Online Filing Post-Completion OPT Guide

SIUE OFFICE OF INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

INTERNATIONAL STUDENT AND SCHOLARS SERVICES (ISSS)

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OCTOBER 30, 2024

This OPT Guide is meant to help you with best practices in completing the Online Form I-765 for Post -Completion OPT application but should not be considered legal advice.

*************IMPORTANT*************

DO NOT submit your USCIS online application until your immigration advisor (DSO) has reviewed and approved your Draft Summary (Form I-765),and you have received an OPT I-20 showing your OPT recommendation on page 2 of your new OPT I-20.

Common Mistakes to Avoid!

► **Submitting an online application if you already filed a paper one**

► **Not including a <u>signed</u> NEW OPT I-20**

► **Uploading wrong file types or file titles**

► **Password protecting or encrypting your files**

► **Submitting your application with something missing**

Don't get denied; follow the guide.

To Prep:
Have items saved & ready to upload. Each document should be smaller than 6 MB.

1. **Scan your Photo (2 in. x 2 in.)**
Take a digital picture with your phone or laptop with a solid white background, then edit/crop it. Then use [PhotoScissors website](#) to upload your photo and format/crop it correctly. Or try the photo tool on the travel.state.gov website to crop your photo: [Photo-tool](#). Do not try to take a picture of a physical photo you've taken the quality is not sufficient. You can also request a digital photo at your local Photo Center on a flash drive in one of the formats listed.

   See the [Department of State website](#) for more detailed information.
   - ❖ Color, Max 6 MB
   - ❖ Test it with DOS Photo Tool
   - ❖ Save as PNG or JPG - File name: **PhotoLASTNAME**

2. **Scan all 3 pages of any CPT and previous OPT I-20**
   - ❖ Make sure they are signed by you
   - ❖ Save as PDF - File Name: **CPTLASTNAME** and **OPTLASTNAME**

3. **Scan I-94**
   - ❖ Save as PDF - File Name: **i94LASTNAME**

4. **Scan Passport Bio Page**
   - ❖ Save as PDF (in color) - File Name: **PassportLASTNAME**

5. **If you've applied for OPT before…**
   - ❖ Scan and save a color PDF of your previous EAD card - File Name: **EADLASTNAME**

Have a credit or debit card ready to pay the $470 online fee

Creating Your Account

Visit:

https://www.uscis.gov/file-online

1) Select "How to Create a USCIS Online Account"

2) Watch the video: "How to Create a USCIS Online Account" for detailed instructions on how to set up your personal account.
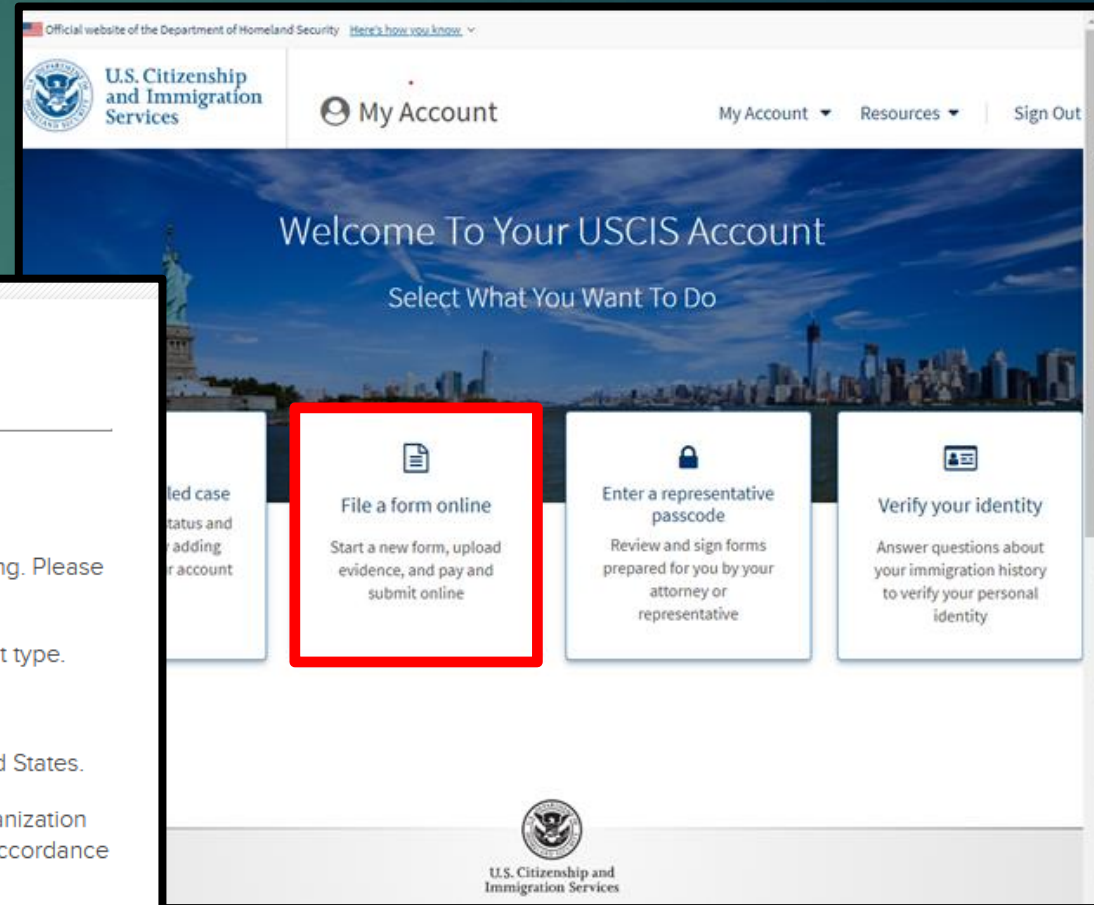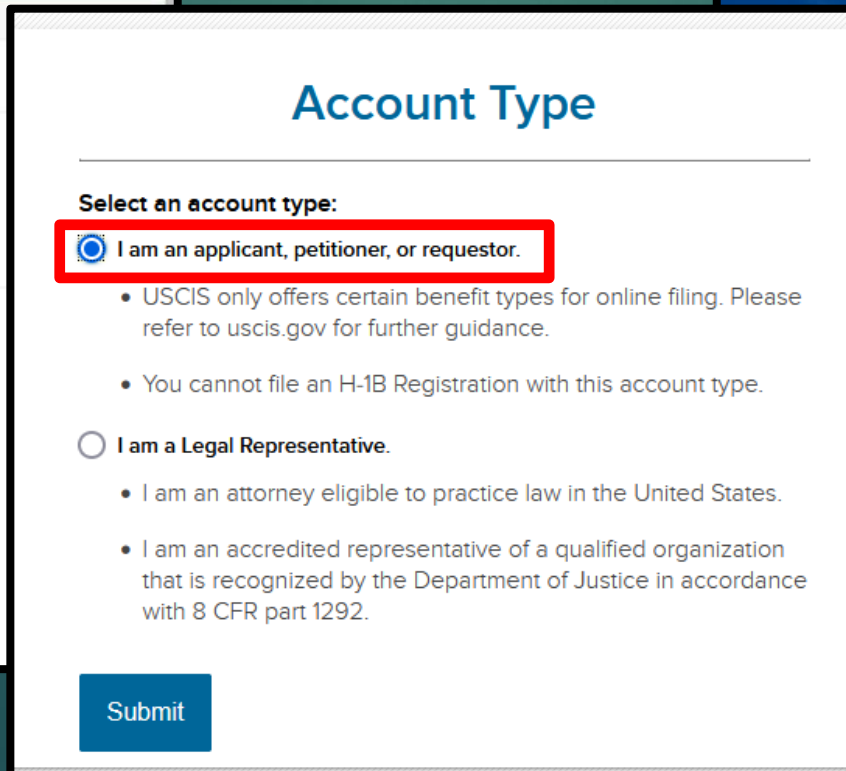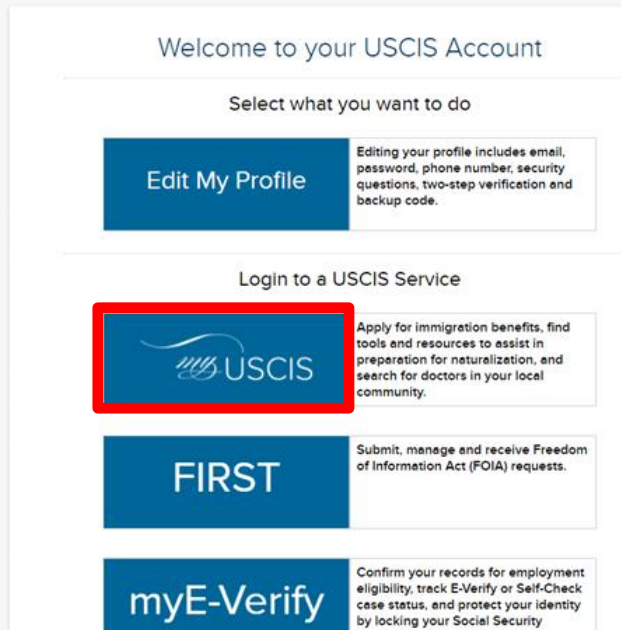
How to Create a USCIS Online Account | USCIS

NOTE: *Do not use your SIUE email address. You will lose access to your SIUE email 180 days after you are no longer enrolled. Use a personal email address that you check regularly.*
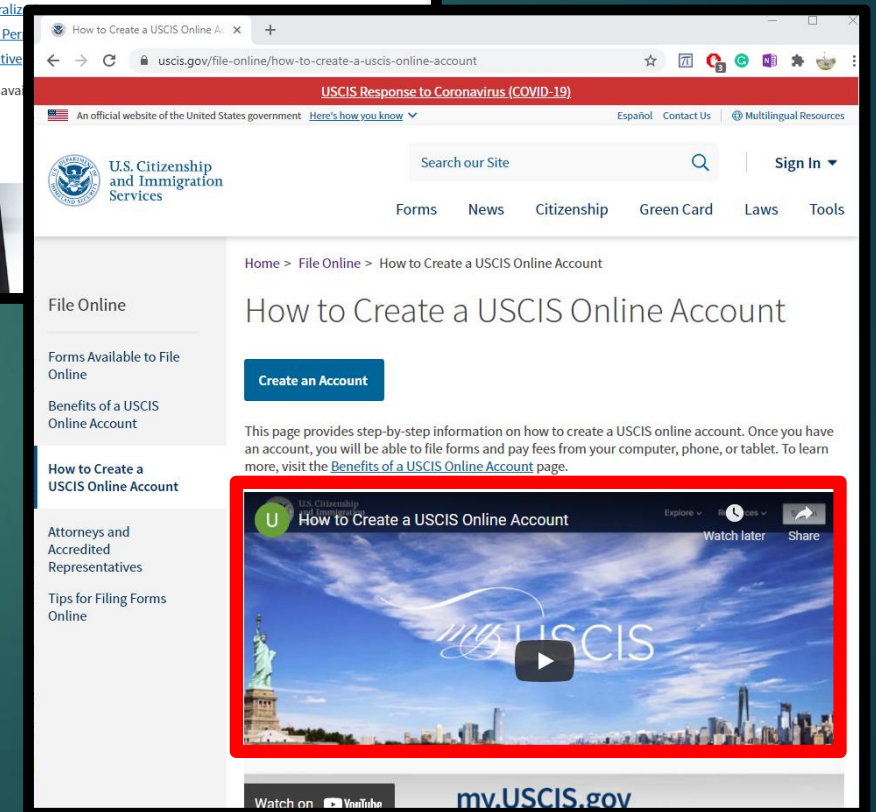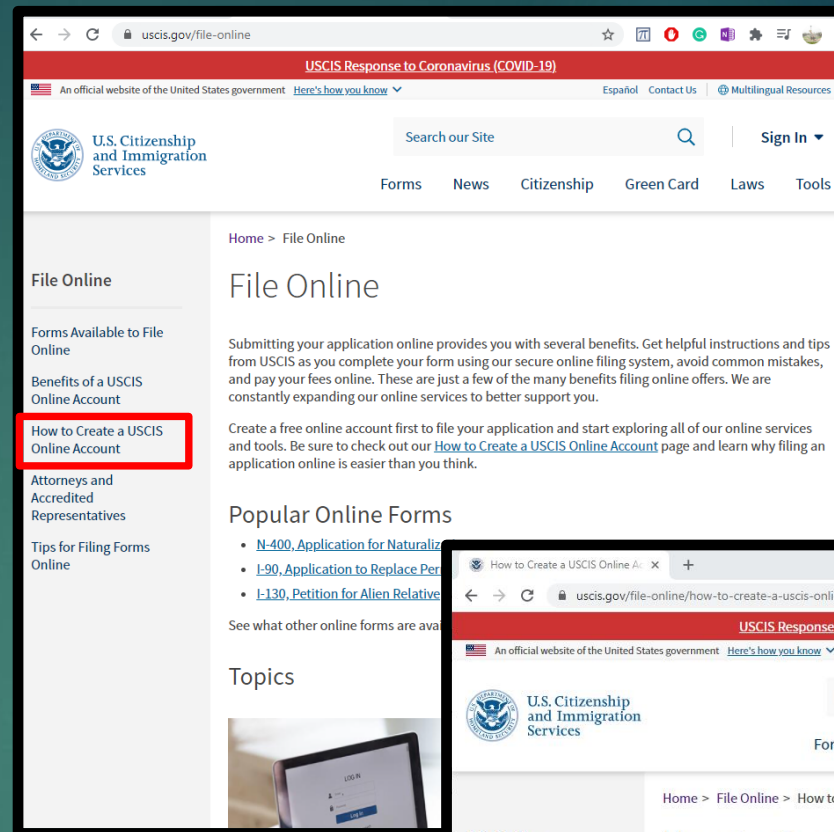
Finish your account setup to begin

❖ Select **My USCIS**
❖ Then select **Account Type**
❖ Finally, select **File a Form Online**

Begin Online Application

The online application has multiple sections to complete. These sections are:

1-Getting Started section

2-About You section

3-Evidence section

4-Additional Information section

5-Review and Submit section

I-765, Application for Employment Authorization

Getting Started ⌄

About You ⌄

Evidence ⌄

Additional Information ⌄

Review and Submit ⌄

File a Form

❖ **Select Application for Employment Authorization (I-765)**

❖ **Then click on Next**

Section 1: Getting Started

Paperwork Reduction Act

❖ Select **Start**

Note: *Your application will auto save a draft as you go through, but the draft will delete if you don't make changes within 30 days.*

Section 1: Getting Started

What is your eligibility category?
- ❖ Select **(c)(3)(B) Student Post-Completion OPT**

- ❖ Click on **Next**

U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services

My Account ▾   Resources ▾

I-765, Application for Employment Authorization

Getting Started ⌃
- Basis of eligibility
- Reason for applying
- Preparer and interpreter information

About You ⌄
Evidence ⌄
Additional Information ⌄
Review and Submit ⌄

What is your eligibility category?

⚠ You can file your request online only for certain eligibility categories

If your eligibility category does not appear on the drop-down list, you must file a paper Form I-765. If you submit online and are not eligible for one of the listed categories, your application may be denied.

(c)(3)(B) Student Post-Completion OPT ▾

Back   **Next**

U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services

My Account ▾   Resources ▾

I-765, Application for Employment Authorization

Getting Started ⌃
- Basis of eligibility
- **Reason for applying**
- Preparer and interpreter information

About You ⌄
Evidence ⌄
Additional Information ⌄
Review and Submit ⌄

What is your reason for applying?

- ⦿ Initial permission to accept employment
- ○ Replacement of lost, stolen, or damaged employment authorization document or correction of my employment authorization document NOT DUE to US Citizenship and Immigration Services error
- ○ Renewal of permission to accept employment

Have you previously filed Form I-765?

- ○ Yes
- ⦿ No   If you have applied for OPT previously, then select **Yes**.

Back   **Next**

- ❖ **What is your reason for applying?**
  - ▪ Select **Initial permission to accept employment**

- ❖ **Have you previously filed Form I-765?**
  - ▪ Select **No** (unless you have applied for OPT previously, then select **Yes**)

- ❖ **Click on Next**

Section 1: Getting Started

Is someone assisting you with completing this application?

❖ Select **No**

❖ **Click Next when ready**

Note: *If an attorney, preparer or interpreter is helping you file this application, then select* **Yes**.

Section 2: About You

What is your current legal name?

❖ Use name exactly as it is shown on your Passport

❖ Type Full Family Name (Last name) in ALL CAPS

❖ Type Full Given Name (include middle name if it shows as part of your Given Name on your passport)

I-765, Application for Employment Authorization

Getting Started

About You

Your name

Your contact information

Describe yourself

When and where you were born

Your immigration information

Other information

Evidence

Additional Information

Review and Submit

What is your current legal name?

Your current legal name is the name on your birth certificate, unless it changed after birth by a legal action such as marriage or court order. Do not provide any nicknames here.

Given name (first name)
First Name

Middle name

Family name (last name)
LAST NAME

Always include your middle name with your given name unless your passport specifically has a line titled "Middle name"

Have you used any other names since birth?

Other names used may include nicknames, aliases and maiden names.

○ Yes

● No

Select "No" unless you've had a legal document under another name. i.e. passport, social security card, etc.

Back

Next

Section 2: About You

How may we contact you?

❖ If you don't have a U.S. phone number, leave it blank; international numbers are not accepted.

❖ Use your personal (not SIUE) email address.

Section 2: About You

What is your current U.S. mailing address?

❖ If you are moving after graduation, we recommend you use the SIUE Office address shown in the sample below. This will prevent your card from getting lost in the mail.

Is your current mailing address the same as your physical address?

○ Yes
◉ No

Where in the United States do you live?

Address line 1

1027 Enclave Blvd

Street number and name

Address line 2

Apt 203

Apartment, suite, unit, or floor

City or town	State	ZIP code
Edwardsville	Illinois ▾	62025

Provide a 5 or 9-digit ZIP code.

Back   Next

What is your current U.S. mailing address?

We will use your current mailing address to contact you throughout the application process. We may not be able to contact you if you do not provide a complete and valid address. Please provide a U.S. address only.

In care of name (if any)

SIUE Office of Intl Affairs

Address line 1

Campus Box 1616

Street number and name

Address line 2

Apartment, suite, unit, or floor

City or town	State	ZIP code
Edwardsville	Illinois ▾	62026

❖ If you used the SIUE Office address, select "no" to current mailing address and enter your own physical address here.

Section 2: About You

❖ Fill out your biographical information throughout this section of the application.

❖ Click **Next** to continue

Section 2: About You

❖ Use your I-94 to fill out your immigration information in this section

  To view and print your I-94 go to: https://i94.cbp.dhs.gov

What is your country of citizenship or nationality?

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

＋ Add country

If you hold passports from more than one country, click "Add country".

What is your Form I-94 Arrival-Departure Record Number (if any)?

Your I-94 record number has 11 digits.

When did you last arrive in the United States?

List your arrival date, place of arrival, and status at arrival.

Date of arrival

MM/DD/YYYY

Place of arrival

Status at last arrival

Find this information in the "Travel History" section of the i-94 website:

https://i94.cbp.dhs.gov/I94/#/history-search

Your status at last arrival should be "F-1 student" unless you've completed a Form I-539 Change of Status with USCIS since your last entry.

Section 2: About You

❖ Provide accurate information on the following pages.

❖ Click **Next** to continue

What is the passport number of your most recently issued passport?

87654321

If you renewed your passport since you last entered the US, your most recently issued passport may have a different number from your most recent I-94. That is okay. Provide the number of your most recently issued passport.

What is your travel document number (if any)?

F-1 students do not have travel documents so leave this blank.

What is the expiration date of your passport or travel document?

09/23/2027

Enter the end date of your most recently issued passport in MONTH/ DAY/ YEAR format.

What country issued your passport or travel document?

Norway

What is your current immigration status or category?

F1 - Student, Academic Or Language Program.

You must be in F-1 Student status to be eligible for OPT. If you are currently in the US in a status other than F1, you are not eligible for OPT.

What is your Student and Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS) Number (if any)?

Use the "Additional Information" section to include all previously used SEVIS numbers.

N- 0012345678

Your SEVIS ID number is located in the top left corner of your I-20.

Back   Next

Section 2: About You

What is your A-Number?
- ❖ Check **"I do not have or know my A-Number."**

What is your USCIS Online Account Number?
- ❖ Check **"I do not have or know my USCIS Online Account Number."**

What is your A-Number?

☐ I do not have or know my A-Number.

A-

If you have previously been issued an Employment Authorization Document (EAD), your A-Number is the same as the USCIS# found on the EAD.

What is your USCIS Online Account Number?

Providing your unique USCIS Online Account Number (OAN) helps us manage your account. You may already have an OAN if you previously filed certain paper forms and received an Account Access Notice in the mail. You can find the OAN at the top of the notice; it is not the same as an A-Number.

☐ I do not have or know my USCIS Online Account Number.

If this is the first application you are filing online, you do not have a USCIS Online Account Number yet. You will have a USCIS Online Account Number after filing this application.

Has the Social Security Administration (SSA) ever officially issued a Social Security card to you?

◉ Yes

◯ No

This is asking whether you have a social security number (SSN) already. Answer accordingly.

What is your Social Security number (if known)?

098-78-6543

Do you want the SSA to issue you a Social Security card?

◯ Yes

◉ No

Back   Next

*If you already have an SSN, you do not need a new one issued so check **NO**.*

*If you do not have a SSN card and would like one issued to you as part of the OPT application, answer **YES**.*

Section 3: Evidence

❖ **Upload your saved docs**

Pay attention to type, size and naming requirements listed under "File Requirements".

Save each Evidence document file with a standard file name.
EX: "PhotoLastname", "Form I-94Lastname".

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 photo.

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.
- Upload no more than five documents at a time
- 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

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.
- Upload no more than five documents at a time
- Accepted characters: English letters, numbers, spaces, periods, hyphens, underscores, and parentheses
- Maximum size: 6MB per file

Choose or drop files here to upload

You may obtain your most recent electronic I-94 at
https://i94.cbp.dhs.gov/I94/#/home

Click on "Get Most Recent I-94."

Back   Next

Section 3-Evidence

❖ **Upload your saved docs**

▪ Save each required Evidence document file with a standard file name:
EX: "PassportLastname", "EADLastname", "Previous CPT I-20 or OPT I-20-Lastname" and "OPT I-20Lastname"

▪ Click on **Next** to continue.

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.
- Upload no more than five documents at a time
- Accepted file name characters: English letters, numbers, spaces, periods, hyphens, underscores, and parentheses
- Maximum size: 6MB per file

Choose or drop files here to upload

Back | Next

If you have been issued an Employment Authorization document by USCIS in the past (such as for OPT after a previous degree program), upload a copy in this section.

If you <u>have not</u> been issued an Employment Authorization Document by USCIS in the past, upload a copy of your passport identification page in this section.

If you have had CPT before, upload a copy of the I-20 you received with the CPT authorization.

If you have had OPT/STEMOPT before, upload a copy of the Employment Authorization Document (EAD) you received from USCIS.

*If you <u>have not</u> had either CPT or OPT, click **Next** to continue.*

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: 6MB per file

Choose or drop files here to upload

Back | Next

Section 3: Evidence

❖ **Upload your saved docs**

Save and upload each required Evidence document file with a standard file name. EX: "OPT I-20Lastname"

Click on **Next** to continue.

- *Do not upload this document before submitting your draft I-765 to your immigration advisor.*

- *You must upload an OPT I-20 showing OPT has been recommended on page 2 by your immigration advisor.*

- *Make sure the I-20 is signed and dated by you (in the "Student Attestation" box at the bottom of page 1).*

Failure to upload a new OPT I-20 will result in a denial of your OPT application.

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.
- Upload no more than five documents at a time
- Accepted file name characters: English letters, numbers, spaces, periods, hyphens, underscores, and parentheses
- Maximum size: 6MB per file

Choose or drop files here to upload

Back   Next

Section 4: Additional Information

❖ Typically, there is no additional information needed in this section.

Click on **Next** to continue.

Section 5-Review and Submit

❖ **Review your application**

- Make sure to pay the correct fee for the OPT application. You will be able to pay by ACH withdrawal from your savings/checking account or by credit/debit card.

- Make sure there are no alerts or warnings regarding your application.

- Click on **Next** to continue.

Section 5-Review and Submit
Do not submit your application yet!

❖ **Your Application Summary**

- Review your application summary for accuracy and make any necessary corrections.

- Then click **"View Draft Snapshot"** download and save the document as a .pdf file with the file name: "Form I-765Lastname"

- Upload both your OPT Request Form (completed and signed by both your and your academic advisor and the Draft I-765 to the **OPT Request form**

- Your immigration advisor will review the document and issue an OPT I-20 <u>BEFORE</u> you may submit your application.

- Processing time for an OPT I-20 after you have submitted your Draft Summary to ISSS is 2-3 business days.

Section 5-Review and Submit

❖ Your Statement

- After your Immigration Advisor reviews and recommends your OPT on your SEVIS record, you will receive an OPT I-20 via SIUE email.

- After you have received your OPT I-20, review it for accuracy, then print and sign it. Save it as "OPT I-20Lastname".

- Next, return to your online application and upload it in the **"Evidence>Form I-20 section".**

- Go over your entire application one more time to make sure everything is correct. Once you submit the application, you won't be able to make any changes.

- Go to **"Your Statement"** in the **"Review and Submit"** section.

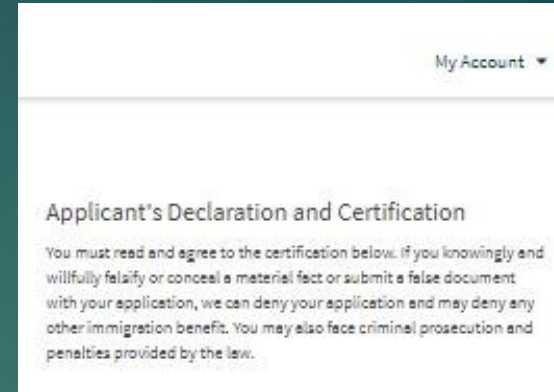- Check the statement box and click on **Next** to submit your OPT application.

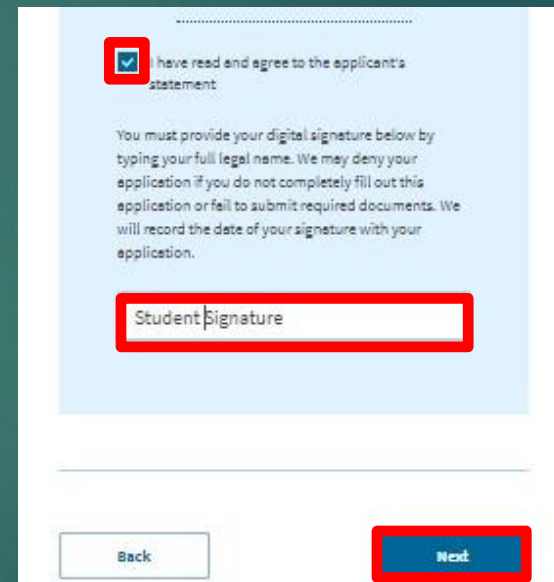# Section 5-Review and Submit

❖ **Your Signature**

- Check the box next to **"I have read and agree to the applicant's statement."**

- Then type your full legal name in the field provided. (This will serve as your electronic signature. A handwritten signature is not required.)

- Click on **Next** to continue.

Section 5-Review and Submit

I-765, Application for Employment Authorization

Check your application before you submit

Please review your application and check it for accuracy and completeness before you submit it.

Getting Started	∨
About You	∨
Evidence	∨
Additional Information	∨

We encourage you to provide as many responses as you can throughout the application. Missing or incomplete information may 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.

Review and Submit ∧

Review your application

Your fee

ⓘ Your form filing fee is: $470

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.

❖ **Pay and submit**

- Click on **Pay and Submit**. You will be taken to Pay.gov

- Once you have completed the Pay.gov sections, you should see a screen which confirms **"You successfully submitted your I-765" application."**

- You will also receive an email from Pay.gov with your payment confirmation.

USCIS I-765

Please select a payment method:

○ I want to pay with a withdrawal from a checking or savings account (ACH)

○ I want to pay with a debit or credit card

Cancel   Continue

You successfully submitted your I-765

We will contact you if we have any questions or need additional information. You can track the status of your application through your USCIS online account.

Go to my cases

Pay.gov Payment Confirmation: USCIS I-765 ⅀ Inbox ✕

ELISdonotreply@uscis.dhs.gov
to me ▾

After You Submit Your Application

After You Submit Your Application

Track your case online

After you submit your form, you can track its status through your USCIS account. Sign in to your account often to check your case status and read any important messages from USCIS.

Respond to requests for information

If we need more information from you, we will send you a Request for Evidence (RFE) or Request for Information (RFI). You can respond to our request and upload your documents through your USCIS account.

Receive your decision

The decision on Form I-765 involves a determination of whether you have established eligibility for the immigration benefit you are seeking. USCIS will notify you of the decision in writing. If your application is approved, we will either mail your EAD to you or we may require you to visit your local USCIS office to pick it up. If USCIS cannot approve your application, you will receive a written notice explaining the basis of your denial.

Next

After You Receive your EAD Card and your start date begins

OPT Reporting Information

All students on OPT are required to submit the OPT Reporting Form to report the following information within 10 working days:

- Contact Information (name, phone, email address and/or residential address

- Start/End dates of employment (including volunteering information)

- Employer's name, address, job title, your supervisor's name, email address, phone and your employers 9-digit Employer Identification Number (EIN) (Ex: 37-0415268)   Contact your supervisor or Human Resources department if you do not know the EIN.

- Any periods of unemployment

- Change of immigration status

- Students must explain how this employment is related to your course of study. For additional information see the Employment Reporting Resources and Examples.