OPT Application Guide

Use this guide to compile a complete OPT Application to mail to USCIS

Last updated: 11/16/2020
What is in an OPT Application?

Prepare Your Application Materials

- Optional: Form G-1145 to receive e-Notification of receipt from USCIS
- Check for $410 Fee
- Original Form I-765
- Photocopy of OPT I-20
- Photocopy of passport biography page
- Photocopy of most recent U.S. visa
- Form I-94
- 2 U.S. Passport photos

*Please note: You may need to include other documents in addition to those listed above, depending on your responses in the I-765. See the I-765 Guide for details.

All documents must be printed single-sided on standard 8.5”x11” white paper
What is in an OPT Application?

Optional: Form G-1145 to receive e-Notification of receipt from USCIS

- Use this form to request a text message and/or email when USCIS accepts your form.
- Form G-1145 can be found on the USCIS webpage: https://www.uscis.gov/g-1145.
What is in an OPT Application?

- Check for $410 Fee
  - Fee can be paid by a personal check, money order, or cashier’s check.
  - It is okay if the name or address in the top left is not the same as the applicant’s information.
  - The check should be made payable to “U.S. Department of Homeland Security.”

- The “memo” or “for” section should state “I-765 OPT Application.”

- Write your SEVIS Number anywhere on the front of the check.

Be sure you have enough funds in your account to avoid a bounced check. Bounced checks can result in Rejection or Denial of an OPT Application by USCIS.
What is in an OPT Application?

- Original Form I-765

- Please refer to the “Form I-765 Guide” located on the OPT webpage (same drawer as this “OPT Application Guide”) for step-by-step instructions for how to complete Form I-765.
- The guidance provided within the “Form I-765 Guide” is an interpretation by ISPO Advisors of the instructions published within the USCIS Instructions for Form I-765. As this guide is a supplement we have created to answer any questions that may arise while completing the Form I-765, we urge all students to also review the guidance provided by USCIS.
What is in an OPT Application?

- Photocopy of OPT I-20
  - Include copies of all three pages.
  - Sign and date the original I-20 but mail the copy.
  - Check requested OPT start and end dates on page 2 for accuracy.

Remember...
- USCIS must receive your OPT Application within 30 days of the Date Issued on page 1 of your OPT I-20.
- USCIS must receive your OPT Application within your 5 months window (no earlier than 90 days before your program end date and no later than 60 days after your program end date).
What is in an OPT Application?

- Photocopy of passport biography page

Be sure the entire MRZ Code is visible.
What is in an OPT Application?

- Photocopy of most recent U.S. F-1 Visa
  - Visa does not need to be valid.
  - Visa may or may not have UC San Diego under “Annotation.”
  - Be sure the entire MRZ Code is visible.
  - Not required for Canadian citizens
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Form I-94

- If you have not travelled into the USA since April 2013 OR if you entered at a land border (such as the land port of entry at Tijuana), then you will have a paper I-94 (example to the left).

- If you travelled into the USA after April 2013 and entered by air or sea, you will have an electronic I-94 record (example to the right). You can retrieve your electronic I-94 record here: www.cbp.gov/i94.

Note: Beginning May 2019, I-94s will follow the format of 9 digits followed by a two-character alphanumeric series: [9-digit sequence] + [1 letter] + [1 digit].
What is in an OPT Application?

- 2 U.S. Passport Photos

  - Photo must be taken within the last 30 days.
  - Photo must be 2”x2”. For exact specifications, visit the U.S. Department of State webpage.
  - Lightly print your full name (pen or pencil) AND your SEVIS Number (N000…) on the back of each photo.
  - Photos must be professionally taken.
    - UCSD Mail Services has a Passport Acceptance Office that will take passport photos for a fee (no returns).
    - There are many off-campus locations that offer passport photo services. Please confirm these services follow the U.S. Department of State regulations.
Please return to the OPT webpage for information regarding the timeline and instructions for mailing your OPT Application to USCIS.