



F-1 OPT Application and Mailing Instructions

International Student Services – Texas A&M University

This handout explains how to complete the **paper version** of the I-765 application for OPT and how to mail the completed application to the appropriate U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) Service Center. These instructions are applicable to all three types of OPT (Pre-Completion, Post-Completion, and the 24-month extension). OPT applications must be received by the USCIS Service Center within 30 days of ISS issuing the I-20 with OPT recommendation. The 30 day clock starts upon the date the advisor signed the I-20 indicated on page 1 of the I-20. OPT applications received later than the 30 days will be denied by USCIS. STEM OPT applications may be received up to 60 days after recommended by ISS.

It is now possible to submit Form I-765 and the associated application fee for OPT **online** through the USCIS e-Filing system. However, this process may actually take longer to be approved and there is greater chance that an error will result during your application since USCIS does not receive your entire, complete application at one time. To do so, visit <http://www.uscis.gov>, select “FORMS” from the menu at the top of the page, and then select “File My Application Online” from the menu on the left side of the page. From here you can find links with information about how to e-File, how to submit supporting documents, etc. If you click on “Forms Currently Available for e-Filing and Form-Specific e-Filing Instructions” from the menu on the right side of the page, you will then have the option to select “Instructions for Electronically Filing Form I-765” from the new menu on the right side of the page. You will have to create an e-Filing Account to file Form I-765 electronically and to pay the application fee online. You will still have to mail the supporting documents for the OPT application.

The following documents are required to complete the paper application for OPT. They should be compiled and submitted to USCIS in the following order:

1. A completed USCIS Form I-765, which can be downloaded from the USCIS web page: <http://www.uscis.gov>. Click on the Immigration Forms link and scroll to the form I-765. Make sure to use the latest version of Form I-765, to use the appropriate eligibility code on question # 16 on Form I-765 and to sign Form I-765. The appropriate eligibility codes for question #16 on Form I-765 are listed below:
 - **Pre-Completion OPT: (c) (3) (A)**
 - **Post-Completion OPT: (c) (3) (B)**
 - **24-Month Extension of OPT: (c) (3) (C)** – If you are applying for the 24-month extension of OPT, you will have to complete question #24 on Form I-765 as well.
2. Two passport-style photographs sealed in a plastic bag or envelope. Paperclip the bag (do not staple the photographs) to the top right corner of Form I-765. Write your name on the back of each picture.
3. A personal check or money order payable to “Department of Homeland Security.” Paperclip the check to the top left corner of Form I-765. The fee amount for filing Form I-765 is located on the USCIS web page: <http://www.uscis.gov>. Click on the Immigration Forms link and scroll to Form I-765.
4. A photocopy of the I-94 record (front and back). Do not send the original I-94 card if you have one.
5. Photocopies of previously issued Employment Authorization Documents (EAD), front and back, if applicable
6. A photocopy of the I-20 issued by ISS with the OPT recommendation.
7. Photocopies of all previously issued I-20s, including I-20s from other schools, for the F-1 OPT applicant. Do not submit dependent I-20s.
8. A photocopy of the following passport pages. Do not send the original or copies of dependent documents.
 - Page with the picture and name
 - Validity/expiration page
 - Most recent visa page
9. If you are applying for a 24-month extension of OPT, you must submit proof of your degree earned. Submit a photocopy of your diploma or an official transcript.

Determine which USCIS Service Center will process your OPT application.

OPT applications should be mailed to the appropriate USCIS Lockbox. See page 10 of the USCIS Instructions for Form I-765 to determine which USCIS Lockbox should receive your OPT application. The appropriate USCIS Lockbox is determined by the address written on Form I-765. It is recommended that the phrase “I-765” be written on the envelope containing the OPT application. Remember to include a return address on the envelope as well. An example of what the envelope should look like is included below:

Sample I-765 Application Envelope

Your Return Address
I-765
USCIS PO Box 660867 Dallas, TX 75266

If the address listed on your Form I-765 is in the State of Texas, you should send your OPT application to the USCIS Dallas Lockbox. The addresses for the USCIS Dallas Lockbox are listed below:

The USCIS Dallas Lockbox address for U.S. Postal Service deliveries:

USCIS
PO Box 660867
Dallas, TX 75266

The USCIS Dallas Lockbox address for Express mail and private courier deliveries:

USCIS
Attn: AOS
2501 S. State Hwy. 121 Business
Suite 400
Lewisville, TX 75067

If the address listed on your Form I-765 is NOT in the State of Texas, you should visit the [Application for Employment Authorization](#) USCIS webpage (<http://www.uscis.gov>) to determine which USCIS Service Center will process your application.

Mail the OPT application to the appropriate USCIS Service Center. This can be done in one of two ways:

1. U.S. Postal Service <http://www.usps.com>
 - a. U.S. Postal Express Mail provides a tracking service to confirm when the application was delivered.
 - b. U.S. Priority Mail provides a tracking service to confirm when the application was delivered.
 - c. First Class Mail Packages does not provide a tracking service.
2. Private Courier Services (non U.S. Postal Service deliveries)

Check on the status of your OPT application.

Use the U.S. Postal Service tracking system to check whether or not the OPT application was delivered. USCIS will send a receipt, usually within 4 to 6 weeks from receiving the OPT application, to the address on Form I-765. The receipt number is also written on the back of the check and a copy of the cashed check can be obtained from the applicant’s bank. The USCIS Case Status Service is available at <https://egov.uscis.gov/cris/jsp/index.jsp>.

What to do if your address changes after applying for OPT.

It is advisable to use an address that will not change while the OPT application is being processed. However, if the address where USCIS needs to mail the EAD changes, call the National Customer Service Center at 1-800-375-5283. Please note that any change in address can dramatically delay the receipt of the EAD. Remember to update your information through the MyRecord tab of the Howdy Portal (<https://howdy.tamu.edu>) within 10 days of any change of address.