

OPT APPLICATION CHECKLIST

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This handout was adapted from ones created by the international departments of South Dakota Mines and Glendale Community College with many thanks.

Prepare Documents!

Note: All documents must be in one of the following formats and no more than 6 MB per file: JPG, JPEG, PDF, TIF, OR TIFF (exceptions are specified below). Give each document a clear name, using English characters only. We recommend scanning your documents from a scanner/copier machine (or using a scanning app on your phone) and uploading “clean” clearly-legible images, free of shadows, and with nothing in the “background” – no fingers, tabletops, other paperwork, etc.

- 1. US passport-style photo – 2”x2” (taken within the last six (6) months)**
 - Many stores with photo counters (Walgreens, Costco, Staples, UPS Store, etc.) will provide you with a pair of printed photos for less than \$20.
 - You may be able to skip getting printed photos and do it online. Some students have had success with these two options: [iVisa](#) and [Passport Photo AiD](#)
 - For uploading: the photo must be 600x600 pixels; no more than 6 MB: file must be a **JPG, JPEG, TIF, OR TIFF – NO PDF.**
 - Photos must meet US photograph requirements, or they will be rejected and delay processing. Check it at [Travel.State.Gov](#).
- 2. Copy of current I-94, saved as a PDF from <https://i94.cbp.dhs.gov/i94/#/home>.**
 - If you changed your status to F-1 within the US, your current I-94 is one on your I-797 approval notice.
 - If you were given a physical I-94 card upon entry to the US, make scans/photos of both the front and the back.
- 3. Scan/photo of passport photo page**
 - Your passport must be valid. If you are within 6 months of the expiration date, make sure to begin the renewal process BEFORE filing for OPT. You will need to include information about where you are in the renewal process in the “Additional Information” section when you file.
 - If there are any pages in your passport showing amendments such as name changes, corrections, etc., please include those as well.
- 4. If applicable, scan/photo of any previously issued employment authorization documents (EAD cards).**

Create USCIS Account and Start Application!

1. Go to <https://myaccount.uscis.gov/> and create an account. Follow the instructions for setting up a password.
2. Once you have created an account and logged in, you will select 'My USCIS'
3. You will select:
 - Applicant;
 - File a form online (I-765);
 - The authorization you are applying for: "Post-completion OPT: c 3 B"
4. Complete the questions and start uploading documents (except your OPT I-20, which you don't have yet). If you don't know an answer or you aren't sure what to upload, review the online resources below for help. If you are still unsure, just skip that part for now and move on to the next section... but please STOP when you get to the payment section. Do not enter this information yet.

DO NOT SUBMIT YOUR USCIS APPLICATION UNTIL AFTER YOUR I-765 REVIEW MEETING. FAILURE TO INCLUDE THE NEW OPT I-20 IN YOUR APPLICATION WILL RESULT IN DENIAL.

Online Filing Resources:

[USCIS.gov screenshots with tips](#) (prepared by Glendale Community College)
[OPT Filing Video Walk-Through \(without sound\)](#) (provided by NAFSA Region XII)

Request!

1. Apply for graduation in ctCLink. See instructions at <https://registration.highline.edu/student-records/graduation/>.
2. [Request OPT I-20 here.](#) (You must log in to your Highline email account to access this form.) Advisors will review your request and let you know if we have any questions. Your OPT I-20 will be provided to you during/after the I-765 Review Appointment.
3. Schedule an I-765 Review Appointment by calling 206-592-3725 or emailing int@highline.edu. If using email, be sure to specify if you want an in-person appointment or if you prefer to meet in Zoom. Set the appointment far enough in the future so that you will be able to prepare all of your documents, and do most of the I-765 application at USCIS.gov, in advance of the meeting.

Attend I-765 Review Meeting!

1. Be ready to log in to your USCIS account and show your draft application. **If you are not adequately prepared, you will be asked to reschedule the meeting for a later date.**
 - If you are meeting in Zoom, you will be asked to screenshare.
 - If you have an in-person meeting, please bring your laptop and connect to wifi.
2. Come to the meeting prepared with any questions you want to ask (about the application or OPT in general).
3. The ISP Advisor will check your USCIS application and issue your OPT I-20.

Finish Filing and Submit!

Important: You must complete the filing process within 30 days of the issuance of the OPT I-20. Late filing will result in a denial.

1. Add your signature to your OPT I-20 and resave it without password protection. Upload it to the application in the I-20 section.
 - a. If you have been approved for CPT or OPT before, please upload those I-20s as well.
 - b. No other I-20s will need to be uploaded.
2. Make any other changes as recommended by your advisor.
3. Enter details to pay the OPT filing fee (double check the fee amount at <https://www.uscis.gov/i-765>). Payment options:
 - Credit or debit card (Visa, MasterCard, American Express or Discover). Call your credit card company or bank to let them know this fee will be charged.
 - Bank Account and Routing number (Must be drawn at a financial institution that is physically located in the U.S.)
4. When you're sure everything is perfect... Submit!! You will be assigned a receipt number immediately.

What happens next?

You wait! Feel free to start applying for jobs in your field, but you **MUST NOT WORK** until (a) you have received your EAD, and (b) it is on or after the date printed on the EAD.

More information will be emailed to you when you finish your degree.