Dear Spring 2021 Graduates,

As many of you prepare to apply for OPT with USCIS, OIS would like to clarify some frequently asked questions (FAQs) regarding the OPT Application Checklist, Form I-765, and related documents.

For questions related to employment requirements while on OPT and other important FAQs, refer to the OPT Instructions.

1) My city of birth is incorrect on my OPT I-20 and/or past I-20s. What should I do?
   - The city of birth information was added to your initial USC I-20 based on the information you entered and verified in your USC Admissions record.
   - To update or correct the city of birth in your SEVIS record, please email oisintdt@usc.edu with your full name, SEVIS ID number, 10-digit USC ID number and correct city of birth in the subject line.
   - Your OPT I-20 with the current/incorrect city of birth information can be mailed to USCIS along with the other OPT application materials - it will not negatively affect your OPT application. A reprint of your OPT I-20 is not necessary since your SEVIS record will contain the correct information.

2) I applied for an RCL this semester but the “Authorized Reduced Course Load” section on my I-20 is blank. Should I be concerned?
   - No, it is fine if your RCL was approved but the “Authorized Reduced Course Load” is blank. Please disregard this section - it is not needed for OPT application purposes.
3) Do I need to include copies of my initial I-20 from USC or any other I-20s that do not show CPT or OPT work authorization?
   • No, only include copies of I-20s with work authorization.

4) Does OIS have a sample I-765 for me to use?
   • Yes, OIS has a sample I-765 that provides step-by-step instructions.

5) What if a question on the I-765 does not apply to me? What do I write?
   • In each line for all questions that do not apply to you, type or handwrite neatly in black ink:
     • “N/A” - for questions that require a written answer
     • “NONE” - for questions that require a numerical answer
     • Checkboxes - for questions that require a checkbox response, leave blank
   • These instructions apply to all sections of the Form I-765, except Part 6/Page 7. The sections on Part 6/Page 7 can be left blank if unused but “N/A” is also acceptable.

6) I am trying to type my response in the Form I-765 but the form will not allow me. What should I do?
   • You must handwrite these sections in black ink after you print the Form I-765.

7) I applied for my SSN with an on-campus job or CPT but I am waiting to receive an appointment and/or SSN card from the Social Security Administration. What should I write on the SSN section of the Form I-765?
   • If you have a pending SSN application you should not request an SSN via the Form I-765 as this can cause delays or issues with your pending SSN application. Refer to the sample I-765 for additional guidance.

8) How do I write my CPT and/or past OPT employment information in Part 6/Page 7 of the Form I-765?
   • Write a short explanation, including current and previous (if applicable) SEVIS ID numbers. Indicate the degree level and whether the CPT was part-time or full-time. Here are some examples of ways you can write this:
     • Example A: Current and previous SEVIS IDs: N0000000000 (current, Master’s, no CPT); N0000000001 (previous, Bachelor’s, 6 months of full-time CPT, no OPT)
     • Example B: My current SEVIS ID (N0000000000, Master’s) is my only SEVIS ID; therefore, I do not have work authorization on a previous SEVIS record. I have completed the following CPT with my current SEVIS record: Part-time: DATE - DATE; Full-time: DATE - DATE
   • If you have never participated in CPT, OPT, and/or have never had any other SEVIS IDs, no explanation is needed.

9) When I fill out the PDF Form I-765 the barcode does not appear on the bottom of some or all pages, but my friend’s PDF Form I-765 has a barcode. Is this a problem?
   • No, this is not a problem, as confirmed by USCIS. Depending on which PDF viewer application or internet browser you use the barcode may or may not appear. Please disregard the barcode as it has no bearing on your OPT application.
10) How should I pay the Form I-765 fee?
   - OIS strongly recommends students pay with cashier's check or money order. Refer to Slide 27 of the OPT Instructions for additional guidance.

11) I am paying with cashier’s check or money order and there is no “memo” section. What should I write?
   - A “memo” section is not mandatory. However, please be sure your name is clearly written on the check or money order.

12) Can I send multiple forms of payment, just in case?
   - No, USCIS will reject any application submitted with more than one form of payment.

13) I am unable to fit my full name in the G-1145. What should I do?
   - If you are unable to fit your responses by typing, handwrite your responses neatly in black ink.

14) How can I check if my passport photos meet USCIS requirements?
   - The two passport photos must meet U.S. Department of State specifications. On the back of each photo, write your name (LAST NAME, FIRST NAME) and I-94 number.

15) Do I need to use my USC email address on documents included in my OPT application? What happens to my USC email address when I graduate?
   - No, you may use any personal email address of your choosing. This could be your USC email or non-USC email.
   - For questions related to accessing your @usc.edu email address after graduation, refer to the USC Alumni Association Frequently Asked Questions (select “Alumni Email” tab).
   - Note that your SEVP Portal account creation link will be sent to your USC email address on or after your OPT EAD start date. Please monitor your USC email for this link around your EAD start date.

16) Can I send my OPT application in the same envelope as my friends’ OPT application?
   - No, USCIS will reject any submission with more than one OPT application.

17) I already mailed my OPT application to USCIS but I still have questions. How can I speak with an advisor?
   - Please attend an upcoming OPT Information Session so OIS advisors can answer your questions.

18) What is the USCIS processing time for OPT applications?
   - Please refer to Slides 6 and 15 of the OPT Instructions.
When assembling your application packet, please refer to the OPT Application Checklist for the order of documents. Secure all documents with a paper clip or binder clip. Please do not staple your documents.

Mail all documents to a USCIS Lockbox address indicated on Page 3 of the OPT Application Checklist. Be sure to send by certified mail so that you have a tracking number to monitor your application delivery.

Questions? Please refer to the OPT page of the OIS website for guidance.

OPT Quick Links…
- OIS Website
- OPT Application Information
- OPT Reporting Requirements
- Contact OIS