What to Consider Before Filing

OPT Start Date
- Choose a start date within 60 days of your completion date. Choose your dates carefully. Once the OPT application has been submitted, the dates cannot be changed.

Travel
- Travel outside the U.S. while your OPT application is pending (after the I-20 program end date) is risky and therefore discouraged.

Changing Your Address
- Changing addresses may cause problems with receipt of correspondence from USCIS. The US Post Office does not forward mail from DHS.

Starting Employment
- OPT applications may take up to 90 days for approval.
- You cannot begin work until:
  - you receive your EAD card
  - the start date has been met

OPT employment must be directly related to the field of law and appropriate for your level of education.

When Can I Apply?

Apply up to 90 days before or 60 days after program completion date.

Checklists

Submit to Graduate Programs:
- Optional Practical Training (OPT) Request Form (website address)

Documents to submit to USCIS
- Filing Fee: Personal check, cashier's check or money order (see sample)
- Two passport-style photos
- Form I-765 (uscis.gov)
- Copy of new I-20 (with student signature and OPT recommendation on page 3)
- Copies of all previous I-20s
- Copies of previous EADs (if any)
- Copy of passport biographic page
- Copy of I-94 card (front & back)/automated I-94 Form (cbp.gov/I94)
- Copy of F-1 entry visa

Tips for Completing the I-765

Address: Where DHS will send the receipt notice and EAD. Address should remain valid for at least three months after submission of the application.

Question 11: If you have submitted this form to USCIS previously, you have applied. If you still have either the receipt or the approval notice from your initial application, the receipt number tells you where it was filed (SRC=Texas, EAC=Vermont, LIN=Nebraska, WAC=California). Dates are the employment dates listed on the EAD. Results granted or denied: must attach copy of EAD or denial.

Question 16: Reason code is (c)(3)(B).

Question 17: Leave blank.

Photo Specifications
- *passport style
- *white background
- *pencil name on back of photos.
- *photos taken in last 30 days

Sample Check

Joe Hoya
123 Bulldog Alley
Washington, DC 20057

Date March 12, 2011

Pay to the order of Department of Homeland Security $380.00

Three hundred eighty and 00/100 Dollars

Memo I-765 File Fee (OPT) Joe Hoya