OPT Application Checklist

F-1 visa holders can decide to submit their OPT applications online through USCIS's application portal, or by a paper-based application to USCIS. Review OIS' Form I-765 Online Filing Information Fact Sheet to learn about the differences between these two different methods, and which method may be best for you.

Remember: you *must* receive an OPT I-20 from OIS before you submit your OPT application to USCIS.

- ☐ **Original,** completed G-1145, only if applying via paper mail
- ☐ **Original**, completed and signed Form I-765
  - If applying via paper mail:
    - ➢ Be sure that you use the most recent version of the form, and submit all pages to USCIS.
    - ➢ Review OIS' Sample I-765.
  - If applying online:
    - ➢ Follow the logic-based questions on the online form.
- ☐ Copy of newest I-20 with OPT recommendation on page 2. *No staples, please!*
- ☐ Copy of previous CPT/ OPT I-20s (including those from former schools), if applicable. Make sure your signature is on the front page of each I-20. *No staples, please!*
  - If you never received CPT or OPT in the past, you do not need to upload anything on the online Form I-765 when it asks to provide copies of your previous CPT / OPT I-20s.
- ☐ Copy of the biographical page of your passport
- ☐ Copy of your F-1 visa stamp (not required for online application)
- ☐ Copy of your I-94 Admission Record
- ☐ Copy of any previous EAD cards (if applicable)
- ☐ Copy of your Pitt transcript and enrollment verification letter (*ONLY for pre-completion OPT applicants*)
- ☐ Filing fee of **$410.00**
  - If filing via paper mail:
    - ➢ *If paying by check or money order*, make payable to: "*U.S. Department of Homeland Security*". Remember to write the date on the check!
    - ➢ *If paying by credit card*, complete and sign Form G-1450.
  - If filing online:
    - ➢ You will submit an online credit/debit card payment via the government's online portal.
- ☐ Photos:
  - If filing via paper mail:
    - ➢ Two US passport-style (2 in x 2 in) photographs taken within the last 30 days. **Lightly print your name and I-94 Number on the back of each photo in pencil**. Place the photos in an envelope or plastic bag. Use a paperclip to attach them to the application.
  - If filing online:
    - ➢ You will upload a digital photo that meets the government's requirements.
- ☐ **Make a copy of all application materials for your personal records *before* submitting to USCIS.**
  - If filing via paper mail:
    - ➢ Keep the receipt with tracking number (FedEx, UPS, USPS) after mailing your application.
  - If filing online:
    - ➢ print a copy of your Form I-765 after you submit it.

Social Security Cards

If you already have a Social Security Number (SSN), you should not apply for another one. If you wish to apply for an SSN as part of the OPT process, indicate that on Form I-765.

An SSN will be issued only if the OPT application is approved. The Social Security card will be mailed within **7 business days** *after* the start date listed on the EAD. Please allow additional mailing time if you choose to have your documents mailed to OIS. All mail is sorted in Pitt's mailroom before coming to OIS.

Mailing Instructions

If you choose to submit a paper application, your application materials must be **received** at USCIS no later than **60 days** after the STEM OPT Recommendation I-20 has been issued.

USCIS Mailing Address – for Express Mail and Courier Deliveries (UPS, FedEx):
USCIS
Attn: I-765 C03 (Box 805373)
131 South Dearborn - 3rd Floor
Chicago, IL 60603-5517
Phone: 800-375-5283

PLEASE NOTE: Please confirm the correct filing address at the USCIS website. This information listed above is current as of the revised date below.

If applying online, you do not need to mail anything to USCIS. Your application is considered "received" immediately upon submission. Print your Receipt Notice and keep it with your personal records.

Deadlines for USCIS to Receive Application

- Pre-Completion OPT:
    - No earlier than 90 days before requested pre-completion OPT start date
    - USCIS must receive application within 30 days of the date that OIS created your OPT I-20
- Post-Completion OPT:
    - No earlier than 90 days before I-20 end date (most students) or desired post-completion OPT start date (for thesis/dissertation students only; see OIS' online OPT presentations)
    - No later than 60 days after I-20 end date
    - USCIS must receive application within 30 days of the date that OIS created your OPT I-20
- If you are delayed in sending your application, you MUST contact your Immigration Specialist to request a new I-20.

If you have more in-depth questions, contact your OIS Immigration Specialist.