

TIPS FOR FILING YOUR OPT APPLICATION ONLINE WITH USCIS

These instructions are designed to help Bentley University F-1 students complete specific sections of the USCIS online OPT application. Please remember that the OPT application is a personal application, and **you are solely responsible** for ensuring the accuracy of your submission, including uploading all required documents and meeting all deadlines. See the disclaimer below.

Once you have received your OPT recommendation Form I-20 from the CISS, you are ready to file your OPT supplication online with USCIS. First, you will need to create a myUSCIS account.

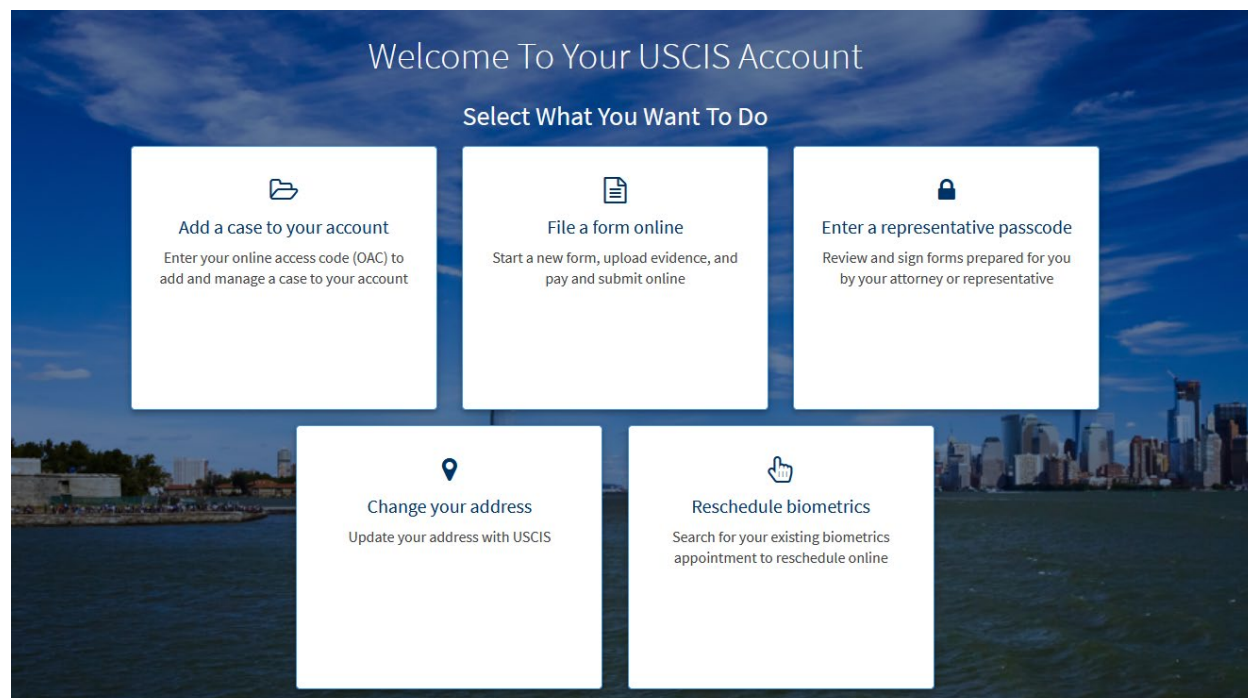
Creating Your USCIS Account

[Click here for complete instructions](#) from USCIS on how to create your USCIS account.

- Use your Bentley University or your personal email to create your myUSCIS account. You will retain access to your Bentley email after graduation and for the duration of your OPT/STEM OPT. *Email ga_ciss@bentley.edu if you have trouble accessing your Bentley email at any time after graduation.*
- Remember your login information so that you can return to your account to finish your application and view updates.

Starting Your Application

- Sign in to your USCIS online account, click on “File a Form Online.”



- From the drop-down list of available forms, select “I-765, Application for Employment Authorization.”

File a Form

Select the form you want to file online. For some forms you will have the option to either fill out your form online or upload a completed form. Once you start, we will automatically save your information for 30 days, or from the last time you worked on the form.

Fee waiver: Fee waivers can be requested online only when submitting certain benefit requests using the PDF filing option. If your desired benefit request is not eligible for PDF filing, you must file a paper version of both the Form I-912, Request for Fee Waiver and the form for the specific benefit you are requesting. You can review the fee waiver guidance at www.uscis.gov/feewaiver.

Select the form you want to file online.

- I-589, Application for Asylum and for Withholding of Removal
- I-765, Application for Employment Authorization**
- I-821, Application for Temporary Protected Status (TPS)
- I-821D, Consideration of Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA)
- I-907, Request for Premium Processing Service
- N-336, Request for a Hearing on a Decision in Naturalization Proceedings
- N-400, Application for Naturalization
- N-565, Application for Replacement Naturalization/Citizenship Document

Eligibility

Select your correct eligibility category: **(c)(3)(B) Student Post-Completion OPT**

I-765, Application for Employment Authorization

You must complete all fields with an asterisk (*) to submit this form.

What is your eligibility category? *



You can file your request online only for certain eligibility categories

If your eligibility category does not appear on the drop-down list, you must file a paper [Form I-765](#). If you submit online and are not eligible for one of the listed categories, your application may be denied.

(c)(3)(B) Student Post-Completion OPT

- Enter your degree level and major exactly as they appear under “Major” on page 1 of your Form I-20. Be sure to include the CIP code in parentheses (e.g., MS in Finance (52.0801)).

Premium Processing

The OPT application includes an option to request Premium Processing.

- If you select “Yes”, you will be prompted to complete Form I-907. This allows you to pay for and submit both your OPT application and your premium processing application together.
- If you select “Yes” and sign the application, you cannot change your response. You will be required to pay the additional Premium Processing fee.
- If you select “No”, you still have the option to request Premium Processing later, after submitting your application. [Learn more about USCIS Premium Processing.](#)

Reason for Applying

- If you are applying for a 12-month Post-Completion OPT, select: “Initial permission to accept employment.”
- If you have not filed for off-campus employment authorization in the past (not including on-campus employment or CPT), check “No.”
- If you have filed for off-campus employment authorization in the past (OPT), check “Yes”

I-765, Application for Employment Authorization

You must complete all fields with an asterisk (*) to submit this form.

Getting Started ^

- Basis of eligibility
- Reason for applying**
- Preparer and interpreter information

About You v

Evidence v

Additional Information v

Review and Submit v

What is your reason for applying? *

☒ Initial permission to accept employment

☐ Replacement of lost, stolen, or damaged employment authorization document or correction of my employment authorization document NOT DUE to US Citizenship and Immigration Services error

☐ Renewal of permission to accept employment

Have you previously filed Form I-765?

☐ Yes

☒ No

[Back](#) [Next](#)

Your Name

- Enter your full legal name exactly as it appears on the biographical page of your passport and your Form I-20.

- If you have used any other names (such as a maiden name, nickname, or previous legal name) since birth, select “Yes.” Additional fields will appear for you to enter those names.
- If you have not used any other names, select “No.”

Your Contact Information

- **EAD cards are official government documents and cannot be forwarded** by the U.S. Postal Service (USPS). If the address you provide is incorrect or you move, your EAD may be returned to USCIS.
- The **U.S. mailing address** you enter in your OPT application is where the USCIS will send you:
 - OPT Receipt notice
 - OPT Approval notice
 - Employment Authorization Document (EAD)
- If you plan to **move within the next 5 months**, it’s strongly recommended that you use the **U.S. address of a trusted friend or relative** who can securely receive your mail on your behalf.

Your Immigration Information

- Your status at last arrival is likely *F-1 Student, Academic, or Language Program*, unless you pursued a change of status (Form I-539) from within the U.S.
- Fill in your (most recently issued) passport information. You can leave the “travel document number” field blank, unless you entered the U.S. on a previous passport, in which case you may list it here.
- You will need to indicate your current immigration status (F-1 Student) and your SEVIS ID. Your SEVIS ID is listed on the top left of your most recent Form I-20 and begins with N.....

You must complete all fields with an asterisk (*) to submit this form.

What is your country of citizenship or nationality?

List all countries where you are currently a citizen or national.

+ Add country

What is your Form I-94 Arrival-Departure Record Number (if any)?

Provide an 11 character I-94 Number.

When did you last arrive in the United States?

List your arrival date, place of arrival, and status at arrival.

Date of arrival (on or about)

MM/DD/YYYY

Place of arrival

Status at last arrival

- Enter the information per your passport and Form I-20.
- Select "Add country" if you have a second country of citizenship.

- Go to <https://i94.cbp.dhs.gov/i94/#/home> to access & download your I-94 Arrival Record.
- Enter the 11-digit number from your most recent I-94 record.
- Verify the entry reflects your most recent entry to the U.S. If it is NOT correct, STOP and contact your OISS Advisor.
- Enter date of your most recent arrival to U.S. per your I-94 record.
- Select place of arrival from drop-down menu.
- Select status at last arrival: Unless you had a change of status, you should select *F-1, Academic, or Language Program*

- Enter the SEVIS number located in the upper left corner of your current Form I-20.
- If you have used other SEVIS numbers in the past, list them in the “Additional information” section.
- Provide your passport number.
- Leave the field “What is your travel document number (if any)?” empty.
- Enter the expiration date of your passport and the country that issued it.

What country issued your passport or travel document?

What is your current immigration status or category?

What is your Student and Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS) Number (if any)?

Use the "Additional Information" section to include all previously used SEVIS numbers.

Provide a 10, 11, or 12-digit SEVIS number.

Back

Next

A-Number

Enter your A-Number, which is the USCIS number printed on your EAD card.

- If you have applied for OPT previously, your A-Number is listed on your EAD cards as *USCIS #* and listed on your receipt notice.
- If you have not applied for OPT previously, check the “I do not have or know my A-number” box.

USCIS Online Account Number

Check if you have a USCIS Online Account Number from any prior application. **If you do not have one or do not know your USCIS account number, check the “I do not have or know my USCIS Account Number” box.**

Social Security Number

- If you have a Social Security Number (SSN), answer “No” to this question.
- If you do not have a Social Security Number (SSN), answer “Yes” to request that the SSA issue you a Social Security card.

Do you want the SSA to issue you a Social Security card?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
-

- We have been informed that USCIS has stopped automatically issuing SSN cards upon approving OPT. Instead, you can apply directly to the Social Security Administration for an SSN on or after your OPT start date.

Evidence

In this section, you will need to upload various documents.

- Files must be **clear and easy to read**
- Accepted file types: **JPG, JPEG, PDF, TIF, or TIFF**
- **Do not upload** encrypted or password-protected files
- File names may include **English letters, spaces, periods (.), hyphens (-), underscores (_), and parentheses ()**
- Maximum file size: **6 MB per document**

1. Passport-Style Photo

Upload a recent (taken within the last 30 days) passport-style photo (2 x 2 inches).

Do not use photos from a recent passport renewal, U.S. visa application, or previous OPT/EAD applications.

Use the U.S. Department of State Photo Tool to ensure your photo meets the required standards.

2. Form I-94

Upload a copy of your most recent I-94 Entry Record (not the travel history). Your Form I-94 should look like this. Do *not* upload the I-94 Travel History. You can download it [here](#).

Make sure your Class of Admission is listed as “F1,” unless you changed your status (I-539) since last entering the U.S.

Most Recent I-94

Admission (I-94) Record Number : 51415565885

Most Recent Date of Entry: 2017 July 25

Class of Admission : F1

Admit Until Date : D/S

Details provided on the I-94 Information form:

Last/Surname :

First (Given) Name :

Birth Date :

Passport Number :

Country of Issuance : China

3. Employment Authorization Document (EAD) or Government ID

Post-Completion OPT applicants: Upload the biographical page of your current, valid passport.

STEM OPT Extension applicants: Upload your current, valid Post-Completion EAD card.

Note: You only need to upload your passport once, under this section.

4. Form I-20

Upload a signed copy of your most recent Form I-20 with the OPT recommendation.

5. Previous CPT or OPT Authorizations (if applicable)

Upload documentation of any previously approved CPT or OPT, including:

CPT I-20(s) showing approved CPT

OPT I-20(s) showing approved OPT

Front and back of EAD card(s) for prior OPT

Important Note:

If you've never been issued a Form I-20 for approved CPT or OPT, do not upload anything in this section.

7. Institutional Accreditation (if applicable)

- Required only if you are applying for STEM OPT Extension based on a previous degree.

Additional Information Section

Use the "Additional Information" section to report any previously authorized CPT or OPT employment.

Follow these steps:

1. Click "Add Response" to enter any prior CPT or OPT work authorizations.
2. From the dropdown menus, select:
 - a. **Section:** Evidence
 - b. **Page:** Previous CPT or OPT
 - c. **Question:** Previous CPT or OPT

3. **Enter your details** in the text box provided.

TIP: The government is looking for a summary of your past CPT/OPT authorizations. Use the sample format below and customize it with your information:

Under SEVIS Number N#####, I was previously authorized for full-time/part-time OPT/CPT at the Bachelor's/Master's/Doctoral level from MM/DD/YYYY to MM/DD/YYYY.

4. Click **“Save Response”** once you’ve entered your information.

Review Your Application

Before submitting, carefully review your application for accuracy and completeness:

- Check for any issues in the **“Alerts and Warnings”** section, which will flag missing or inconsistent information.
- Keep in mind: while you can upload additional documents later, **you cannot edit the application itself after submission.**
- It’s highly recommended to **save a copy of your Form I-765:**
 - Click **“View draft snapshot”** to download, review, and save a PDF version for your records.

Submit Payment

When you're ready to submit, the system will redirect you to **Pay.gov**, the official U.S. government payment portal. There, you can pay the **Form I-765 filing fee** using one of the following methods:

- A U.S. **credit or debit card**, or
- An **ACH transfer** (direct withdrawal) from your U.S. checking account.

⚠ Important: Once your payment is submitted, your Form I-765 will be **locked**, and you will no longer be able to make any changes.

Saving Your Draft

If you begin working on your Form I-765 but are not yet ready to submit it, **USCIS will save your draft for up to 30 days.** This allows you to return and complete it at your convenience before final submission.

Important Reminder

The screenshot shows the 'Pay and submit' page for the I-765 Application for Employment Authorization. On the left is a navigation menu with options: 'Getting Started', 'About You', 'Evidence', 'Additional Information', 'Review and Submit' (selected), and 'Pay and submit'. The 'Review and Submit' section includes links for 'Review your application', 'Your application summary', 'Your statement', 'Your signature', and 'Pay and submit'. The main content area is titled 'Pay for and submit your application' and explains that the final step is to pay the \$470 application fee. It includes a 'Refund policy' and a list of steps: 1. Provide billing info, 2. Provide payment info, 3. Submit payment. A 'Pay and submit' button is at the bottom.

Do not submit your payment or application until you have received your new OPT or STEM OPT I-20 from CISS **and upload it** in the **Evidence** section under **Form I-20**.

Electronic Receipt Notice

Within a few minutes to 24 hours after submitting your online Form I-765 application, an electronic receipt notice will be available under the “**Documents**” tab in the “**Your Cases**” section. If it’s not immediately accessible, please allow up to 24 hours for it to appear.

In addition, USCIS will mail you a physical copy of the receipt notice, which typically arrives within a few weeks.

Disclaimer

The **Center for International Students and Scholars (CISS)** at **Bentley University** provides guidance on the OPT and STEM OPT application processes as a courtesy to Bentley students and alumni. While we strive to offer the most accurate and up-to-date information, the support we provide does **not constitute legal advice**.

Students are responsible for reviewing all deadlines and ensuring the accuracy of their OPT/STEM OPT application materials before submitting them to U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS). The OPT application is a personal process, and each applicant is accountable for their submission. Outcomes may vary depending on individual circumstances.

Please be aware that USCIS policies, procedures, and eligibility criteria may change at any time. CISS is not liable for any errors, omissions, or decisions made by USCIS regarding your application. For legal advice, students are encouraged to consult a licensed immigration attorney at their own expense.