice. We have updated the process in consideration of ongoing changes made by USCIS.

*Note: Each student is ultimately responsible for filing their own accurate and complete application with U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS). Students must be in the U.S. in F-1 student status to apply for OPT.*

**Contained in this Document:**

Please note: those items **highlighted below** are **mandatory** to review regardless of if you are filing your I-765 OPT application online or via mail.

**Post-Completion Optional Practical Training (OPT): Guidance for I-765 Application, Filing, and Mailing**..... 1

**Getting Started with ISSS and your I-765 Form Requirements**..... 2

**For Online Applications: Online Filing Instructions** ..... 5

**Next Steps After Filing & Important Reminders** ..... 17

**For Mailed Applications: Additional Form I-765 Filing Guidance**..... 19

**For Mailed Applications: Mailing Instructions** ..... 22

## Getting Started with ISSS and your I-765 Form Requirements

### 1. Attend an OPT workshop with ISSS

These workshops are not mandatory but are highly recommended for you to attend to fully understand the OPT benefit and eligibility requirements. In these workshops you will not only be able to view our presentation, but you will get additional details and the benefit of posing questions/hearing responses to other questions that might be of interest. ISSS will send out emails informing you of upcoming OPT workshop sessions you may attend.

### 2. Compile your OPT Request

The required ISSS OPT Intake Form and a link to the USCIS Form I-765 is available on the ISSS website at: <http://www.middlebury.edu/international/iss/employment> (see OPT and Applying for OPT). The USCIS I-765 (and G-1145 forms for those who apply by mail) are also available at: <https://www.uscis.gov/forms>

**ISSS OPT Intake Form** (For use by the ISSS office only; not sent to USCIS.)

Completed and signed. We must have a month/day/year start date (and end date, if requesting pre-completion OPT. ISSS will calculate the end date for post-completion.). **You must also indicate dates of any off-campus work authorization (i.e., pre-completion OPT and/or CPT).**

**Original USCIS Form G-1145 e-Notification of Application (for those submitting their application by mail)**

This USCIS form is optional, yet highly recommended if you want to receive an email or text that your application has been accepted at a USCIS Lockbox facility. *For students applying online, you will automatically receive electronic notifications.*

**Original USCIS Form I-765**

Completed with all items completed in black. **TIP for those applying by mail:** *typing the form provides great clarity and accuracy on forms that will be scanned by USCIS. Handwriting the application is discouraged for these reasons.*

**Online I-765:** For those applying online, ISSS must receive an electronic copy of the I-765 for review. Do NOT submit the online I-765 without consulting with ISSS first. If you complete the online form without the required I-20 recommending OPT submitted with it, your application will be denied and/or delayed, resulting in a delay, or worse - a loss of the OPT opportunity depending on the timing of the submission.

To obtain the most current form, visit the [USCIS website](#). Use the latest version of Adobe Acrobat Reader. Do NOT use the "File Online" option. Read all USCIS instructions provided before completing the form. Additional guidance to complete Form I-765 is included on the following pages of this document.

**TIP for those applying by mail:** *Filling it out on a PC computer is best (Students have encountered problems with date entries and other details when using a Mac).*

**Note for those applying by mail:** *Even if you do not need all 7 pages of the application, you must submit all 7 pages to USCIS. USCIS I-765 form filing tips - <https://www.uscis.gov/forms/filing-guidance/form-filing-tips>*

**1 Copy of Passport Identification Page.**

This includes any additional pages that confirm the document's validity dates.

**1 Copy of your most recent F-1 Visa** (if applicable).

**1 Copy of your Electronic I-94 Record or Current I-94 Card** (front and back) if you have a hard copy card.

Access this document using your passport ID page at <https://i94.cbp.dhs.gov/i94/> and print it. **TIP:** *the travel history is not an acceptable alternative to the I-94 Record.*

**1 Copy of your most recent F-1 Entry Stamp** for admission into the U.S. (if you have one).

**1 copy of any previous EAD (Employment Authorization Document) cards** (front and back), if applicable. If you misplaced your EAD, write a short letter of explanation, including approved start and end dates.

- 1 copy of all previous I-20 Forms** (pages 1 and 2). Only I-20 Forms issued at the bachelor's level need to be included. **TIP:** *instructions page (page 3) may be excluded*

**You do not need to submit the 3 items below to ISSS with your ISSS OPT Request.**

- (Mailed applications only) Money order (preferred) or check for the appropriate fee amount made payable to U.S. Department of Homeland Security.** **TIP:** *Avoid a personal check, if possible, since there have been reports of delays processing them recently. It is also highly advised not to use a credit or bank card due to reports of errors in processing payments. TIP: Do not* write an abbreviation (such as DHS). The name must be spelled out in full as in the blue highlighted above.
- Confirm current filing fee at: <https://www.uscis.gov/i-765> before submitting your application.
- The money order/check must be from a U.S.-based financial institution and payable in U.S. currency.
  - Money Orders may be obtained from a U.S. Post Office, Western Union, some grocery store Customer Service desks, and some banks.
  - Be sure to have the information provided here when obtaining the money order, as some require you to provide specific information to issue them.
  - Make sure that your name, date of birth (DOB) and the phrase "I-765 filing fee" appear on the document.
    - Use the Memo line to enter the following: I-765 filing fee - DOB: mm/dd/yyyy
  - Use the MONTH/DAY/YEAR (MM/DD/YYYY) format when dating checks and writing your DOB (date of birth).
  - If address is required, follow these suggestions:
    - For Pay To address: use the USCIS address you will use to mail your OPT application (see page 6 of this document for address instructions)
    - For Payee (i.e. you) address: use the mailing address you included on the I-765 (should be ISSS)
    - **TIP:** Go to USCIS Filing Fee information page under "How to Write Your Check" (useful guidance for money orders, also) for specific instructions - <https://www.uscis.gov/forms/filing-fees>

**NOTE: for online applications, you will receive information about payment within the I-765 instructions to follow.**

- (Mailed applications only) 2 Photos, USCIS PHOTO SPECIFICATIONS: you must submit two identical color, 2x2 inch, passport-style photographs, taken recently (ideally within the past 30 days).** For specific details, please refer to the [Form I-765 Instructions](#).
  - **Using pencil, lightly print your name and SEVIS ID# on the back of each photo.** **TIP:** *do not press firmly when writing or it may interfere with the photo and be deemed unusable.*
  - Photos can be obtained locally at the US Postal Service, the UPS Store, and Kinney Drugs in Middlebury.

**NOTE: for online applications, you will receive information about photo requirements within the I-765 instructions (page 8).**

- For students who have not been in continuous F-1 status for a full year and will complete the 1-year requirement based on your F-1 status now and a previous valid nonimmigrant status:** You must include evidence of having been lawfully enrolled as a student on a full-time basis in the prior status as well as any proof of a change of status to F-1. Ask ISSS if you have questions.

3. **Submit your complete OPT Request to ISSS.**

Complete the OPT Intake Form found on our Forms website under “Student Employment Authorization” and “OPT application forms and resources.” Within the form, you will submit your completed I-765 pdf version and all supporting documents to ISSS. **TIP:** *When visiting the USCIS Form I-765 download page, be sure to scroll towards the very bottom of the page to obtain the I-765 pdf version; do NOT click on the “File Online” blue button. An ISSS Advisor will review your submission and if complete, process your request. Please anticipate up to 5-10 business days for initial processing. If further attention is required, ISSS will email you specific feedback, including instructions on how to resubmit documents if necessary.*

4. **Review edits and recommendations provided by ISSS.**

ISSS will notify you when your OPT application review is complete. We will email you with edits, recommendations, and suggestions for your I-765 OPT application. If you have questions about your OPT application, you can book an appointment with an advisor to review your questions or concerns.

5. **The Form I-20 from ISSS and Action Steps.**

ISSS will send you an email when your I-20 with OPT recommendation is ready. Depending if you are on campus or at another location, will determine how you will be instructed. The email will provide specific instructions based upon your circumstances. The following steps are VERY IMPORTANT:

- a) Review the information on all pages of the I-20 to ensure it is accurate.
  - b) If the information is accurate, then sign & date (MM/DD/YYYY) the student attestation section on page 1.
  - c) Confirm the OPT requested dates on page 2 – these cannot be changed once submitted to USCIS.
  - d) Include a copy of the updated I-20 (be sure to make a copy AFTER signing and confirming the correct dates) in your application. THIS IS THE COPY TO BE INCLUDED IN YOUR OPT APPLICATION.
- a. For those filing online, you will submit a digital copy of your new I-20 recommending OPT. It must include your signature and date. Remember you are **NOT** authorized to sign/date digitally; it must be signed/dated using ink pen (blue or black ink).
- e) Keep the original Form I-20 with the OPT recommendation as your most current and active I-20.
  - f) **USCIS must receive your OPT application within 30 days of the date that your DSO enters the recommendation in your SEVIS record. Be sure to submit to USCIS within 30 days.**

6. **ASSEMBLE THE OPT APPLICATION DOCUMENTS before mailing or submitting an online application. See page 6.**

**TIP:** *This really is important and can impact the timely review by the USCIS adjudicator. For online applications, you will follow the I-765 instructions.*

7. **Carefully read page 17 for Next Steps After Filing.**

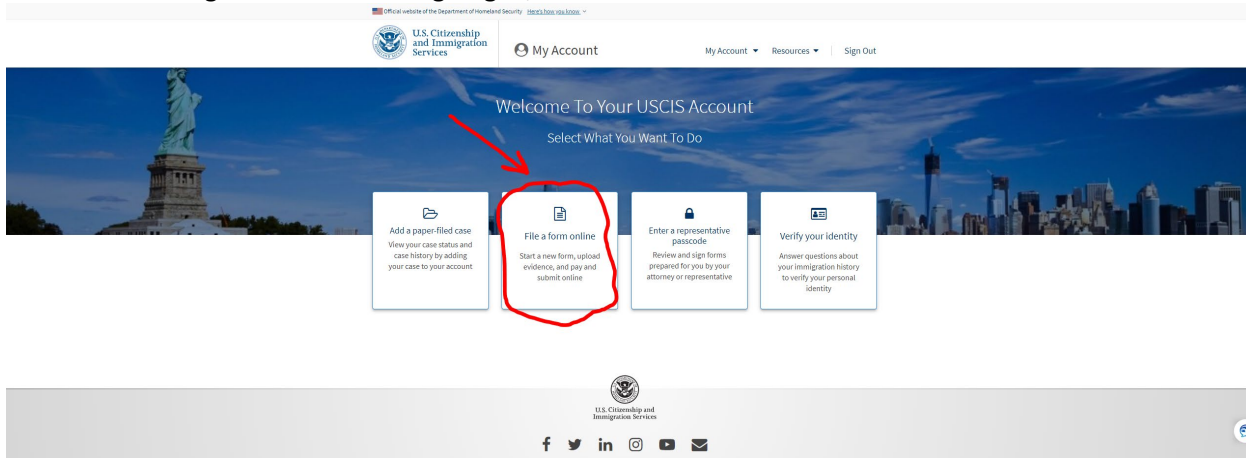
**Pages 5-16 are Online Filing instructions. If you are mailing a paper OPT application to USCIS, please refer to pages 17-22.**

*Please note: USCIS will accept both paper applications mailed OR applications submitted on-line though they have indicated they prefer applications submitted on-line, where possible. Mailed paper applications and on-line applications are processed in the same time frame. On-line submissions are not processed sooner than mailed applications by USCIS.*

## For Online Applications: Online Filing Instructions

Please note, the following gives tips for specific questions on the online application form but does not cover and review every single question that appears on the online application. Questions like your name and phone number should be intuitive to fill out.

1. Create an account as instructed on the USCIS on-line filing website. They need to be sure to select you are an applicant (#1).
2. After creating an account and signing in, select the box “File a form online”



3. Select “Application for Employment Authorization (I-765)” then click on “Start Form”

File A Form

Once you start your form, we will automatically save your information for 30 days, or from the last time you worked on the form.

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)
- 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.For all other eligibility categories, you must submit a paper [Form I-765](#).
- Petition for Alien Relative (I-130)
- Application To Extend/Change Nonimmigrant Status (I-539)

[Cancel](#)

4. Read the information on the next page (of the online application) then click “Next” at the bottom.

NOTE: Biometrics are not required of those in F status filing on-line for Optional Practical Training.

*Biometric services appointment*

*USCIS may require that you appear for an interview or provide biometrics (fingerprints, photograph, and/or signature) at any time to verify your identity, obtain additional information, and conduct background and security checks, including a check of criminal history records maintained by the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), before making a decision on your application or petition. After USCIS receives your application and ensures it is complete, we will inform you in writing if you need to attend a biometric services appointment.*

5. You must read the information on the following page and then click on “Start” at the bottom.

NOTE: the below is listed in a blue box just above the Back and Start buttons at the bottom.

*Security Reminder*

*If you do not work on your form for more than 30 days, we will delete your data in order to prevent storing personal information indefinitely.*

6. Choose the appropriate eligibility category for your situation then click the “Next” button.

The screenshot shows the USCIS website interface for the I-765 application. At the top, there is a navigation bar with the USCIS logo, the text "U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services", and links for "My Account", "Resources", and "Sign Out". The main content area is titled "I-765, Application for Employment Authorization". On the left, there is a sidebar menu with sections: "Getting Started" (expanded), "Basis of eligibility", "Reason for applying", "Preparer and interpreter information", "About You", "Evidence", "Additional Information", and "Review and Submit". The main content area asks "What is your eligibility category?" and features a dropdown menu. The dropdown is open, showing three options: "c(3)(A) Student Pre-Completion OPT", "c(3)(B) Student Post-Completion OPT", and "c(3)(C) STEM Extension". Below the dropdown, there is a warning message: "online and are not eligible for one of the listed categories, your application may be denied." At the bottom of the form, there are two buttons: "Back" and "Next".

NOTE: If applying for STEM, required to fill in the degree the Employer’s E-Verify name and number. For students applying for Post-completion OPT, this does NOT apply to you.

7. Mailing address and Physical addresses: for each address the address verification is done automatically (see snippet below) and must choose the original or recommended.

If following our recommendation and using the Middlebury office address as the mailing address, then the snippet below shows this address in the original address and what the address verification automatically popped up with. Suggest using the Original by selecting the “original address” and click “Use selected address” button. If the “recommended address” is used, it will result in mail receipting issues when it comes to campus.

Note: 14 Old Chapel Rd is the ‘Official’ street address for all the college in Vermont.

For “In care of name” box use Middlebury College ISSS

**Verify your address**

We are unable to verify your address with the U.S. Postal Service. To avoid delays, please use the recommended address.

**Original address:**  
14 Old Chapel Rd, Service Bldg, Suite 200  
Middlebury, VT, 05753-6004

**Recommended address:**  
14 OLD CHAPEL RD, STE 200  
MIDDLEBURY, VT, 05753-6004

[Use selected address](#) [Edit original address](#)

8. Next couple of pages apply to choosing gender and marital status and city, state/province, and country of birth (You can type the country in or choose from a drop box) and date of birth which is in the format of MM/DD/YYYY.

**NOTE: only use mm/dd/yyyy date format**

9. Next page asks for citizenship country and allows the addition of a country if cannot find in list but doesn't allow it for country of birth. You can type the country in or choose from a drop box.

What is your country of citizenship or nationality?

List all countries where you are currently a citizen or national.

Lithuania

+ Add country

- a. This page also solicits the I94/arrival information, the passport information, and current immigration status and the SEVIS ID number.
10. The next page asks for the A-number and USCIS Online Account Number and also has checkboxes that can be checked; possible labels are:
  - i. I do not have or know my A-Number
  - ii. I do not have or know my USCIS Online Account Number
  - a. This page also solicits SSN (social security number) and or information and permission for an SSN number to applied for on their behalf with this application.
11. The next page gives information about the required photos and allows the upload of a photo, but it must meet the requirements as instructed:

## 2 X 2 Photo Of You

Upload a recent color photograph of yourself that measures 2 inches by 2 inches, with your face measuring 1 inch to 1 3/8 inch from your chin to the top of your head. Your eyes should be between 1 1/8 inch and 1 3/8 inch from the bottom of the photo.

Make sure your whole face is visible, you are facing the camera directly, and the background is white or off-white. Your head must be bare, unless contrary to your religious beliefs.

If you need help understanding the photo requirements or want to resize, rotate, or crop your photo, you can use to the Department of State's [photo composition tools](#). Please note that we cannot approve your application without your photos.

### File requirements

- Clear and readable
- Accepted file formats: JPG, JPEG, or PNG
- No encrypted or password-protected files
- If your documents are in a foreign language, upload a full English translation and the translator's certification with each original document.
- Accepted characters: English letters, numbers, spaces, periods, hyphens, underscores, and parentheses
- Maximum size: 6MB per file

[Choose](#) or drop files here to upload

---

[Back](#)

[Next](#)

NOTE: This requirement is a common reason for applications to receive a "Request for Evidence" (RFE). Be sure to carefully follow the photo requirements to avoid this possible RFE reason. A RFE will result in a delay of your application being reviewed until sufficient information/documentation is submitted for further review. It is critical to respond in a timely manner to any RFE because they typically provide a deadline for submissions.

**CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE ----->**



12. The next page asks for the upload of a copy of the most recent I94 record:

### I-94, Arrival And Departure Record

Upload a copy of one of the following:

- Your Form I-94, Arrival-Departure Record (front and back);
- A printout of your electronic Form I-94 ; or
- Your passport or other travel document.

If you were admitted to the United States by CBP at an airport or seaport after April 30, 2013, CBP may have issued you an electronic Form I-94 instead of a paper Form I-94. You may visit the [CBP website](#) to obtain a paper version of an electronic Form I-94. CBP does not charge a fee for this service. Some travelers admitted to the United States at a land border, airport, or seaport, after April 30, 2013, with a passport or travel document, who were issued a paper Form I-94 by CBP, may also be able to obtain a replacement Form I-94 from the CBP website without charge.

If your Form I-94 cannot be obtained from the CBP website, it may be obtained by filing [Form I-102, Application for Replacement/Initial Nonimmigrant Arrival-Departure Record](#), with USCIS. USCIS does charge a fee for this service.

#### File requirements

- Clear and readable
- Accepted file formats: JPG, JPEG, PDF, TIF, or TIFF
- No encrypted or password-protected files
- If your documents are in a foreign language, upload a full English translation and the translator's certification with each original document.
- Accepted characters: English letters, numbers, spaces, periods, hyphens, underscores, and parentheses
- Maximum size: 6MB per file

[Choose](#) or drop files here to upload

**CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE ----->**

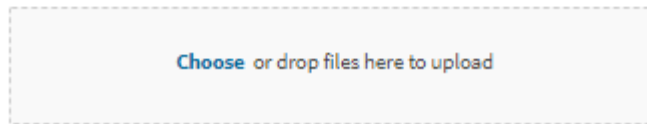
13. The next page asks for EAD or government ID document (i.e., passport or travel permit).

### Employment Authorization Document Or Government ID

Upload a copy of your last Employment Authorization document (EAD) (front and back). If you were not previously issued an EAD, you must upload a copy of a government-issued identity document (such as a passport) showing your picture, name, and date of birth; a birth certificate with photo ID; a visa issued by a foreign consulate; or a national ID document with photo and/or fingerprint. The identity document photocopy must clearly show your facial features and contain your biographical information.

#### File requirements

- Clear and readable
- Accepted file formats: JPG, JPEG, PDF, TIF, or TIFF
- No encrypted or password-protected files
- If your documents are in a foreign language, upload a full English translation and the translator's certification with each original document.
- Accepted characters: English letters, numbers, spaces, periods, hyphens, underscores, and parentheses
- Maximum size: 6MB per file



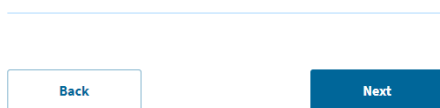
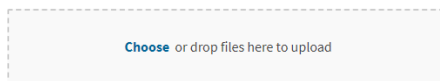
14. The next page asks for uploads of any previously authorized CPT or OPT and the academic level at which it was authorized. Previous I-20's with approval for CPT (see page 2) must be included, including any copy (front and back) of any prior employment cards, as well as the I-20's indicating requested OPT.

### Previously Authorized CPT Or OPT

Upload evidence of any previously authorized CPT or OPT and the academic level at which it was authorized.

#### File requirements

- Clear and readable
- Accepted file formats: JPG, JPEG, PDF, TIF or TIFF
- No encrypted or password-protected files
- If your documents are in a foreign language, upload a full English translation and the translator's certification with each original document.
- Upload no more than five documents at a time
- Accepted file name characters: English letters, numbers, spaces, periods, hyphens, underscores, and parentheses
- Maximum size: 12MB per file Des



15. The next page requires the I-20 with OPT recommendation for this application (current and new I-20). The recommendation must be done in SEVIS within 30 days for post-completion OPT and 60 days for STEM OPT.

### I-20, Certificate Of Eligibility For Nonimmigrant Student Status

Upload a copy of the Form I-20, Certificate of Eligibility for Nonimmigrant Student Status endorsed by the Designated School Official (DSO). For the (c)(3)(B) eligibility category, your DSO must have entered the recommendation for OPT into your SEVIS record within 30 days of you submitting Form I-765. If you fail to do so, we will deny your OPT request. For the (c)(3)(C) eligibility category, the Form I-20 must have been endorsed by the DSO within 60 days of submitting Form I-765.

#### File requirements

- Clear and readable
- Accepted file formats: JPG, JPEG, PDF, TIF, or TIFF
- No encrypted or password-protected files
- If your documents are in a foreign language, upload a full English translation and the translator's certification with each original document.
- Accepted characters: English letters, numbers, spaces, periods, hyphens, underscores, and parentheses
- Maximum size: 6MB per file

**Choose** or drop files here to upload

16. The next page is a space to provide any additional responses – this is equivalent to the last page of the paper I-765. If you lost the required documentation proving previous work authorization (CPT and/or OPT), you will use this section to explain any previous work authorization here.

#### Additional Information

If you need to provide any additional information for any of your answers to the questions in this form, enter it into the space below. You should include the questions that you are referencing.

If you do not need to provide any additional information, you may leave this section blank.

Section

Page

Question

Additional information

0/500

Save response

Cancel

17. The next page prompts you to check your application before submitting and indicates the filing fee. It will also indicate if there are any alerts and warnings regarding your application. If you receive any alerts, it is imperative that you stop and reach out to ISSS if you are not confident how to resolve the alert or warning. If you do not have any alerts or warnings, you will see a green checkmark confirming this (see example below).

## Check your application before you submit

We will review your application to check for accuracy and completeness before you submit it.

We encourage you to provide as many responses as you can throughout the application, to the best of your knowledge. Missing information can slow down the review process after you submit your application.


You can return to this page to review your application as many times as you want before you submit it.

### Your fee

 Your form filing fee is: \$410

Refund Policy: USCIS does not refund fees, regardless of any action we take on your application, petition or request, or how long USCIS takes to reach a decision. By continuing this transaction, you acknowledge that you must submit fees in the exact amount and that you are paying the fees for a government service.

### Alerts and warnings

 We found no alerts or warnings in your application

-----> **Continue to Next Page**

18. The next page reviews the I-765. This can be done on the page by scrolling down or by printing the web version to review. You may also view the form as a draft snapshot which looks like the paper I-765 (with a watermark that it is the electronic copy).

[Review the I-765 form information](#)



Here is a summary of all the information you provided in your application.

Make sure you have provided responses for everything that applies to you before you submit your application. You can edit your responses by going to each application section using the site navigation.

We also prepared a draft case snapshot with your responses, which you can download below.

[View draft snapshot](#)

Getting Started	
Basis of eligibility	
What is your eligibility category?	c(3)(B) Student Post-Completion OPT
What is your degree?	-
What is your employer's name as listed in E-Verify?	-
What is your employer's E-Verify company identification number or a valid E-Verify client company identification number?	-
Reason for applying	
What is your reason for applying?	Initial permission to accept employment
Have you previously filed Form I-765?	No
Preparer and interpreter information	
Is someone assisting you with completing this application?	No
Is a preparer assisting you with completing this application?	-

19. The next page has the applicant's statement. You must click the check box before you can go to the next page.

### 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.

20. The next page is the Applicant's declaration and Certification which the checkbox must be clicked and must type in your signature before progressing to the next page.

Copies of any documents I have submitted are exact photocopies of unaltered, original documents, and I understand that USCIS may require that I submit original documents to USCIS at a later date. Furthermore, I authorize the release of any information from any and all of my records that USCIS may need to determine my eligibility for the immigration benefit that I seek.

I furthermore authorize release of information contained in this application, in supporting documents, and in my USCIS records, to other entities and persons where necessary for the administration and enforcement of U.S. immigration law.

I understand that USCIS may require me to appear for an appointment to take my biometrics (fingerprints, photograph, and/or signature) and, at that time, if I am required to provide biometrics, I will be required to sign an oath reaffirming that:

- 1) I reviewed and understood all of the information contained in, and submitted with, my application; and
- 2) All of this information was complete, true, and correct at the time of filing.

I certify, under penalty of perjury, that all of the information in my application and any document submitted with it were provided or authorized by me, that I reviewed and understand all of the information contained in, and submitted with, my application, and that all of this information is complete, true, and correct.

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

### Applicant's Declaration and Certification

You must read and agree to the certification below. If you knowingly and willfully falsify or conceal a material fact or submit a false document with your application, we can deny your application and may deny any other immigration benefit. You may also face criminal prosecution and penalties provided by the law.

21. The final page is to pay and submit. You will be directed to the Pay.gov website to submit your filing fee online.

## Pay for and submit your application

The final step to submit your Form I-765, Application for Employment Authorization, is to pay the required fee.

Your application fee is: **\$410**.

**Refund Policy:** By continuing this transaction, you agree that you are paying for a government service and that the filing fee, biometric services fee and all related financial transactions are final and not refundable, regardless of any action USCIS takes on an application, petition or request, or how long USCIS takes to reach a decision. You must submit all fees in the exact amounts.



We will send you to Pay.gov — our safe and secure payment website — to pay your fees and submit your form online.

Here are the steps in the payment and submission process:

1. Provide your billing information on Pay.gov
2. Provide your credit card or U.S. bank account information
3. Submit your payment

When you have paid your fee, your form will be submitted.

Pay.gov will redirect you to a [uscis.gov](https://uscis.gov) confirmation screen, which will include your receipt number. Please keep a copy of your receipt number for your records. You can track the status of your application through your USCIS online account.

**Pay and submit**

**See important information about how to pay online; go to next page ----->**

## If You File Online



If you [file your form online](#), the system will guide you through the process of paying your fees with a credit, debit, or pre-paid card. Bank account withdrawals are also available when paying online. Once you are ready to submit your form, the system will automatically direct you to the secure Department of Treasury site, [pay.gov](#), to pay your fees online.

We only use [pay.gov](#) to process fees. Always check the website address before you pay. Beware of scam websites and scammers who may pretend to be a USCIS website.

**Continue reading on page 17 for Next Steps After Filing and Important Reminders**



## Next Steps After Filing & Important Reminders

### Receipt Notice

Within a few weeks, USCIS will mail an I-797 “Notice of Action” to confirm receipt of your application to the address used on your application. For online applications, you must save the initial confirmation page and email once you submit the application online. You can check the status of your case online at [www.uscis.gov](http://www.uscis.gov) by using the case number found on your Receipt Notice. USCIS only updates the site when action is taken. If you mailed your application and wish to receive an update, please email ISSS, and if we have your Receipt Notice, we will provide a digital copy to you.

### Approval Notice/Employment Authorization Card (EAC)

OPT applications can take a significant amount of time for USCIS to process, please see their website for current estimated processing times (<https://egov.uscis.gov/processing-times/> - typically, the Field Office/Service Center is Potomac Service Center adjudicating the form). If you used the ISSS Vermont Office address as the mailing address on the I-765 (both paper and on-line), all USCIS paper communications regarding your OPT application will be sent to ISSS in Vermont. We will notify you via email when we receive the receipt notice. However, not until ISSS receives your Employment Authorization Card (EAC) will we mail anything to you. ISSS will email you a notification and instructions on how to receive the EAC. The EAC, Approval Notice, and Receipt Notice will be mailed to you, and you must keep these for your records. If you used your personal address, then you need to make sure that ISSS gets copies of the notices and EAC (front and back) via our Document Submission form on the [Forms & Resources page](#) of our website. **TIP:** *do not engage in any employment/internship/activity, including orientation, training or accept a signing bonus until you have received the EAC physically & you have reached your OPT start date printed on the EAC.*

Once you receive your EAC, double check it for any errors and notify ISSS immediately if any are found. Additionally, upon OPT approval, USCIS will email you a link to activate your **SEVIS Portal Account**. If you add the USCIS email address [do-not-reply.sevp@ice.dhs.gov](mailto:do-not-reply.sevp@ice.dhs.gov) to your contacts, important messages from them will not be filtered into your spam or junk mail. **TIP:** *It is your responsibility to monitor the email address you listed on the OPT intake application, because this will be the email address USCIS and ISSS will use for all official communication.*

### Travel Advice

ISSS recommends that you **do not travel** outside of the U.S. while your OPT application is **pending approval**. If you must travel, please discuss this with ISSS during your OPT Application Final Review Appointment.

Once your OPT has been approved, you may travel outside of the U.S. before and during your OPT period. You must present the following documents at the U.S. port of entry upon your return each time:

- Form I-20 endorsed for OPT on page 2 with a valid travel signature from ISSS (within 6 months)
- Valid F-1 visa (not required for citizens of Bermuda and Canada)
- Valid Passport (for at least six months into the future)
- Valid Employment Authorization Card (EAC)
- Proof of employment/Employer letter – (not required, yet highly recommended)
- Proof of financial ability – pay stub, bank letter, etc. (not required, yet highly recommended)

### F-1 Visa

If your F-1 visa has expired, you will need to apply for a new F-1 visa at a U.S. Embassy or Consulate in your passport country to use for re-entry to the U.S. You may be required to show documentation that you have a job to return to and sufficient income or funds to cover your living expenses. The above documents for travel will also be used for any visa renewal applications. Keep in mind that a visa renewal to cover your OPT period will only be possible when you have received the OPT approval and receipt of the EAC.

Please do not enter the US in any other visa category. If you re-enter the United States through the Visa Waiver program or with a tourist visa, or any other visa status, you will not be authorized to work even if you have a valid EAC. **You must be in F-1 status for this card and your authorization to remain valid.** Your I-94 record is proof that you have arrived in the U.S. in a specific status.

## Reporting Requirements

**You are still in F-1 status and responsible for reporting the following to ISSS:** U.S. address, name change, email address, phone number, new or ending employment, and any changes to your employment, i.e., work address, etc. Visit the ISSS Forms website (see “OPT and STEM OPT reporting forms”). **TIP:** Remember, you must report within 10 calendar days of any change or new information.

You must also continue to maintain a valid travel signature on page 2 of your I-20. Once you are approved for OPT, your travel signature validity period is reduced to 6 months. An updated travel signature is requested using an online form (see Forms “OPT and STEM OPT reporting forms”). Require at least 2 weeks’ notice before planned travel. It is your responsibility to keep track of required reporting requirements; if you are unsure, then ask ISSS.

### After OPT

If you have a STEM-eligible major, you will want to refer to the ISSS website regarding STEM Extension. Beginning a STEM application when there is about 5 months remaining on your OPT period is prudent so you have time to consult with ISSS if needed and prepare your application appropriately.

If you do not plan to use STEM Extension or are not eligible, you may consider transferring your SEVIS record to a U.S. institution for further study. Consult ISSS for further guidance if this might be your plan.

If you will leave the U.S. after your OPT, then you have a grace period of 60 days to exit. If you exit during the 60-day period, then you cannot reenter in F-1 status. Please plan accordingly.

## For Mailed Applications: Additional Form I-765 Filing Guidance

>>> **MAKE ALL DOCUMENTS SINGLE SIDED TO ENSURE ACCURATE USCIS PROCESSING.** <<<

### **PART 1)**

#### >> REASON FOR APPLYING

See the USCIS Form I-765 instructions for how to complete the form based on the Foreign Students Category.

### **PART 2)**

#### >> YOUR FULL LEGAL NAME

List your full legal name instead of any preferred names.

#### >> YOUR U.S. MAILING ADDRESS

Use a valid, U.S. address as this is where USCIS will send notices, the Employment Authorization Document (EAD) and Social Security Number (SSN) (if requested). Many students use ISSS's address as it is permanent.

**TIP:** *Using the ISSS address is a very safe option, as mail is always received here and regularly processed. If you may be moving to multiple locations or traveling, it also ensures a timely receipt of these very important documents. The U.S. government does NOT allow their mail to be forwarded, so any mail forward service you might organize will not apply to anything sent by USCIS in regard to your OPT application. We will also then be able to review the documents for errors or discrepancies on your behalf.*

5a: Middlebury College ISSS

5b: 14 Old Chapel Road

5c:

5d: Middlebury

5e: VT            5f: 05753

6: No

**\*\* If you use the ISSS mailing address and want to change your address on record with USCIS afterwards, please contact ISSS first before taking action so that you have a clear understanding of the implications of this action.**

#### >> YOUR U.S. PHYSICAL ADDRESS

Use a valid, U.S. address for where you are physically living. If you live on the Middlebury College campus, use:

7a: 14 Old Chapel Rd MC XXXX (insert your box number)

7b: Leave blank

7c: Middlebury

7d: VT            7e: 05753

#### >> OTHER INFORMATION

Question 8: If you have applied for a USCIS benefit before (such as pre-completion OPT), then you may have an A-Number. If you have one, you will find it at the top of your EAD card mailer or located under the USCIS # heading on your EAD card.) If you have not, then you can leave this question blank.

Question 9: If you have never created a USCIS On-line account number (most Middlebury College undergraduates probably have not), then you can leave this question blank.

Question 12: If you have applied for employment authorization in the past, select YES. Provide copies of all previous EADs, front and backside. (You will also have to provide additional information in PART 6.)

Question 13a: Everyone must answer question 13a. It asks if the Social Security Administration (SSA) has ever officially issued you a Social Security Number. **TIP:** *If you were ever issued an SSN, even if you don't think you need it or have the card, you must enter it here.*

Question 14: If you answer No, you skip ahead to Part 2, Question 18a.

Via this form, you have the option of applying for an SSN or requesting a replacement SSN if your original card was lost or stolen. If so, you should receive your SSN within 2 weeks after your I-765 application is approved. **TIP:** *due to COVID-19, there are reports of slight delays in the issuance of the SSN beyond 2 weeks. The SSN is issued by the Social Security Administration, not USCIS, so the SSN will not be issued at the same time as the EAC. You may begin working without receipt of the SSN (as long as you have the EAC in hand and you are on or after the OPT start date).*

>> YOUR COUNTRY OR COUNTRIES OF CITIZENSHIP

- If you are stateless, use the name of the country where you were last a citizen or national.
- If you are a citizen or national of more than one country, use the name of the foreign country that issued your last passport and that matches what is referenced in SEVIS on your I-20.

>> INFORMATION ABOUT YOUR LAST ARRIVAL IN THE U.S.

Question 21a: Use your I-94 number and data on the I-94 website at <https://i94.cbp.dhs.gov/i94/>.

Question 21b: Use your passport information.

Question 21c: Most of you will be able to answer 21b with your passport information. In this case, you would leave question 21c blank since the instructions indicate “if any.” This is only to be used if you have a travel document other than a passport.

>> INFORMATION ABOUT YOUR ELIGIBILITY CATEGORY

Question 27: The **pre-completion** category is **C 3 A**. The **post-completion** category is **C 3 B**.

- **You do not need to complete numbers 28 through 31 (this is only for STEM).**

**TIP:** *Graduating students who may be eligible for STEM, will NOT indicate STEM in this box; the STEM extension application is done later in your post-completion period.*

**PART 3)**

>> APPLICANT’S STATEMENT

Select the appropriate box. Most students will choose 1a.

>> APPLICANT’S CONTACT INFORMATION

For questions 3 to 5, use your contact information. If you do not have a phone number for question 3, you may use the ISSS number at 802-443-5858.

>> APPLICANT’S SIGNATURE

Sign your name in the box (black ink) for 7a and **make sure that your signature fits within the box**. USCIS will not accept a stamped or typewritten name in place of a signature. **TIP:** *it is imperative to use black ink*

**DO NOT COMPLETE PARTS 4 OR 5.** These are only used if the applicant uses an interpreter or preparer (attorney).

**TIP:** *draw a diagonal line (using black ink) through each page (from the upper corner to the opposite bottom corner) and write N / A across the middle of the page; this will ensure you left the pages blank intentionally. (N/A = not applicable)*

**PART 6)**

If you were previously approved for CPT and/or pre-completion OPT, use the below suggested entry for questions 1a-c, 2, and 3a-d. If you were approved for multiple work authorization periods, then you would use the additional 4a-d, 5a-d, etc. to list additional periods. If you applied for pre-completion OPT and then withdrew your application, you will also provide reference to it in this section.

For OPT:

1. Family Name, Given Name, Middle Name (as listed in your passport and on the I-765)
2. A-Number (if any)—you can find it under the USCIS # on your EAD card or at the top of the EAD card mailer.
- 3a. Page Number: 2    3b. Part Number: 2    3c. Item Number: 12
- 3d. (provide the additional information):

SEVIS ID N000000000000 (use your specific number)

Since there are no clear USCIS instructions on how to list this information, consider the following method:

MM/DD/YYYY to MM/DD/YYYY

Bachelors Level  
Pre-completion OPT

**TIP:** *Students who may have submitted OPT previously and withdrew the application successfully (received a confirmation of withdrawal), please indicate this on the ISSS Intake form so you may receive additional assistance in representing that here appropriately.*

For CPT:

1. Family Name, Given Name, Middle Name (as listed in your passport and on the I-765)
2. A-Number (if any)—you can find it under the USCIS # on your EAD card or at the top of the EAD card mailer.
- 3a. Page Number: NA    3b. Part Number: NA    3c. Item Number: NA
- 3d. (provide the additional information):  
    SEVIS ID N000000000000 (use your specific number)

Since there are no clear USCIS instructions on how to list this information, consider the following method:

MM/DD/YYYY to MM/DD/YYYY

Bachelors Level

CPT

**TIP:** *3a-c (or additional similar fields, i.e., 4a-c, 5a-c) may require you to handwrite “NA” in each field. If this is necessary, please use BLOCK LETTERS when doing so.*

Note: FOR ANYONE FILING A RENEWAL (i.e., a second request for the same employment at the same educational level, i.e., STEM Extension or second OPT application using the same category):

List all previously issued SEVIS numbers (the N number found on your Form I-20s), all periods of CPT and all periods of OPT as well as the educational level at which they were authorized.

**FINAL REMINDER:**

Answer all questions fully and accurately. If a question does not apply to you, leave it blank. In some cases, you may be advised to type “N/A” or “Not Applicable” in certain questions; you will be advised if needed. Always follow the instructions provided on the I-765. Questions that indicate “if any” may be left blank if it does not apply to you.

**SEE NEXT PAGE FOR MORE IMPORTANT MAILING INFORMATION**

## For Mailed Applications: Mailing Instructions

### 1. ASSEMBLE THE OPT APPLICATION DOCUMENTS before mailing:

Refer to the [USCIS website regarding the filing of the I-765](#). Review the [Checklist](#). Follow the *General Requirements* as well as the *Student Seeking Pre- or Post-Completion* guidance on the list.

**As of November 18, 2020, according to USCIS, you should submit your documents as follows:**

**TIP:** Use one large **paper clip** instead of staples to attach documents together.

**>> MAKE ALL DOCUMENTS SINGLE SIDED TO ENSURE ACCURATE USCIS PROCESSING <<**

- Money Order for **Filing Fee**,
- **2 Photos** that meet USCIS requirements (see page 2) – may be placed in a smaller envelope unsealed
- Original **Form G-1145** (if you want USCIS to notify you electronically)
- Original **Form I-765 Application**-- properly signed and dated (must include fresh ink signature/date)
- **Copy of new I-20 with DSO recommendation of OPT**—signed and dated by you and ISSS staff
- Copy of **previous EAD cards** (if you used OPT before)—both sides; if none, skip this
- Printout of [most recent I-94 record](#)
- Copy of **passport ID page(s)**, including validity dates, and **most recent entry stamp**, if available
- Copy of your **F-1 visa** (not required for citizens of Bermuda or Canada)
- Copies of **all previous I-20s**, single-sided and without staples (instruction page may be excluded)

### 2. BEFORE mailing, make a copy or SCAN of your entire OPT packet (I-765 and supportive materials).

Keep this duplicate packet for your personal records, as you may need to refer to it in the future. **TIP:** include scan/copy of payment method and photos as proof of submission with I-765 and supportive documents.

### 3. Mail the completed OPT application to the applicable USCIS Lockbox

- Mailing addresses for I-765 can change without notice. So, before mailing, verify the address on the USCIS website: <https://www.uscis.gov/i-765> under “Where to File.”
- You will be using two separate envelopes: one to place your documents in to secure them and a second that will be provided by the express mailing service you choose. The former will go inside the latter.

**On the front of the envelope, you place your documents inside, you will write: “I-765 - OPT APPLICATION.”**

**TIP:** write this in the center of the envelope using all large block letters (as shown above)

- For I-765 mailing information, see: <https://www.uscis.gov/i-765-addresses> (select “Foreign students”)
- For the specific lockbox address you should use, see:

**For FedEx, UPS and DHL express mail Deliveries:**

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

**For U.S. Postal Service (USPS) Deliveries**

USCIS  
Attn: I-765 C03  
PO Box 805373  
Chicago, IL 60680

→ **USCIS must receive your OPT application, along with Form I-765, within 30 days of the date that your DSO enters the recommendation in your SEVIS record. Be sure to submit to USCIS within 30 days.**

**TIP:** Submit application by an **express mail service** such as UPS (available at Mailing Services in the Freeman International Center building) or FedEx that offer package tracking. If choose US Postal Service (USPS), be sure to request a method with a tracking number. **DO NOT** use a “signature upon delivery” option because USCIS may not “sign” for the package. **ATTENTION: UPS and USPS are two different entities!**

**GO TO PAGE 16 FOR NEXT STEPS AFTER FILING & IMPORTANT REMINDERS**