



## INSTRUCTIONS TO COMPLETE FORM I-765 OPTIONAL PRACTICAL TRAINING (OPT)

### **ONLY** access and download the I-765 Form directly via the USCIS [website](https://www.uscis.gov/i-765):

- <https://www.uscis.gov/i-765>
- Do not use another site or general Google search to locate the I-765.
- Using the USCIS website ensures you are completing the correct edition/version of the form (*dated printed on bottom left-hand corner*).
- Failure to use the correct version of the Form I-765 will result in the rejection or denial of your application by USCIS.
- At this time, the HIO **strongly discourages** the use of the USCIS online I-765 filing system while we gather further information on its efficacy. The HIO encourages all students applying for pre, post and STEM OPT to follow the HIO's [guides and instructions](#) for how to submit their applications to USCIS by courier mail.



### **DOCUMENTS** to have on-hand while completing the I-765 OPT Form:

- Current Form I-20
- Passport
- I-94 Arrival Record from most recent entry

**UNDERSTAND** and familiarize yourself with your F-1 status and immigration history. Your answers to these questions below will impact how you will complete information on page 7 of Form I-765.

- Have you previously submitted Form I-765 to the USCIS? (*Ex: Prior OPT Application*)
- Did you receive Curricular Practical Training (CPT) for an internship or job in your current or any previous degree programs?
- Did you have a prior SEVIS ID? (*Ex: Return from a leave of absence or previously attended another F-1 program*)

If you answer **YES** to any of these questions, you must provide these details on page 7 of the I-765 (instructions follow).

### **RECOMMENDATIONS** for completing I-765:

- **OPEN** the form in Adobe software so that you can complete all of the fields. If you attempt to use Preview or other non-Adobe-based PDF software, you may not be able to complete each field as instructed.
- **TYPE** the form, **do NOT** complete it by hand unless indicated otherwise in the following instructions.
- **ENTER** as much data as you can and then provide overflow information on page 7 of the Form I-765.
- **ENTER** N/A or None in questions or fields that do not apply to you. *If you are unable to type N/A or None into a field, neatly handwrite N/A or None after printing your Form I-765.*
- **PRINT** the form single-sided only and do not staple it together.

### **You must PRINT AND SIGN the completed I-765 Form with an ORIGINAL SIGNATURE**

- USCIS will **NOT** accept electronic signatures or photocopies of the I-765 Form.

*Note: The HIO will not review individual Forms I-765 or supporting documentation for your OPT application. It is your responsibility to review our detailed [step-by-step instructions, videos, and guides](#) to prepare your final OPT application. Failure to follow our detailed instructions could result in a rejection, delay, or denial of your OPT application by USCIS.*

**By using this document to complete Form I-765 for your OPT application, you acknowledge the following:** The HIO provides

general guidance on your OPT/STEM OPT application based on information obtained from reliable sources and reflecting our years of experience in working with students. We make every attempt to ensure that we provide you with the most up to date information available. Any advice provided to you by our office (as well as the information in this packet) does not constitute legal advice, however. The OPT application is a personal application for which you are responsible; the application

preparation and USCIS case decision will vary depending on the facts at issue in your particular case. The HIO does its best to provide you with the most current guidance, but please be mindful that USCIS may change its interpretation of these policies, procedures, regulations, and eligibility requirements at any time. The HIO is not responsible for any errors or omissions, or for the results obtained from USCIS.

### **Part 1: Reason for Applying**

- Check 1a: “Initial Permission to Accept Employment,” unless you are filing for a replacement EAD.

### **Part 2: Information About You**

#### *Your Full Legal Name*

- List your family name, given name, and middle name in Items 1.a. – 1.c.
- Please list names exactly as they appear on the biographical page of your passport.
- Leave the middle name field (Item 1.c.) blank if you do not have a middle name.

#### *Other Names Used*

- Please provide any other legal names used in Items 2.a. – 4.c., including aliases, maiden names, and nicknames.
- If not applicable, write “None” in each unused field in items 2.a. – 4.c.

#### *Your U.S. Mailing Address – This is the address where you will receive your application receipt, approval notice, and OPT EAD.*

- Use a mailing address that will be valid for **at least** 5 months into the future. EADs are considered government documents that cannot be forwarded by the U.S. Postal Service (USPS).
  - Using a stable address is crucial.
  - **Attempting to change the address midway through the OPT application process can cause delays and be extremely disruptive, resulting in lost or returned OPT EADs.**
- If you will move from your current residence in less than 5 months, you should use the U.S. address of a reliable friend or relative who can receive the card for you.
- Alternatively, you may wish to consider using a U.S. Post Office address (known as a P.O. Box) if that is how you would prefer to receive your mail.
- Prior to completing your U.S. mailing address, verify your address with USPS:  
**[https://tools.usps.com/go/ZipLookupAction\\_input](https://tools.usps.com/go/ZipLookupAction_input)**
- If you use the address of a friend, please write your friend’s name in Item 5.a., and continue with the mailing address in Items 5.b. – 5.f.
  - If you are using your own address, leave Item 5.a. blank.
- Item 5.f. – You must enter the full zip code, which must include the four-digit routing code (XXXXX-XXXX).
  - After printing the completed Form I-765, you must neatly handwrite the four-digit routing code following your zip code in black ink.
  - The Form I-765 will not allow you to type these additional four digits into the field.
  - To verify your full zip code with USPS, visit: **[https://tools.usps.com/go/ZipLookupAction\\_input](https://tools.usps.com/go/ZipLookupAction_input)**
- Item 6: Check “Yes” if you are using your own mailing address.
  - If you listed a friend’s name and address in Items 5.a. – 5.f., check “No.”

#### *U.S. Physical Address*

- If you checked “No” in Item 6, complete Items 7.a. – 7.e. with your current residential address.
  - USCIS will NOT mail documents here.
  - It is ok if your physical U.S. address will change while your OPT application is pending with USCIS.
  - If you checked “Yes” in Item 6, handwrite “N/A” after printing the Form I-765.

#### *Other Information*

- Item 8: Handwrite “N/A” after printing the Form I-765.

- Item 9: Handwrite “None” after printing the Form I-765.
- Items 10 – 11: These items are self-explanatory. Please fill in the correct information.
- Item 12: If you have ever applied for OPT previously with USCIS, check yes. If you have ever filed a Form I-765 for any other work authorization, check yes.
  - If you have not applied for OPT before with USCIS, check no.
- Item 13a – 13b: Enter your U.S. Social Security Number (SSN)
  - Leave this box blank if you do not have an SSN.
  - You do not need an SSN to apply for OPT.
- Items 14 – 17.b.: This form allows you to apply for an SSN if you do not already have one. Please complete these questions if you wish to do so.
  - Alternatively, you may apply for an SSN after you receive your OPT EAD, and the validity period on the EAD has begun.
    - **If you do not yet have an SSN and if you would like to apply for one now** you can do so by checking "Yes" to question 14. If you choose to use this form to apply for your SSN, please check the appropriate boxes for questions 14 and 15 and then fill out Items 16.a.-17.b. as appropriate.
    - **If you already have an SSN, or do not wish to apply for an SSN at this time**, check "No" to question 14 and write in “N/A” for Items 16.a.--17.b. You can apply separately for an SSN if you choose not to use this function of the form. Please check "No" on question 14 if you have an SSN.

#### *Your Country or Countries of Citizenship or Nationality*

- Items 18.a. – 18.b.: List your country of citizenship as it appears on your Form I-20.
  - Write “None” in Item 18.b. if you do not have a second country of citizenship.

#### *Place of Birth*

- Items 19.a. – 20: These items are self-explanatory. Please complete the correct information.

#### *Information About Your Last Arrival in the United States*

- Item 21.a.: Enter the eleven (11) digit number from your most recent I-94 record.
  - You can download your most recent I-94 record by visiting [www.cbp.gov/i94](http://www.cbp.gov/i94) and entering the information from the biographic page of your passport.
  - Please verify that the Date of Entry reflects your most recent entry to the U.S. If it is incorrect contact your HIO Advisor.
- Items 21.b. – 21.e: This information is provided on the biographic page of your most recently issued passport.
- Item 21.c.: Enter “None.”
- Item 22: Enter the most recent date you entered the U.S. in F-1 status, as indicated in your I-94 record.
- Item 23: Provide the three-letter airport, port-of-entry, or pre-flight inspection site abbreviation location indicated on your most recent entry stamp in your passport.
  - For example, if you most recently entered the U.S. and received your entry stamp in Boston Logan Airport, you would enter BOS in Item 23.
  - A complete list of Customs and Border Protection codes is available [here](#), under the subsection entitled “9 FAM 102.5-3 Port-of-Entry Codes used by the Department of Homeland Security, United States Customs and Border Protection.”
- Items 24 – 25: Enter “F-1 Student” in both fields.
- Item 26: Your SEVIS number can be found at the top left-hand corner of your Form I-20.

#### *Information About your Eligibility Category*

- Item 27: Enter the following in this section:
  - **For pre-completion OPT, enter (c)(3)(A)**
  - **For post-completion OPT, enter (c)(3)(B)**

- Items 28.a. – 29.: Handwrite N/A in each field after printing the Form I-765.
- Items 30.a-30.c.: These questions do not apply to students who are applying for OPT. Do not answer these questions; leave them blank.
- Items 30.d. – 31.a.: Handwrite N/A in each field after printing the Form I-765.
- Item 31.b.: Leave blank.

### **Part 3: Applicant’s Statement, Contact Information, Declaration, Certification, and Signature**

#### *Applicant’s Statement*

- Check the box for Item 1.a.
- Handwrite N/A in Items 1.b. – 2 after printing the Form I-765.

#### *Applicant’s Contact Information*

- Items 3. – 5.: Provide your contact information.
- Leave Item 6 blank unless it is applicable to you.
- Use only numbers and do not enter dashes when entering your phone number.

#### *Applicant’s Signature*

- Items 7.a. – 7.b.: Sign the form using black ink.
- This must be a hand-written signature.
- Do NOT use an electronic signature.

### **Part 4: Interpreter’s Statement, Contact Information, Declaration, Certification, and Signature**

- Items 1.a. – 7.b.: Handwrite N/A in each field after printing the Form I-765.

### **Part 5: Contact Information, Declaration, and Signature of the Person Preparing this Application, if Other than the Applicant**

- After printing the Form I-765, draw a diagonal line through page 6 (which is all items of Part 5) and write “N/A” next to your line.

### **Part 6: Additional Information**

*Note: You must complete Part 6 per the instructions below if you have ever received any previous CPT or OPT authorizations, and/or have been issued Forms I-20 from previous U.S. colleges, universities, or institutions.*

Complete this section **only if**:

- You have been approved for CPT in the past;
- You have been approved for OPT in the past;
- You have used a different SEVIS ID Number in F-1 status in the U.S.
  - For example, if you attended a school for a while, left the U.S. to take a break from school, and returned with a new Form I-20, you would have two (2) different SEVIS ID Numbers issued to you: one from your first period of attendance, and a new one after you returned from your break.
  - Your SEVIS ID Number is on the top left corner of your Form I-20 and starts with N00.
- You need more space than is provided on the Form I-765 to complete required information.

For each of the items listed above that applies to you, complete one box in Part 6 according to the instructions below:

- Items 1.a. – 1.c.: List your family name, given name, and middle name. List your names exactly as they appear in your passport. *If you are unable to type your names in 1.a.-1.c., neatly handwrite your names after printing the Form I-765.*
- Item 2.: Handwrite “N/A” after printing the Form I-765.
- **CPT**: Please list any previous CPT approvals you have obtained. We suggest this format:
  - **Items a – c**: Page 3, Part 2, Item 27

- **Item d:** CPT Authorizations (as a title to the section)
  - Employer Name; Start Date – End Date; Part-time or Full-Time; Degree Level (Bachelor’s, Master’s, PhD, etc.)
  - Your CPT authorization details are found on the Form I-20 that was provided for each period of CPT.
- **OPT:** Please list your OPT approvals. We suggest this format:
  - **Items a – c:** Page 3, Part 2, Item 27
  - **Item d:** OPT Authorizations (as a title to the section)
    - Start date – End date; Degree level (Bachelor’s, Master’s, PhD, etc.)
- **Previous SEVIS ID Numbers:** Please list any other SEVIS ID Numbers you have used in the past. We suggest this format:
  - **Items a – c:** Page 3, Part 2, Item 26
  - **Item d:** Previous SEVIS ID Numbers (as a title to the section)
    - SEVIS ID: N000...; Program Start Date – Program End Date; Degree level (Bachelor’s, Master’s, PhD, etc.)
- **More Space Needed on I-765:** If any date field in Parts 1 – 3 of the I-765 is insufficient for you to provide complete information, please use this section to enter everything in full.
  - Enter the corresponding page, part, and item number accordingly.
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*Please sign and date in black ink anywhere in the blank space below item 7.d. if you have used page 7 of the Form I-765 to provide any additional information. This should be a hand-written signature, NOT an electronic signature.*

- **If you do not need to use this page, draw a diagonal line across page 7 after printing your Form I-765 and write N/A next to the line.**