Post-completion
Optional Practical Training
Instructions
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>Spring 2018</td>
<td>May 11</td>
<td>February 12</td>
<td>June 27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summer 2018</td>
<td>August 7</td>
<td>May 10</td>
<td>September 24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall 2018</td>
<td>December 12</td>
<td>September 14</td>
<td>January 25</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>Spring 2018</td>
<td>May 12 – July 10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summer 2018</td>
<td>August 8 – October 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall 2018</td>
<td>December 13 – February 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

• Plan ahead!
  OIS OPT I-20 Processing Time: 7 Business Days
  USCIS OPT Application Processing Time: [https://egov.uscis.gov/processing-times/](https://egov.uscis.gov/processing-times/)
Things to consider before applying for OPT (continued)

- Students must submit OPT I-20 Request to OIS via the Online OPT I-20 Request system

- 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**
  - Graduation Date

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

- **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

- **Grace period of 60 days**
  - Depart U.S.

- **60 Days**

- **End date on 12 month EAD card. Last day to work unless granted extension by USCIS.**

- **Please note - If you are simply remaining in U.S. for the grace period, you cannot leave and re-enter.**
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>Type of Employment</th>
<th>Description</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>Type of Employment</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 and telephone information

• All changes must be made via the online SEVP Portal within 10 business days.
  - An email with instructions on how to create an SEVP Portal account will be sent from do-not-reply.SEVP@ice.dhs.gov on or after the approved OPT start date. Once you have reported your information, you do not need to confirm with OIS that it has been updated. For guidance on the SEVP Portal, please visit the Study in the States website.

Failing to report OPT employment information and/or US address updates 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 before their ninetieth (90th) 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.

## Pending OPT Application
- Valid passport
- Valid F-1 visa
- OPT I-20 (signed for travel by OIS)
- I-797 Notice of Receipt (Payment receipt that can be used as proof of properly filing OPT application with USCIS)

## Approved OPT Application
- Valid passport
- Valid F-1 visa
- OPT I-20 (signed for travel by OIS)
- Employment verification letter, offer letter, or interview schedule
- 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.)
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>Details</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 via the online OPT I-20 Request System

Step 2 • Student picks up OPT I-20 from OIS

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 requests OPT I-20 online

- Login to the [OPT I-20 Request system](#)
  - Indicate the preferred OPT start and end dates
  - Have academic advisor sign the Graduation Verification Form
    - Viterbi master’s and Ph.D. students meet with a Graduate and Professional Programs (GAPP) advisor in OHE 106
  - Upload the signed Graduation Verification Form
  - Upload copy of current I-20 (page 1 only)

- Please allow **7 business days** to review and process the OPT I-20 Request

Note: Incomplete applications will require additional processing times.
Step 2: Student picks up OPT I-20 from OIS

- Pick up OPT I-20 from OIS
  - If you are unable to come to OIS, you may have a friend pick up the I-20 on your behalf. Your friend must present a printed letter/email from you stating that you give him/her permission to pick-up your I-20 on your behalf. OIS will not mail OPT I-20s to students so please plan accordingly.

- 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
- Photocopy of complete OPT I-20, sign and date “Student Attestation” section
- *Two [US Passport Style Photos](#)*
- *Application Fee Payment (check -or- [Form G-1450](#))*
- Photocopies of all previously issued EADs, CPT I-20s, and OPT I-20s (if applicable)

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

- Download form from USCIS
- Type all information
- Print completed form
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
   
   • 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 | State/Province | Country
   Seoul

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**  
   - Male  
   - Female

8. **Marital Status**  
   - 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

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.

**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)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Father's Name</strong></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>12.a. Family Name (Last Name)</td>
<td>Trojan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.b. Given Name (First Name)</td>
<td>John</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Mother's Name</strong> (Provide your mother's birth name.)</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>13.a. Family Name (Last Name)</td>
<td>Traveler</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.b. Given Name (First Name)</td>
<td>Mary</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Enter your parents’ full name.**

**SLIDES 46 – 47 if you **DO NOT** have an SSN**
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? Dates

Potomac Service Center 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?

☑ Yes (Complete the following questions.)

Which USCIS Office? Dates

Potomac Service Center 05/16/2015 - 05/15/2016

Results (Granted or Denied - attach all documentation)

Granted

☐ No (Proceed to Item Number 16)

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

Was the application granted, denied, or withdrawn?

Attach supporting documents (i.e. I-797 Approval Notice, Denial Notice, EAD photocopy)
I-765 Instructions (continued)

16. **Date of Your Last Arrival or Entry Into the U.S., On or About (mm/dd/yyyy)**

   08/15/2017

17. **Place of Your Last Arrival or Entry Into the U.S.**

   Los Angeles LAX

18. **Status at Last Entry** (B-2 Visitor, F-1 Student, No Lawful Status, etc.)

   F1 Student

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)
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.

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.

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)

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**

- 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 Payment

- Non-refundable
- Fee Amount: $410
- Two payment options available, choose one:
  - Form G-1450 for credit card payment
  - OR -
  - Check 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

Check # # # #

mm/dd/year

$410.00

__________________________
Tommy Trojan
Check Payment for Application Fee

If you are paying with a credit card, please skip to the next slide

• 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 a cashier’s check, money order, or 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 handwritten 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
Credit Card Payment for Application Fee

- Use a card from a US bank, ensure sufficient funds are available
- Type or print legibly in black ink
- Sample Form G-1450:

---

Authorized Payment Amount: $410.00
Credit card holder must sign here in black ink.
Standard OPT Processing Time

• Visit the USCIS website for current OPT application processing times
• Students can check the status of their I-765 application 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.