Common, Avoidable Reasons for OPT Application Rejections or Denials

• **REASON 1:** USCIS received Form I-765 OPT application more than 30 days after OPT I-20 issuance date
  - Students must check *Date Issued* under *School Attestation* on Page 1 of their OPT I-20 — if USCIS receives their application more than 30 days after this date, their OPT application will be denied

• **REASON 2:** Application fee payment issues
  - Follow the payment instructions on Slide 27 of the *OPT Instructions* very carefully
  - Send only one form of payment

• **REASON 3:** Missing or invalid student signatures on forms
  - Students must sign forms by hand in black ink
  - USCIS does not accept electronic signatures

If a student’s application is returned or rejected for any reason, or if they receive a Request for Evidence (RFE) or denial notice, the student must contact OIS immediately before responding to USCIS. Refer to Slide 23 of the *OPT Instructions* for further guidance.

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**Student must sign and date here.** Mail copy of signed I-20 to USCIS; keep original.
Prior to mailing OPT application to USCIS, student must review the OPT Instructions and receive an OPT recommendation I-20 from the Office of International Services (OIS). After receiving the OPT I-20, it is the student’s responsibility to complete the required application and mail their documents to USCIS in a timely manner.

**USCIS Application Checklist**

Student must assemble application materials in the order indicated below. Do not staple documents; use a paperclip.

**IMPORTANT:** On September 29, 2020, a US federal court issued an injunction against the USCIS fee increase that was expected to go into effect on October 2, 2020. Due to this ruling, USCIS will continue to accept OPT applications filed with the 8/25/20 edition of the Form I-765 and $410 fee until further notice.

- **Two (2) U.S. Style Passport Photos**
  - Passport photos must meet all U.S. Department of State specifications
  - Write student name (LAST NAME, FIRST NAME) and I-94 number on the back of each photo

- **Application Fee Payment**—see IMPORTANT above
  - Refer to Slide 27 of the OPT Instructions

- **Form G-1145** (https://www.uscis.gov/g-1145)
  - Typed, not handwritten

- **Original, Signed Form I-765** (https://www.uscis.gov/i-765)—see IMPORTANT above
  - Download most recent version of form and instructions from the USCIS link above to prevent OPT denial
  - Refer to USC’s Sample OPT I-765 for guidance on how to complete the I-765
  - Student must sign the Form I-765 in black ink; signature must stay within the box provided

- **Photocopy of Passport Page**
  - Page that includes photo, passport number and expiration date
  - Must be valid for at least 6 months from application date

- **Printout of Most Recent Electronic Form I-94** (https://i94.cbp.dhs.gov/i94/#/home)

- **Photocopy of Signed OPT I-20 (all pages)**
  - Student must sign and date the Student Attestation section
  - Verify the following information is under Employment Authorizations section: POST-COMPLETION OPT, FULL-TIME, REQUESTED, START DATE, END DATE
    - Students who do not have an I-20 with this information must not proceed with application and need to first request an OPT I-20 from OIS; refer to OPT Instructions
    
    **REMEMBER:** Student must check Date Issued and Program End Date on Page 1 of their OPT I-20. If their application is received by USCIS more than 30 days after Date Issued and/or more than 60 days after Program End Date on Page 1, their OPT will be denied.

If applicable, include:

- **Photocopies** of all previously issued EAD cards and I-20s with work authorization (i.e. CPT I-20s and OPT I-20s)
MAILING INSTRUCTIONS:
1. Make photocopies of the entire application; keep copies for personal records
2. Mail application packet by certified US mail to the appropriate USCIS Lockbox Facility—see addresses below

REMINDER: Student must check Date Issued and Program End Date on Page 1 of their OPT I-20. If their application is received by USCIS more than 30 days after Date Issued and/or more than 60 days after Program End Date on Page 1, their OPT will be denied. Students at risk of missing either deadline must contact OIS immediately prior to mailing application.

If you currently live in:

Mail your application to:

For U.S. Postal Service (USPS) Deliveries:
USCIS
P.O. Box 21281
Phoenix, AZ 85036

For FedEx, UPS, and DHL Deliveries:
USCIS
Attn: NFB AOS
1820 E. Skyharbor Circle S, Suite 100
Phoenix, AZ 85034

If you currently live in:
Alabama, Arkansas, Connecticut, Delaware, District of Columbia, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Mississippi, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, Puerto Rico, Rhode Island, South Carolina, Oklahoma, Tennessee, Texas, Vermont, Virginia, U.S. Virgin Islands, or West Virginia

Mail your application to:

For U.S. Postal Service (USPS) Deliveries:
USCIS
P.O. Box 660867
Dallas, TX 75266

For FedEx, UPS, and DHL Deliveries:
USCIS
Attn: NFB AOS
2501 S. State Hwy. 121 Business, Suite 400
Lewisville, TX 75067

TO MAINTAIN F-1 STATUS ON OPT, STUDENTS MUST:
• Comply with all OPT Reporting Requirements, including reporting employment relation to major to OIS and updating employment and personal contact information in the SEVP Portal—all updates must be reported no more than 10 days after the change
• Engage in employment that is directly related to their major or field of study
• Work full-time, which is defined as 21 hours or more per week
• Not accrue more than 90 days of unemployment between the dates printed on the OPT EAD

Failure to comply with reporting requirements will result in termination of the student’s SEVIS record by SEVP and/or USCIS. See OPT Instructions for further guidance.