Post-completion
Optional Practical Training
Instructions

2017-2018

Office of International Services (OIS)
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General OPT Information
Useful Terminology and Abbreviations

Graduation date— The date student will complete all required credits for graduation. This date is usually the official last day of the semester listed on the university’s Academic Calendar.

Program end date— The expected end date of a student’s academic program. This date can be found on page 1 of the USC I-20.

Commencement date— The graduation ceremony where students wear their caps and gowns

Final semester— The last semester of a student’s academic program at USC

USCIS— United States Citizenship and Immigration Services

OPT— Optional Practical Training

SSN—Social Security Number
What is Post-completion OPT?

F-1 students who wish to work in the US after graduation must apply for a work authorization called OPT.

• It permits F-1 students to gain work experience in their field of study/major

• Employment begins after graduation

• While on approved OPT, student is still considered an F-1 student; therefore, OIS continues to monitor the student’s F-1 status

• Students are eligible to work for companies or organizations located anywhere in the US.
Eligibility Requirements

Students must have met all of the following requirements in order to apply for OPT:

- Maintained F-1 status for a minimum of one academic year (one academic year is equivalent to two consecutive semesters)
- Have applied for graduation with the academic department
- Have not accrued 12 months or more of full-time Curricular Practical Training (CPT) at current degree level

Note: A job or job offer is *not* required in order to apply for OPT
Application Filing Period
When should students apply for OPT?

• Students apply for OPT during their final semester at USC
• Regulations permit students to apply as early as 90 days prior to the program end date and up to 60 days after the program end date
• USCIS will deny any applications that are received before or after the filing period—no exceptions
## OPT I-20 Application Submission Date to OIS

To ensure timely processing of OPT, OIS accepts OPT I-20 applications 90 days prior to graduation and up to 45 days after the program end date.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>If you are graduating in:</th>
<th>Your program ends on:</th>
<th>You can request your OPT I-20 as early as:</th>
<th>You must request your OPT I-20 no later than:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Summer 2017</td>
<td>August 8</td>
<td>May 9</td>
<td>October 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall 2017</td>
<td>December 13</td>
<td>September 14</td>
<td>January 29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spring 2018</td>
<td>May 11</td>
<td>February 9</td>
<td>June 27</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
OPT Start Date

The OPT start date is the day the work authorization period officially begins. Some students prefer to start working immediately after they graduate. Others prefer to take a few weeks off before starting their new job; therefore, it is up to the students to select their preferred OPT start date from a range of dates. See chart below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Graduating Semester</th>
<th>Select any day between the following dates as your OPT Start Date:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Summer 2017</td>
<td>August 9 – October 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall 2017</td>
<td>December 14 – February 11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spring 2018</td>
<td>May 12 – July 10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
OPT End Date

The OPT end date is the last day students can work in the US. By default, OPT expires 12 months from the requested start date.

Example: Tommy graduated in fall 2017. He selected 12/14/2017 as his OPT start date. Tommy’s OPT will end on 12/13/2018.
Things to consider before applying for OPT

• Are you going to graduate on time?
  • If there is a chance that your graduation date might be delayed due to low GPA or other circumstances, wait until you have final confirmation from your academic department before filing for OPT
  • It is extremely difficult to cancel an OPT application once it is sent to USCIS for processing

• The entire OPT application process – from OPT I-20 request to receipt of the Employment Authorization Document (EAD) from USCIS – will take approximately three to four months, so plan accordingly
Things to consider before applying for OPT (continued)

- Students must submit OPT I-20 Request to OIS in person
  - Not able to come in person? Send a friend on your behalf. Give a permission letter to the friend as s/he will need to show it to the front desk staff at the time of drop off and pick-up.
  - Do not email OPT I-20 Request or permission letter to OIS.

- Students cannot begin working until both of the following requirements have been met:
  - They have received the EAD in the mail; and
  - the start date on the EAD has been reached
Things to consider before applying for OPT (continued)

• Become familiar with the US hiring process
  • Visit the USC Career Center
    • Polish your cover letter and resume
    • Learn effective interviewing and job search strategies
    • Attend helpful workshops and career events
**OPT Timeline**

- **Apply up to 3 months before**
  - 90 Days
  - Application Window
  - OPT application must be received by OIS no later than 3 weeks BEFORE graduation.

- **Graduation Date**
  - OPT employment of 12 months
    - Cannot accrue more than 90 days aggregate total of unemployment during 12 months.
    - Can choose any day within 60 day window after graduation for OPT start date.
      - Cannot have start date MORE THAN 60 days after graduation date.

- **OPT**
  - 60 Days

- **Grace period of 60 days to either leave U.S., transfer to another school, or change to another visa category**
  - 60 Days

- **End date on 12 month EAD card. Last day to work unless granted extension by USCIS.**
  - Depart U.S.
Employment Restrictions
Work Hours and Duration of Authorization

- Students are required to work full-time while on OPT. Full-time is defined as working at least 21 hours per week (paid or unpaid).

- Students are granted up to 12 months of OPT per higher degree level.

Example: Tommy applied for OPT based on his bachelor’s degree in Computer Science. He was granted 12 months of OPT. After working for 12 months, he decided to go back to school to earn a master’s degree in Business Administration (MBA). Tommy is eligible for another 12 months of OPT upon completion of his MBA program and must seek employment that is related to his MBA degree.
## Acceptable Types of Employment While on OPT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Standard full-time employer</td>
<td>Student can have one employer and work for that company on a full-time basis.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multiple employers</td>
<td>Student may work for more than one employer, but all employment must be related to student’s field of study.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multiple short-term employers (performing artists)</td>
<td>Musicians or other performing artists may work for multiple short-term employers (i.e. gigs). Students should maintain a list of all gigs, including the dates and duration of the gigs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work for hire</td>
<td>Also commonly referred to as 1099 employment, the term “work for hire” describes a service based on a contractual agreement rather than an employment relationship. This means that the individual is performing a service.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Acceptable Types of Employment While on OPT (continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Employment Type</th>
<th>Details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Self-employed business owner</td>
<td>Students on OPT may start a business and be self-employed. In this situation, students must work full-time. Students must be able to prove to DHS that they have the proper business licenses and are actively engaged in a business related to their degree program. OIS recommends that self-employed students seek consultation from a lawyer.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employment through an employment agency or consulting firm</td>
<td>Students on post-completion OPT must be able to provide evidence that they worked an average of at least 20 hours per week while employed by the agency.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unpaid Jobs</td>
<td>Students may work on a volunteer basis or as unpaid interns, where this does not violate any US labor laws. Labor laws vary by state. Check with the company’s Human Resources office for restrictions.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Student’s Responsibilities
OPT Reporting Requirements

While on OPT, students are required to:

• Report any changes to their employment situation (i.e. start a new job, quit current job, laid off from current job, unemployed)

• Report changes to their US address

• Keep records of when you reported your information to OIS

• All changes must be made via the online OIS OPT Employment Reporting System within 10 business days.

⚠️ Failing to report OPT employment information and/or US address updates to OIS in a timely manner can affect future US visa applications.
Recordkeeping Tips

• Keep copies of all I-20s and EADs – Students who apply for future immigration benefits in the US will likely be asked to provide evidence of all previous EADs and I-20s

• Keep track of OPT employment – OIS will continue to monitor students SEVIS records while on OPT, but it is the students’ responsibility to keep track of their employment records

• Keep original EAD in a safe place, not in a wallet
  • Lost or stolen EAD will need to be replaced at the student’s expense
90-Day Unemployment Rule

- Students are limited to 90 days of unemployment while on OPT
- The 90-day “clock” begins on the start date printed on the Employment Authorization Document (EAD)
- If students accrue 90 days of unemployment, it is considered a violation of F-1 status and their SEVIS records will be automatically terminated
- Future US immigration benefits can be affected for students who accrue 90 days or more of unemployment
- Student and Exchange Visitor Programs (SEVP) may audit SEVIS data for students on OPT and terminate students’ records if there is no employment information updated in SEVIS
90-Day Unemployment Rule (continued)

Students who are unemployed should select one of the following solutions \textbf{before} their ninetieth (90\textsuperscript{th}) day of unemployment:

- Begin a new degree program at USC
- Transfer SEVIS record to another SEVP certified school
- Change visa status
- Depart the United States
International Travel
Travel and Re-Entry to the US with Pending OPT Application

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Travel <em>before</em> graduation date</th>
<th>Travel <em>after</em> graduation date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Filing for OPT has no effect on students’ ability to travel before the graduation date</td>
<td>• Students are strongly advised to wait for their EAD if traveling internationally after the graduation date</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Students will travel as they always have as F-1 students</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Required Documents for Re-entry to the U.S.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pending OPT Application</th>
<th>Approved OPT Application</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Valid passport</td>
<td>• Valid passport</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Valid F-1 visa</td>
<td>• Valid F-1 visa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• OPT I-20 (signed for travel by OIS)</td>
<td>• OPT I-20 (signed for travel by OIS)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• I-797 Notice of Receipt (Payment receipt that can be used as proof of properly filing OPT application with USCIS)</td>
<td>• Employment verification letter, offer letter, or interview schedule</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Valid OPT EAD (EAD says “Not Valid for Re-entry” since the card must be presented with above documents. The EAD alone does not suffice for re-entry to the US.)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Travel Signatures

Students who have an OPT I-20 and need to travel internationally will need to request a travel signature from OIS prior to leaving the US.

Each travel signature is valid for **6 months** from the date it was signed.

Need a travel signature? Submit the following documents to OIS:
- Completed [Travel Signature Request Form](#)
- OPT I-20 (Original)
- OPT EAD (Photocopy)

Students can pick up their signed I-20 in person or request express mail delivery via [eShipGlobal](#) (at the student’s expense)

Visit the OIS website for current [document processing timelines](#).
Options After OPT
Options After OPT Ends

Students are allowed to remain in the US for up to 60 days after the OPT end date. During this time, students may not work and cannot leave and reenter the US as F-1 students.

Please see next slide for options during the 60 day grace period.
## Options During 60 Day Grace Period

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Option</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Begin a new program of study at USC</td>
<td>Students must apply to the new program, be admitted, and be issued a new I-20 from the Graduate Admissions (GA).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apply for a change of status</td>
<td>USCIS must receive the application to change the immigration status before the end of the grace period.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transfer to another institution</td>
<td>Students must request the transfer of their SEVIS record to that institution before the end of the 60 days. To request a transfer of SEVIS record, students will need to submit the SEVIS Transfer Release Form and the transfer in form (if applicable) to OIS.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Return home</td>
<td>Students can return to their home country or depart the US before the end of the grace period.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
OPT Application Instructions
Overview

Step 1 • Student submits OPT I-20 Request to OIS

Step 2 • Student returns to OIS to pick-up OPT I-20

Step 3 • Student assembles OPT application packet

Step 4 • Student mails OPT application packet to USCIS

Step 5 • USCIS adjudicates OPT application and mails decision to student

Step 6 • If OPT application is approved, USCIS mails EAD to student

Step 7 • Student may begin working on start date printed on the EAD
Step 1: Student submits OPT I-20 Request to OIS

- Complete the 12-Month OPT I-20 Request form
  - Indicate the preferred OPT start and end dates
  - Have academic advisor sign the graduation verification section
    - Viterbi master’s and Ph.D. students meet with a Graduate and Professional Programs (GAPP) advisor in OHE 106
- Attach photocopy of most recent USC I-20 – page 1 only
- Please allow 7 business days to review and process the OPT I-20 Request
Step 2: Student returns to OIS to pick-up OPT I-20

- Pick-up OPT I-20 from OIS
- Sign and date OPT I-20

IMPORTANT: **OPT applications must be received by USCIS within 30 days of the OPT recommendation.** Please refer to page one of the OPT I-20 under the school attestation section to see when the OPT I-20 was issued. If USCIS receives the OPT application after the thirtieth (30th) day, the application will be denied.
Step 3: Student assembles OPT application packet

Student will include the following documents in the OPT Packet:

• Original Form G-1145
• Original Form I-765
• Passport Photocopy
• I-94 Printout
• OPT I-20 Photocopy (pages 1 and 2)
• *Two US Passport Style Photos
• *Check for Application Fee
• Photocopies of all previously issued EADs, CPT I-20s, and OPT I-20s (if applicable)

*Paperclip the 2 photos and check on top of the application packet.
Instructions for USCIS Form I-765

- Download form from USCIS
- Type all information
- Print completed form

Sample Form I-765

USC Student Affairs
I-765 Instructions

START HERE - Type or print in black ink.

I am applying for:

- Permission to accept employment.
- Replacement (of lost employment authorization document).
- Renewal of my permission to accept employment (attach a copy of your previous employment authorization document).

1. Full Name
   - **Family Name**
   - **First Name**
   - **Middle Name**
   - **Trojan**
   - **Tommy**

2. Other Names Used (include Maiden Name)
   - **Family Name**
   - **First Name**
   - **Middle Name**

Select this reason

Field #1
Family name is your last name.

Field #2
- Enter other legal names used
- Do not use nicknames
I-765 Instructions (continued)

3. **U.S. Mailing Address**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Street Number and Name</th>
<th>Apt. Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1234 Sample Street</td>
<td>123</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Town or City</th>
<th>State</th>
<th>ZIP Code</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Los Angeles</td>
<td>CA</td>
<td>90089</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Field #3

- Students should plan to live at this location for at least 4-5 months from date of application submission to OIS
- Do not use a P.O. Box or USC department mailing address
U.S. Address

Attention: Students are strongly advised not to move or change their mailing address while the OPT application is pending with USCIS

• The U.S. Postal Service does not forward mail from USCIS

• If students are no longer residing at the address listed on the I-765, the EAD will be returned to USCIS

• Students are not notified when EADs are returned to USCIS

If it’s absolutely necessary, contact OIS as well as USCIS National Service Center at 1-800-375-5283 to change the mailing address for any pending OPT applications.
I-765 Instructions (continued)

4. **Country of Citizenship or Nationality**
   - South Korea

5. **Place of Birth**
   - Town or City: Seoul
   - State/Province: South Korea

6. **Date of Birth (mm/dd/yyyy)**: 12/16/1989

**Field #4**
Enter country of citizenship

**Field #5**
Enter place of birth

**Field #6**
Use the month/day/year format
I-765 Instructions (continued)

7. **Gender**
   - [X] Male
   - [ ] Female

8. **Marital Status**
   - [X] Single
   - [ ] Married
   - [ ] Divorced
   - [ ] Widowed

Field #7
Select your gender

Field #8
Select your marital status
I-765 Instructions (continued)

If you have a SSN already, please continue to Slides 44 - 45

If you **DO NOT** have a SSN, please skip to Slide 46
I-765 Instructions (continued)

7. Gender  ☑ Male  ☐ Female

8. Marital Status
   ☑ Single  ☐ Married  ☐ Divorced  ☐ Widowed

9.a. Has the Social Security Administration (SSA) ever officially issued a Social Security card to you?
   ☑ Yes  ☐ No

   NOTE: If you answered “Yes” to Item Number 9.a., provide the information requested in Item Number 9.b.

9.b. Provide your Social Security number (SSN) (if known)

   1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1

10. Do you want the SSA to issue you a Social Security card?
    (You must also answer “Yes” to Item Number 11., Consent for Disclosure, to receive a card.)
    ☐ Yes  ☑ No

   NOTE: If you answered “No” to Item Number 10., skip to Item Number 14. If you answered “Yes” to Item Number 10., you must also answer “Yes” to Item Number 11.
I-765 Instructions (continued)

11. **Consent for Disclosure:** I authorize disclosure of information from this application to the SSA as required for the purpose of assigning me an SSN and issuing me a Social Security card.

   □ Yes □ No

**NOTE:** If you answered “Yes” to Item Numbers 10. - 11., provide the information requested in Item Numbers 12.a. - 13.b.

**Father's Name**

12.a. Family Name (Last Name)

12.b. Given Name (First Name)

**Mother's Name** (Provide your mother's birth name.)

13.a. Family Name (Last Name)

13.b. Given Name (First Name)
I-765 Instructions (continued)

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

☐ Yes  ☒ No

NOTE: If you answered “Yes” to Item Number 9.a., provide the information requested in Item Number 9.b.

9.b. Provide your Social Security number (SSN) (if known)

10. Do you want the SSA to issue you a Social Security card? (You must also answer “Yes” to Item Number 11., Consent for Disclosure, to receive a card.)

☒ Yes  ☐ No

NOTE: If you answered “No” to Item Number 10., skip to Item Number 14. If you answered “Yes” to Item Number 10., you must also answer “Yes” to Item Number 11.

11. Consent for Disclosure: I authorize disclosure of information from this application to the SSA as required for the purpose of assigning me an SSN and issuing me a Social Security card.

☒ Yes  ☐ No

NOTE: If you answered “Yes” to Item Numbers 10. - 11., provide the information requested in Item Numbers 12.a. - 13.b.

SLIDES 46 – 47 if you DO NOT have an SSN

Field #9a
Select “No” if you do not have an SSN

Field #10
Select “Yes” if you do not have an SSN

Field #11
Select “Yes”. If you select “no”, your SSN number will not be issued.
I-765 Instructions (continued)

SLIDES 46 – 47 if you DO NOT have an SSN

Enter your parents’ full name.

**Father's Name**

12.a. Family Name (Last Name)  
   Trojan

12.b. Given Name (First Name)  
   John

**Mother's Name** (Provide your mother's birth name.)

13.a. Family Name (Last Name)  
   Traveler

13.b. Given Name (First Name)  
   Mary
I-765 Instructions (continued)

14. Alien Registration Number (A-Number) or Form I-94 Number (if any)

![11111111111]

15. Have you ever before applied for employment authorization from USCIS?
   ✗ Yes (Complete the following questions.)

   - Which USCIS Office?
     Potomac Service Center

   - Dates
     05/16/2015 - 05/15/2016

   - Results (Granted or Denied - attach all documentation)
     Granted

   □ No (Proceed to Item Number 16.)

Field #14
Enter the 11 digit I-94 number located on the I-94 document.

Field #15
- Select “Yes” if you received an EAD in the past
- Otherwise, select “no” and skip to Field #16
I-765 Instructions (continued)

15. Have you ever before applied for employment authorization from USCIS?
   □ No (Proceed to Item Number 16.)
   ☑ Yes (Complete the following questions.)

   Which USCIS Office?
   Potomac Service Center

   Dates
   05/16/2015 - 05/15/2016

   Results (Granted or Denied - attach all documentation)
   Granted

   Was the application granted, denied, or withdrawn?
   Attach supporting documents (i.e. I-797 Approval Notice, Denial Notice, EAD photocopy)

   If you answered “yes” for field #15:
   • Enter the name of the USCIS Office that processed your application (i.e. California, Potomac, Vermont, or Texas Service Center)
   • Enter the approved start date on EAD
     • Print out the form and handwrite the end date
**I-765 Instructions (continued)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Field</th>
<th>Information</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>16.</td>
<td><strong>Date of Your Last Arrival or Entry Into the U.S., On or About (mm/dd/yyyy)</strong>&lt;br&gt;08/15/2017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17.</td>
<td><strong>Place of Your Last Arrival or Entry Into the U.S.</strong>&lt;br&gt;Los Angeles LAX</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18.</td>
<td><strong>Status at Last Entry</strong> (B-2 Visitor, F-1 Student, No Lawful Status, etc.)&lt;br&gt;F1 Student</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Enter information from [I-94 Arrival/Departure Record](#) or the entry stamp in the passport.
I-765 Instructions (continued)

Field #19
Type in “F1 student”

Field #20
Use the eligibility code: (c)(3)(B)

19. Current Immigration Status (Visitor, Student, etc.)
   F1 Student

20. Eligibility Category. Go to the Who May File Form I-765? section of the Instructions. In the space below, place the letter and number of the eligibility category you selected from the instructions. For example, (a)(8), (c)(17)(iii), etc.
   (c) (3) (B)
I-765 Instructions (continued)

21. (c)(3)(C) Eligibility Category. If you entered the eligibility category (c)(3)(C) in Item Number 20. above, list your degree, your employer’s name as listed in E-Verify, and your employer’s E-Verify Company Identification Number or a valid E-Verify Client Company Identification Number in the space below.

   Degree: ____________________________
   Employer’s Name as listed in E-Verify: ____________________________
   Employer’s E-Verify Company Identification Number or a Valid E-Verify Client Company Identification Number: ____________________________

22. (c)(26) Eligibility Category. If you entered the eligibility category (c)(26) in Item Number 20. above, please provide the receipt number of your H-1B principal spouse’s most recent Form I-797 Notice of Approval for Form I-129.

   Receipt Number: ____________________________

23. (c)(35) and (c)(36) Eligibility Category
   a. If you entered the eligibility category (c)(35) or (c)(36) in Item Number 20. above, please provide the receipt number of the Form I-140 beneficiary’s Form I-797 Notice of Approval for Form I-140.

      Receipt Number: ____________________________

   b. Have you EVER been arrested for and/or convicted of any crime?  
      [ ] Yes  [ ] No

   NOTE: If you answered “Yes” to Item Number 23.b., refer to Item Number 5., Item H. or Item I. in the Who May File Form I-765 section of these Instructions for information about providing court dispositions.
I-765 Instructions (continued)

Certification
I certify, under penalty of perjury, that the foregoing is true and correct. Furthermore, I authorize the release of any information that U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services needs to determine eligibility for the benefit I am seeking. I have read the Who May File Form I-765 section of the Instructions and have identified the appropriate eligibility category in Item Number 20.

Applicant's Signature

Date of Signature (mm/dd/yyyy) 10/06/2017

Telephone Number
2137402666

Signature of Person Preparing Form, If Other Than Applicant
I declare that this document was prepared by me at the request of the applicant and is based on all information of which I have any knowledge.

Preparer's Signature

Date of Signature (mm/dd/yyyy)

Printed Name

Address

Signature Field
• Print the form
• Sign name using **black** ink pen
• Signature must fit in the box
• Enter today's date
• Enter phone number

Since you are preparing your own application, leave this section blank.
Two US-Style Passport Photos

**Passport photo requirements** *(click on the link for specifications)*

- Only US-style passport photos taken in the US will be accepted by USCIS

- Obtain passport photos at the following locations:
  - Quik-Pik (located at 2820 South Vermont Avenue)
  - Costco
  - Walgreens

- Photos cost $10-$15
Two US-Style Passport Photos (continued)

- Handwrite on the back edge of each photo:
  - First and last name
  - I-94 Arrival/Departure admission number

Note: Damaged photos are not accepted by USCIS. Do not press too hard when writing on them. Do not let ink smear on the face of the photo.
I-765 Application Fee

- Non-refundable
- Fee Amount: $410
- Check should be payable to the US Department of Homeland Security (do not abbreviate)

Tommy Trojan
1234 Sample Street #123
Los Angeles, CA 90089

Pay to the order of: US Department of Homeland Security
The sum of: Four hundred ten dollars

Date of birth: 08/20/1989
Memo: I-94#12345678910

__________________________
Tommy Trojan

Check: # # # #

mm/dd/year

$410.00
I-765 Application Fee (continued)

- Write “Four hundred ten dollars”
- Write date of birth and I-94 admission number on the front of the check in the Memo section (bottom left corner)—if check is from another account holder, write student’s name as well
- Do not write on or sign the back of the check
- Check must have imprinted name and either imprinted or hand-written address in upper left corner
- Check must be a US check from a US bank, but does not need to be from students’ own accounts
- Ensure sufficient funds are available
- If the check “bounces” (is not valid due to insufficient funds), USCIS will suspend the application until receiving valid payment, which delays the application processing time
Standard OPT Processing Time

• Current OPT application processing time for USCIS is 90 days
  • Count 90 days from the date on the I-797 Notice of Receipt – students can expect the decision of their OPT application by that date.

• [Check application status](#) online
Employment Authorization Document (EAD)

Once the OPT application is approved by USCIS, students will receive the Approval Notice in the mail. A few days later, the EAD will also arrive by mail.

Sample EAD:

A valid passport, I-94, OPT I-20, and OPT EAD will satisfy employer’s request for proof of work authorization.
Request for Evidence (RFE)

• If there are errors or omissions in the application packet, USCIS may issue a RFE

• **Contact OIS** if you receive an RFE

• The RFE will explain which additional documents are required along with return mailing instructions

• Use the return envelope that is provided by USCIS to send the requested documents to USCIS

• Respond to the RFE by the stated deadline; otherwise, students risk having their request for OPT significantly delayed or denied
OPT Cancellation

Students who wish to forfeit their OPT and return to their home country must notify OIS so that their SEVIS records can be closed out. Students can use the [OPT Employment Reporting link](#) to inform OIS of their departure date. Failure to report departure information to OIS can result in the automatic termination of their SEVIS record as a result of excessive unemployment days.

OPT and Avocational Coursework

Students may take classes that are avocational or recreational in nature that are incidental to the job. Students cannot be enrolled in a degree program while on OPT.
Social Security Number
Social Security Number (SSN)

- SSN is a 9-digit number issued to US citizens, permanent residents, and temporary (working) non-residents (i.e. F-1 students on OPT) by the Social Security Administration (SSA) Office.
- Its primary purpose is to track individuals for taxation purposes; it is not intended to be used for identification purposes.
- Students who had paid employment in the US prior to OPT should already have a social security number, so they do NOT need to apply for another one.
- Students who have never worked for pay in the US and therefore need a social security number must apply for one using the OPT I-765 application.
Questions regarding OPT?

Call OIS at (213)740-2666 to schedule an appointment with an advisor or email ois@usc.edu.