

OIS Guidelines for Completing Form I-765

Important Information

- These guidelines have been prepared by the Office of International Services (OIS) for F-1 students applying for Optional Practical Training (OPT) or OPT extension (STEM OPT). These guidelines are based on OIS's best practices and interpretation of [USCIS's Instructions for Form I-765](#). We strongly recommend that you review [USCIS's Instructions for Form I-765](#) yourself before completing this form. It is especially important to review the following sections of the Instructions:
 - Foreign Students Categories
 - General Instructions
 - Required Documentation
 - What is Filing Fee?
 - Where to File?
 - Address Change
 - Processing Information

The Instructions are available at <https://www.uscis.gov/i-765>.

- These guidelines are based on the 12/26/19 version of Form I-765.
- These guidelines only cover the items of Form I-765 that can be confusing. Make sure to provide answers to all applicable items regardless of whether they are covered in these guidelines.
- It is your responsibility to complete and file Form I-765 properly and in a timely manner. OIS is here to help you with advice, but not to share the responsibility with you.
- Make sure to check the date of issuance of your I-20 before filing your OPT application:
 - For students applying for the initial 12-month OPT: USCIS must receive your Form I-765 and all supporting documentation within 30 days of the date that OIS issues your I-20 with an OPT recommendation. If you fail to do so, USCIS will deny your OPT application.
 - For students applying for the 24-month STEM extension (STEM OPT): USCIS must receive your Form I-765 and all supporting documentation within 60 days of the date that OIS issues your I-20 with a STEM OPT

recommendation. If you fail to do so, USCIS will deny your STEM OPT application.

- USCIS must receive your OPT application while you are physically present in the U.S. in your F-1 status. OIS strongly recommends that you stay in the U.S. until at least you get the official Receipt Notice from USCIS before planning any international travel. The best practice is to wait for your Employment Authorization Document (EAD) card before travelling out of the U.S.

General Guidelines

- Make sure to use the latest version of Form I-765 available at <https://www.uscis.gov/i-765>. These guidelines are based on the 12/26/19 version of Form I-765.
- Complete the form by typing or printing legibly in black ink. You may need to use Adobe Acrobat to be able to complete all fields electronically.
- Answer all questions fully and accurately.
- Print out the completed form and sign it in black ink.
- If a question does not apply to you, type or print “N/A” (short for “Not Applicable”). If the question requires a numeric response, you can type or print “None.”
- If you need extra space to complete any item on the form, use the space provided in **Part 6. Additional Information** or attach a separate sheet of paper. Type or print your name and Alien Registration Number (A-Number) (if you have one) at the top of each sheet; indicate the **Page Number**, **Part Number**, and **Item Number** to which your answer refers. Sign and date each sheet.
- These guidelines only cover the items of Form I-765 that can be confusing. Make sure to provide answers to all applicable items regardless of whether they are covered in these guidelines.

Part 1. Reason for Applying

If you are applying for the initial 12-month post-completion OPT: select 1.a. (Initial permission to accept employment).

If you are applying for the 24-month STEM OPT extension (STEM OPT): select 1.c. (Renewal of my permission to accept employment).

Part 2. Information About You

Your Full Legal Name

Items 1.a – 1.c. Type or print your full legal name as it appears on your I-20 and passport.

Other Names Used

Items 2.a – 4.c. Type or print all other names you have ever used, such as a maiden name, “FNU,” previous legal names, etc. If you need extra space, use the space provided in *Part 6. Additional Information*.

Your U.S. Mailing Address

Items 5.a – 5.f. This is the address USCIS will use to mail you documents related to this application, including the official Receipt Notice and Employment Authorization Document (EAD) card. If you are using someone else’s mailing address, make sure to include their name in the “In Care Of Name” field. **Please do not use the OIS mailing address in this field!** With the COVID-19 situation in flux, OIS cannot guarantee that there will not be an interruption in our mail service.

If the mailing address you indicated on your Form I-765 changes after you send your application to USCISs, you will need to submit the [USCIS’s online Change of Address form](#).

You should also file an online change of address with the postal service on the [USPS website](#).

Item 6. If your physical (home) address is different from the mailing address listed in Items 5.a. – 5.f., check “No” in this item and complete Items 7.a. – 7.d. If your mailing address is the same as your physical address, check “Yes.”

U.S. Physical Address

Items 7.a – 7.d. If you answered “No” to Item 6, provide the address where you currently live. USCIS will not use this address to mail your documents. If you answered “Yes” to Item 6, you can leave Items 7.a. – 7.d. blank.

If the physical address you indicated on your Form I-765 changes after you send your application to USCISs, you will need to submit the [USCIS’s online Change of Address form](#).

Other Information

Item 8. Alien Registration Number (A-Number) is only applicable to you if you have been issued an EAD in the past. All students applying for the STEM OPT extension should have this number. A-Number is the same as USCIS Number. You will find it on your EAD (listed as “USCIS#”). If you are applying for the initial 12-month OPT and have never been issued an EAD before nor have you been assigned the A-Number for any other reason, you can leave this field blank or type/print “None.”

Item 9. Most likely, you don’t have a USCIS online account number. Leave this field blank or type/print “None” unless you know that you have a USCIS online account.

Items 10 – 11. Self-explanatory.

Item 12. If you answered “Yes,” make sure to include copy/copies of your previous EAD(s).

Items 13.a – 13.b. If you have ever been issued a Social Security card (even if it was issued in your previously used name, such as your maiden name), you must check “Yes” in Item 13.a. and enter your Social Security Number (SSN) from the card in Item 13.b. Otherwise, answer “No” to Item 13.a. and skip to Item 14.

Items 14 – 15. You are not required to request a Social Security card using Form I-765, so you can answer “No” to this item even if you don’t have an SSN yet. You can apply for a Social Security card separately at a later date. However, remember that you must have an SSN properly assigned in your name to work in the United States. For more information about a Social Security number, please visit our [SSN webpage](#).

If you want the Social Security Administration to assign you an SSN and issue you a Social Security card, or issue you a new or replacement Social Security card using Form I-765, answer “Yes” to both Item 14 and Item 15.

Items 16.a – 17.b. If you answered “Yes” to Items 14 and 15, you will need to provide your father’s and mother’s names in Items 16.a – 17.b. Otherwise, type/print “N/A.”

Your Country or Countries of Citizenship or Nationality

Items 18.a – 18.b. The country of citizenship listed on your Form I-765 should match the country of citizenship on your current passport(s).

Place of Birth

Items 19.a – 20. Self-explanatory.

Information About Your Last Arrival in the United States

Item 21.a. You will need to provide the number of your most recent I-94 arrival record. You can access your most recent I-94 on the [I-94 website](#) (go to the “Get Most Recent I-94 tab”). Make sure the information in your I-94 record is correct. If you notice an error, you can contact OIS at ois@ncsu.edu and one of OIS advisors will work with US Customs and Border Protection (CBP) to get it corrected.

Item 21.b. Self-explanatory.

Item 21.c. If you have a passport, type or print “N/A.”

Items 21.d – 21.e. Self-Explanatory.

Item 22. The date of your last arrival into the United States should be listed on your most recent I-94 arrival record available on the [I-94 website](#).

Item 23. Provide the city name and state of your last arrival into the United States. This information should be listed on your Travel History available on the [I-94 website](#).

Item 24. If you last entered the United States on your F-1 visa, enter “F-1 student.” If you last entered the United States on a different visa type, enter the type of that visa (for example, “F-2 spouse” or “B-2 tourist”).

Item 25. Type or print “F-1 student.”

Item 26. You can find your SEVIS number on top of your I-20.

Item 27. Make sure to enter the correct code for the eligibility category:

- If you are applying for the initial 12-month post-completion OPT: your eligibility category is **(c)(3)(B)**
- If you are applying for the 24-month STEM OPT extension (STEM OPT): your eligibility category is **(c)(3)(C)**

Items 28.a – 28.c. These items apply only to students applying for the 24-month STEM OPT extension. If you are applying for the initial 12-month OPT, type or print “N/A.”

If you are applying for the 24-month STEM OPT extension:

- **Item 28.a.** Type or print your degree level and major (for example, Bachelor’s degree in English). It is ok to abbreviate your degree in this field, as long as it make sense. You can also use the extra space in *Part 6. Additional Information*

to provide the full name of your degree level and major (in addition to the abbreviated version in Item 28.a).

- **Item 28.b.** Make sure to list the name of your STEM OPT employer as it appears in the E-Verify system. Your employer should provide you with this information.
- **Item 28.c.** Your employer should provide you with their E-Verify Company Identification Number. If your employer is using a third-party company for E-Verify, this must be your employer's E-Verify Client Company Identification Number.
 - Remember: your STEM OPT employer must be enrolled in E-Verify prior to your requesting a STEM OPT I-20 from OIS. If your employer doesn't have any experience with the E-Verify system, you can refer them to the [E-Verify website](#).
 - Don't confuse the E-Verify number with the Employer Identification Number (EIN)! These are two different numbers!

Items 29 – 31.b. These items are not applicable for OPT. Type or print "N/A."

Part 3. Applicant's Statement, Contact Information, Declaration, Certification, and Signature

Applicant's Statement

Items 1.a – 2. Self-explanatory.

Applicant's Contact Information

Items 3 – 6. Self-explanatory.

Items 7.a – 7.b. Don't forget to sign and date the form! Applications submitted without a proper signature in Item 7.a may be denied. The signature must be in black ink. Do NOT provide a stamped or typewritten name instead of a signature. Do NOT use an electronic signature!

Part 4. Interpreter's Contact Information, Certification, and Signature

You should have sufficient English fluency to complete this form yourself, so it is very unlikely that you will need an interpreter's help for this. If you checked Item 1.a in Part 3

(“I can read and understand English...”), you don’t need to fill out Part 4 – just type or print “N/A” in this section’s fields.

Part 5. Contact Information, Declaration, and Signature of the Person Preparing this Application, If Other Than the Applicant

If you completed the form yourself (which is most likely), type or print “N/A” in all fields of Part 5. If your or your employer’s immigration attorney completed this form for you, they will fill out this Parts.

Part 6. Additional Information

You will need to use this section, if

- you have been approved for CPT (Curricular Practical Training) in the past;
- you have been approved for OPT in the past;
- you have used a different SEVIS ID number in the past (SEVIS numbers are listed on top of I-20s);
- you need extra space to provide answers to any of the items within this form.

If you need more space than what is provided in Part 6, you may make copies of Part 6 to complete and file with your application, or attach a separate sheet of paper. Type or print your name and A-Number (if any) at the top of each sheet; indicate the Page Number, Part Number, and Item Number to which your answer refers; and sign and date each sheet.

- **CPT.** If you are using Part 6 to provide information about your previously authorized CPT, we suggest the following format: *CPT authorization: part time or full time; CPT start date – CPT end date; degree level; SEVIS number (which you had at the time of this CPT)*. As for the Page Number, Part Number and Item Number, we recommend that you enter 3 for Page Number, 2 for Part Number and 27 for Item Number (as this information refers to your eligibility category).
- **OPT.** If you are using Part 6 to provide information about your previously authorized OPT, we suggest the following format: *OPT authorization (indicate what type of OPT – pre-completion, post-completion, or STEM extension): part time or full time; OPT start date – OPT end date; degree level; SEVIS number (which you had at the time of this OPT)*. As for the Page Number, Part Number and Item Number, we recommend that you enter 3 for Page Number, 2 for Part Number and 27 for Item Number (as this information refers to your eligibility category).
- **Previous SEVIS ID.** If you are using Part 6 to provide your previously used SEVIS ID number(s), we suggest the following format: *Previous SEVIS ID:*

N0000000; *program start date – program end date (at the time you used this SEVIS ID)*; *degree level*. As for the Page Number, Part Number and Item Number, we recommend that you enter 3 for Page Number, 2 for Part Number and 26 for Item Number (as this information refers to your SEVIS number).

See our sample below (it covers all three scenarios):

Part 6. Additional Information

If you need extra space to provide any additional information within this application, use the space below. If you need more space than what is provided, you may make copies of this page to complete and file with this application or attach a separate sheet of paper. Type or print your name and A-Number (if any) at the top of each sheet; indicate the **Page Number, Part Number, and Item Number** to which your answer refers; and sign and date each sheet.

1.a. Family Name (Last Name)

1.b. Given Name (First Name)

1.c. Middle Name

2. A-Number (if any) ▶ A-

3.a. Page Number 3.b. Part Number 3.c. Item Number

3.d. CPT authorization: full time;

4.a. Page Number 4.b. Part Number 4.c. Item Number

4.d. Post-completion OPT authorization:

5.a. Page Number 5.b. Part Number 5.c. Item Number

5.d. Previous SEVIS ID: N0000054321;

6.a. Page Number 6.b. Part Number 6.c. Item Number

6.d.

7.a. Page Number 7.b. Part Number 7.c. Item Number

7.d.

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