Instructions for Completing Your OPT Application for USCIS

Step 1: Submit Edgewood College OPT application to the Center for Global Education
Step 2: Receive approval from Center for Global Education and new I-20 with OPT recommendation
» **Step 3:** Submit USCIS OPT application materials (Meet with Sara to review application BEFORE mailing)

United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) will review your application and, if approved, issue an Employment Authorization Document (EAD). Processing may take between 2-4 months at USCIS. You may not begin employment until USCIS has approved your application and you have a valid EAD.

Application Deadlines:

Standard Pre-Completion OPT

- Can apply up to 90 days before being enrolled for 1 full academic year; *employment cannot begin prior to completion of full academic year*
- Students who have met the 1 academic year requirement may apply up to 90 days before the requested employment start date; CGE recommends applying as early as allowed.

Standard Post-Completion OPT

- Can apply up to 90 days before program end date on your I-20 & no later than 60 days after program end date.
- USCIS must receive your application no later than 30 days after Sara makes the OPT recommendation in SEVIS. CGE recommends applying as early as allowed.

***You must file your Form I-765 within 30 days of the date Edgewood College enters your OPT recommendation in SEVIS.**

Your application must include (preferably in this order):

You should submit legible photocopies of documents, unless the USCIS instructions specifically state that you must submit an original document.

- ☐ $410 personal check or money order payable to the "U.S. Department of Homeland Security."
  - Must be from a bank or other financial institution located in the U.S. and must be payable in U.S. Dollars.
  - Spell out U.S. Department of Homeland Security; do not use the initials USDHS or DHS.

- ☐ Two identical color photos of yourself with a white background taken within 30 days of submitting your application to USCIS. The photos should meet the regulations for U.S. passport photos (https://travel.state.gov/content/passports/en/passports.html) . Lightly print your name on the back of each photo with a pencil or felt marker. We recommend you place both photos in a small plastic bag or envelope so they don't get lost in the rest of the application.

- ☐ Completed Form I-765 http://www.uscis.gov/files/form/i-765.pdf (see attached for detailed instructions)

- ☐ Form G-1145. It is recommended that you elect to receive an email and/or text message notifying you that your application has been accepted. To receive the email/text notification complete Form G-1145, E-Notification of Application/Petition Acceptance, and clip it to the first page of your application. To download a copy of Form G-1145, click on "FORMS" on www.uscis.gov".

- ☐ Photocopy of pages 1 and 3 of your new I-20 produced for the purpose of recommending OPT.

- ☐ Photocopies of any previous I-20s produced for the purposes of recommending CPT or OPT (both at your current academic level and any previous academic levels)

- ☐ If you have previously applied for employment authorization from USCIS, provide photocopies of any previous EADs.

- ☐ Copy of Form I-94 printed from website or copies of both sides of cardstock I-94 https://i94.cbp.dhs.gov/I94/#/home .

- ☐ Color photocopy of your passport identity, expiry and visa pages.

- ☐ Pre-Completion OPT only:
    - Evidence of having been lawfully enrolled on a full-time basis for 1 full academic year at a college, university approved by USCIS and SEVP for attendance by F-1 students.

All of the above should be mailed to one of the following addresses:

If sent through the US Postal Service (USPS):
USCIS
P.O. Box 21281
Phoenix, AZ 85036

If sent through a service like FedEx:
USCIS
Attn: NFB AOS
1820 E. Skyharbor Circle S
Suite 100
Phoenix, AZ 85034

When sending your application through the US Postal Service, we recommend that you use a confirmation service, such as *Return Receipt* or *Certified Mail*.

You should also receive a **Receipt Notice** from the Service Center acknowledging your application within 2-8 weeks. With your Receipt Notice, you can check the status of your application online at https://egov.uscis.gov/cris/jsps/index.jsp. This site also provides information about processing times which is more accurate than the estimated time given on the Receipt Notice.

We advise you to make copies of all of the above before mailing.
Also, keep all your mail receipts and USCIS Service Center Communication.

A Guide to Completing USCIS Form **I-765**

**TYPE (do NOT write by hand) your responses using the fillable form available online at:
https://www.uscis.gov/i-765

You should read the complete instructions for Form I-765 on the USCIS website. This guide is intended as a supplement to provide added clarification to the USCIS instructions for specific items only.

Answer all questions fully and accurately. If a question does not apply to you, type or print "NA" unless otherwise directed to leave the item blank. If the answer requires a numeric response and your response is zero or none, type "None" unless otherwise directed.

Part 1. Reason for Applying
1.a. Select "Initial permission to accept employment" if applying for standard pre or post-completion OPT.
1.c. Select "Renewal of permission to accept employment" if applying for STEM extension OPT.

Part 2. Information About You
1.a. – 1.c. Provide your full legal name as shown on your birth certificate or legal change of name document.

5.a.-6. Your U.S. Mailing Address

CGE suggests using a mailing address where you can receive mail for approximately six months from the time of submitting your application. Note: Federal mail cannot be forwarded; therefore, requesting forwarding service from the US Postal Service will not result in your USCIS mail being rerouted to your new address.

You may use the Center for Global Education (CGE) address for your correspondence with USCIS. The Edgewood Mail Center or CGE will contact you via **Edgewood email** when we receive mail from USCIS. Once we notify you that we have received mail, you may pick it up in our office, ask us to forward your mail to your current address, or give us permission to release your mail to another individual. CGE is not responsible for mail lost via post.

If using CGE's office address, complete as follows:

5.a. Center for Global Education
5.b. 1000 Edgewood College Drive
5.c. leave blank
5.d – 5.f. Madison, WI 53711
6. Indicate "no" – your current mailing address is not the same as your physical address (you do not live at CGE)

7.a. – 7.e. Enter the physical address where you live in the U.S.

8. Alien Registration Number (A-Number). If you do not have an A-Number, leave this space blank. You will most likely only have an A-Number if you are applying for the STEM OPT Extension, and it will be on your EAD card (called a "USCIS number"). Read USCIS instructions if you are not sure whether you have an A-Number.

9. Leave this field blank unless you have a USCIS online account number (which you most likely will not have).

12. Previous Application for Employment Authorization from USCIS. If you have previously applied for economic hardship, OPT, have had an H-1-B visa or have otherwise applied for work permission from USCIS, indicate "yes". (CPT does not count since permission is granted by Edgewood.) If you marked "yes", provide copies of your previous EAD's.

13.a – 17.b. Questions regarding Social Security Number (SSN). If SSA has ever issued a SSN to you in your name or a previously used name such as your maiden name, then you must enter the SSN from your card in item 13.b. You are not required to request an SSN using this application. However, you must have an SSN properly assigned in your name to work in the U.S.

21.a. I-94 Number. Your Form I-94 number is found on your most recent I-94 entry record. You can access your most recent I-94 by using this link and going to "Get Most Recent I-94": https://i94.cbp.dhs.gov/I94/#/home. Use the I-94 number from your most recent entry to the US.

21.c. Travel Document Number. Write "NA" if you have a passport.

27. Eligibility Category.

F-1 Pre-completion OPT: (c)(3)(A)
F-1 Post-completion OPT: (c)(3)(B)
F-1 24-month STEM Extension: (c)(3)(C)

28 – 31. Applicants for standard OPT can leave Items 28-31.b. blank. STEM Extension OPT applicants must answer 28.a. – 28.c.

Part 3. Applicant's Statement, Contact Information, Declaration, Certification, and Signature
After you print the form, sign your name with a handwritten signature using black ink. Make sure your signature does not go outside of the lines of the signature box because USCIS will scan this signature box and this will become the signature on your EAD.

Part 4. Interpreter's Contact Information, Certification, and Signature.
Enter "NA" in this section unless you used an interpreter to help you complete the form.

Part 5. Contact Information, Declaration, and Signature of the Person Preparing this application, if Other Than the Applicant
Enter "NA" in this section unless someone else completed this form on your behalf.

Part 6. Additional Information
If you need extra space to complete any item on the application, use the space provided in Part 6. Additional Information. If you need more space than what is provided in Part 6, you may make copies of Part 6 or attach a separate sheet of paper. If you attach a separate sheet, type or print your name at the top of each sheet and indicate the page number, part number, and item number to which your answer refers. Sign and date each sheet.

Complete this section if:

- You have been approved for **CPT** in the past
- You have been approved for **OPT** in the past
- You have used a different SEVIS ID in F-1 status in the US (for example, you attended school for a while, left the US to take a break from school, and returned with a new I-20, you would have a SEVIS ID from your first period of attendance that is different than your current SEVIS ID). Your SEVIS ID is on the top right corner of your I-20, and starts with N00.

3-7. For each of the items listed above that applies to you (CPT, OPT, different SEVIS ID numbers), complete one box in Part 6, starting with 3.a. We suggest using the following format:

SEVIS Number, CPT/OPT, start date – end date; degree level
Example: N0000000000, CPT, 07/07/2017 – 09/07/2017, Bachelor's

Previous SEVIS ID, start date – end date; degree level
Example: Previous SEVIS ID N0000000000, 09/08/2013-05/20/2016, Bachelor's

Save a copy of your completed application for your records and submit one copy to the Center for Global Education for your file.