OPT APPLICATION CHECKLIST

□ Original, completed Form G-1145 (www.uscis.gov/g-1145)
□ Original, completed and signed Form I-765 (www.uscis.gov/i-765)
  • Be sure you are using the most recent version of the form and send all pages to USCIS
  • Review OIS’ Sample I-765 (https://www.ois.pitt.edu/sites/default/files/Sample-i-765.pdf)
□ Photocopy of newest I-20 with OPT recommendation on page 2. No staples, please!
□ Photocopies of all previous I-20s (including those from former schools). Make sure your signature is on the front page of each I-20. No staples, please!
□ Photocopy of the biographical page of your passport
□ Photocopy of your F-1 visa stamp
□ Photocopy of your I-94 Admission Record (cbp.gov/i94)
□ Photocopy of any previous EAD cards (if applicable)
□ Filing fee of $410.00
  • 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 (www.uscis.gov/g-1450).
□ Two US passport-style (2 inches x 2 inches) photographs taken within the last 30 days. Lightly print your name and I-94 Number on the back of each photo in pencil. The photos should be placed in an envelope or plastic bag and paper clipped to the application so they are not lost. travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/passports/requirements/photos.html
□ Make a copy of all materials to keep for your personal records before mailing to USCIS.
□ Keep the receipt (with tracking number) from FedEx, UPS, or USPS after mailing your application.

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 EAD is approved and mailed. 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
Application materials must be received at USCIS no later than 30 days after the OPT Recommendation I-20 has been issued. Contact OIS if you cannot meet this deadline.

USCIS Mailing Address – for Express Mail and Courier Deliveries (UPS, FedEx):
United States Citizenship & Immigration Services (USCIS)
Dallas Lockbox, Attn: AOS
2501 S. State Hwy 121 Business
Suite 400
Lewisville TX 75067
Phone: 800-375-5283

PLEASE NOTE: If you list a Pennsylvania address on your Form I-765, application materials must be submitted to the USCIS address above. If you list a U.S. address outside of Pennsylvania, please find the appropriate address via www.uscis.gov/I-765.
OPT / STEM OPT EMPLOYMENT: 
DIRECT RELATIONSHIP TO MAJOR AREA OF STUDY

The federal government’s regulations require that ALL employment during the OPT and STEM OPT authorization periods must be directly related to the student’s major area of study.

In 2019, the federal government issued more specific guidance about how students must explain the direct relationship between students’ major area of study and their employment. When reporting their employment, students must:

- Explain the regular duties of their position (2 to 4 sentences)
- Make logical connections between their job duties and their degree program / coursework in their major area of study (1 to 2 sentences)

Students must provide this explanation via the online e-forms in the “OPT Report Participation” section of My OIS. OIS will review students’ explanations and ask for more clarification, if necessary. After reviewing students’ explanations, OIS will enter students’ employment information directly into the SEVIS database.

Students may review their OPT information via the federal government’s SEVP Portal.

The federal government has provided some sample explanations:

- **Bachelor’s degree in Electrical Engineering:**
  
  "I work full time as an Electrical Engineer at ABC Corp., a government contractor. In my job, I analyze client requirements for electrical systems and provide them with cost estimates of such systems. My work requires understanding of electrical circuit theory, which I studied in-depth at the University of ABC.”

- **PhD in Computer Science:**
  
  "I am employed as a Computer and Information Research Scientist at ABC Research Institute. I work as part of a team of scientists and engineers that designs experiments to test the operation of various software systems. My work builds on research in complex algorithms and machine learning, which I studied as part of my dissertation.”

- **Master’s degree in Music:**
  
  "I am working at a hospital playing the harp in patient rooms. I also conduct hands-on harp beginner workshops for long-term patients. On average, I work at the hospital 35 hours a week. My duties directly utilize the skills and knowledge I acquired from my coursework and degree in music therapy.”

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