



U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services

Form I-765

Optional Practical Training

Filing Tips



**U.S. Citizenship
and Immigration
Services**

Optional Practical Training (OPT) Filing Tips

- Ensure that the correct eligibility category is used (item 16 on Form I-765).
- Students should obtain a DSO's recommendation **prior** to filing the Form I-765. In general, submit the following:
 - **Evidence of the student's status (status in SEVIS must be "Active").**
 - **Evidence that the OPT will be in an occupation directly related to the student's major course of study as indicated on the I-20.**
- The Form I-765 must be signed by the student.
- The signature on the EAD is taken from the Form I-765. If the signature on the I-765 is too close to or touches any other text or lines on the form, then the signature cannot be used and an RFE for an acceptable signature **will** be sent to the student.
- If the student has previous CPT or OPT, provide photocopies of all I-20s and/or copies of all previous EADs.
- If no prior EAD has been issued, the applicant must submit a copy of a government-issued identity document, such as a passport showing the applicant's picture, name and date of birth.



OPT Filing Tips **Cont'd**

- The 17-month STEM extension is based on a qualifying degree. Provide a copy of the qualifying degree, **evidence of completion of course requirements (excluding thesis or equivalent)**, and/or transcripts.
- Ensure that the E-verify number and employer's name on the I-765 are correct.
- Mail the I-765 to the correct location as indicated on the form instructions. Incorrectly addressed applications risk delay, rejection, and return.
- If the student is not at the address indicated on the application while the I-765 is pending, RFEs issued for evidence material to the application are returned as UNDELIVERABLE.
- If the student is not at the address indicated on the application at the time the EAD is delivered, the EAD is either returned as UNDELIVERABLE or, worse, the applicant never receives the EAD.

Note: When the student anticipates moving out or being temporarily at a different address while on vacation, etc., it is recommended that the student provides the complete mailing address of the school, in care of (C/O) the DSO, on the I-765 application. This information will be entered at the time of adjudication.



Form I-539 Filing Tips



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Form I-539 Filing Tips

- Forms I-539, DS-2019 and I-20 are signed by the appropriate individuals.
- Forms I-20 show the correct reason for issuance (initial or continued attendance, reinstatement, etc.).
- Ensure that the program start dates have not lapsed and the program dates have been updated in SEVIS.
- Provide proof of the principal applicant's relationship(s) to dependent(s).
- Submit dependent I-20(s) for all family member(s) included on Form I-539 application.
- Provide evidence of financial support to cover the first year of an academic program or the entire length of a language program (F only) .
- Submit evidence of financial support to cover the entire length of a vocational program (M only).
- Ensure that each applicant has a valid passport at the time of filing.
- Provide a copy of each applicant's paper or electronic Form I-94.



I-539 Filing Tips **Cont'd**

M-1 Extension of **Stay**:

- Ensure that the Form I-20 is issued for extension purposes and is from the current SEVIS record. **Do not create a new SEVIS ID.**
- Provide a detailed statement explaining the reason for the extension request.
- Ensure that applications for extensions are filed at least 15 days but not more than 60 days before the program end date.
 - If an extension of status is needed to work OPT, the student needs to file Forms I-765 and I-539 concurrently according to the Form I-539 filing instructions.
- Evidence of **student's** status.
 - The student's status in SEVIS must be "Active."
 - Copies of transcripts and/or proof of enrollment.
- Provide evidence of financial support as required on the student SEVIS Form I-20.



Form I-539 Filing Tips **Cont'd**

M-1 School Transfer:

- Ensure that Form I-20 is issued for transfer purposes and is from the current SEVIS record. **Do not create a new SEVIS ID.**
- Provide a detailed statement explaining the reason for the transfer request if requesting a transfer to another school **beyond** six months **after** the initial program start date.
- Provide evidence of financial support as required on the student SEVIS Form I-20.



I-539 Filing Tips **Cont'd**

Reinstatement (M-1 and F-1):

- Ensure that the Form I-20 is issued for reinstatement purposes. **Do not create a new SEVIS ID.**
- The student must submit Form I-539 within the 5-month period after falling out of status. If reinstatement is not requested within the 5-month period, evidence is required to demonstrate that the delay is due to exceptional circumstances.
- Provide a detailed statement explaining the reason for falling out of status.
- Provide documentary evidence to support the reason for falling out of status. For example: Doctor's note if the reason is medical **or letter** from DSO if the DSO made an error.
- Copies of transcripts and/or proof of enrollment from the school recommending reinstatement.

