12 months Post-Completion OPT: Online I-765 Tips

The instructions below are intended to act as a guide for you when applying for your 12 months Post-Completion OPT application and to assist with the more difficult aspects of the online I-765. Most of the questions you need to answer will be about your personal information and your immigration documents, but a few are specific to your situation. When you submit the IPO OPT request, we will review your paper I-765 and provide any suggested corrections. Most of the information can be copied from the paper I-765 to the online I-765.

- These instructions are not intended for students applying for STEM OPT. Please review these instructions on the IPO’s STEM OPT website.

**DON’T FORGET!!!** You must first follow the IPO’s OPT I-20 request process to get the OPT I-20 to upload to the online I-765 application. If you do not have the OPT I-20 from the IPO, STOP. Return to the IPO’s OPT I-20 Request Process to follow the process listed there. If you apply online with USCIS without the OPT I-20, your OPT will likely be denied.

Application Start

If at any point during the application you need to pause, USCIS will save your application. You will need to log back in to complete the saved application.

Once you create your account and start the application, it will ask you what immigration benefit you are applying for. Select “Application for Employment Authorization” as this option has post-completion OPT.
Getting Started

After choosing the I-765, the online application wants to know what type of OPT you are requesting. These instructions are for 12 months Post-Completion OPT ONLY. You should select “c(3)(B) Student Post-Completion OPT.” If you choose a different OPT, you are applying for the wrong type of OPT.

Select ‘Initial permission to accept employment’ as your reason for applying:

About You

The next sections of the application are “About You” and you will answer basic questions about yourself. Most of these should be self-explanatory and no screen shots are provided as part of these instructions.

NOTE: If you are using the IPO as your mailing address so we can receive your I-797 receipts and EAD, use the address format below.

REMEMBER: If you are using the IPO’s address to receive your mail, select “no” to “Is your current mailing address the same as your physical address” and add your physical address in the next section (remember, you do not live at the IPO, we are just accepting your mail on your behalf), so you need to indicate where you live.

If you have moved, you must also update SPIRE with your new address.

NOTE: “In care of name (if any):” you need only put a name here if someone else is accepting mail on your behalf. If you live at the address where you are receiving the mail, you can leave this blank.
If your mailing address is different from where you live, select ‘no’ and put the address where you live.

Evidence

- Upload a 2 x 2 photo of yourself. Photo requirements will be listed in the application.
- Upload Form I-94. This can be found here: https://i94.cbp.dhs.gov/I94/#/home. Go to the “Get Most Recent I-94” tab at the top of the I-94 website. Enter in your personal information to the I-94 system to get your I-94. Confirm the information is correct and make the document into a .pdf/jpeg/etc. (Do NOT upload your travel history to the online I-765 as this not the I-94).
- Upload previous EAD/passport/visa. If you previously had OPT at another degree level, you should upload a copy of your EAD (front and back).
  - If you did not have OPT previously, upload either your passport bio page or F-1 visa stamp.
- Previously Authorized CPT or OPT. If you’ve have OPT at a prior degree level, upload your prior OPT EAD here if you choose. If you had previously authorized CPT at your current degree level,
upload those I-20s here if you choose. If you do not have your old CPT I-20s, you request them here. The old I-20s will be unsigned and this will not impact your OPT application.

- **Upload OPT I-20 from the IPO**
  - To apply for OPT, you must have requested an OPT I-20 from the IPO before submitting your online I-765 and submitted it to USCIS within 30 days of the OPT I-20’s creation.
  - The OPT I-20 must be signed by YOU at the bottom of page 1 prior to uploading. The IPO should have already signed on page 1 and page 2. You will need to print, sign, scan, save, and then upload to the online I-765. USCIS will not accept digital signatures from students on the I-20s.

  **If you do not have the OPT I-20, return to the IPO’s OPT I-20 Request Process and proceed through the IPO’s steps.**

If you have received the OPT I-20 from the IPO and you are near/past 30 days since it was created, please contact your IPO advisor for a new OPT I-20. You do not need to restart the IPO’s process, but you do need the IPO to provide a new OPT I-20.

**Additional Information**

Once you have completed the I-765 and uploaded all documents, the application will ask you if there is any additional information. Additional information to add would be if your name didn’t fit into the application fields or there is something else to explain.

**Review and Submit**

USCIS indicates they will review your application for accuracy and completeness. However, please keep in mind that you need to double check this for yourself. USCIS will not flag answers that are blank or missing uploads for you to fix prior to submission. The online application will indicate that you have everything needed even if you have unanswered questions or missing file uploads. Double check for yourself. The IPO will only review the paper I-765 as part of the OPT I-20 request process. We cannot review the online I-765.

Once you select ‘next’ in the Review and Submit section, they will give you the option to review the full application. We suggest clicking on ‘View Draft Snapshot’ as this will provide you with an I-765 to save for your records. You can use this to do a side-by-side comparison of the IPO’s review of the I-765 and your own submission to the online I-765. (Note: the paper I-765 and online I-765 questions might not be in the same order)
After you have reviewed everything and are confident it is correct, click ‘next,’ agree to the statements on the next pages, sign, and proceed to payment. **Remember: Payment = I-765 submitted.** Once you pay the fee, you have submitted your application and no additional changes can be made. You can upload additional evidence in your record later if you need too but it is unclear how USCIS will view this. If USCIS needs additional information, they will put the request in your USCIS online portal.

Good luck!