How to Apply for Post-Completion OPT Checklist

Step 1 – Know your stuff!!

- ☐ Visit https://www.bellevue.edu/student-support/international-services/work-permits and watch the Employment Workshops in Blackboard for details. Meet with your immigration advisor if you have questions.
- ☐ Know the time frame!
  - o **Start Early:** ISS processing can take up to 2 weeks & USCIS **processing can take 2-5 months.** You may lose some OPT authorization time if the processing times last longer than 60 days following your degree completion.
    - ▪ Students may apply for post-completion OPT **up to 90 days before or up to 60 days** after their program end date. You may request and receive your OPT I-20 earlier than 90 days before your degree completion, but you must not submit your application to USCIS until you have entered the 90-day window.
    - ▪ All I-20s will be shortened to reflect actual program end dates, if necessary
    - ▪ Degree completion program end dates by term: **Fall – November 30; Winter – March 15; Spring – June 15; Summer – August 25**

IMPORTANT: Do NOT file your OPT application with USCIS if you have not received your OPT Recommendation I-20 AND you have entered the valid window of time described above.

Step 2 – Gather the required documents

- ☐ **Signed Academic Verification Form** (signed by you and your student coach through DocuSign – Ask your Immigration Advisor to send this so you can begin this)
- ☐ **Passport page**(s) showing your name, photo, and expiration date
- ☐ **Most recent Electronic I-94 record** (https://i94.cbp.dhs.gov); or paper I-94 card (front and back)
- ☐ **Visa** (most recently used when last entering the U.S.)
- ☐ Any **previously issued Employment Authorization Documents** (EADs), if any (front and back)
- ☐ Any **previously issued OPT and/or CPT I-20s**, if applicable

ISS recommends online filing. If you choose to apply by mail, additional documents and fees will apply. Please request more details from your immigration advisor if you plan to file by mail.

Step 3 - Submit All Documents & Make an Appointment

Once you've prepared all documents from Step 2 and have the completed Academic Verification Form completed, set up an appointment with your immigration advisor in ISS:

- Send an email to your immigration advisor (if you don't know who your immigration advisor is, please email iss@bellevue.edu). In the body of the email, let us know that you have all documents prepared for the OPT application and are requesting an appointment. See step 4 for details on the OPT Appointment.
- ISS cannot process OPT applications on a drop-in basis. However, if you prefer, you can drop in to see if an advisor is available for general questions and set up an appointment with them in person.

Your OPT I-20 request will not be finalized until you complete the OPT appointment.
Do NOT file your OPT application with USCIS if you have not been issued an OPT Recommendation I-20!

Step 4 - Come prepared to your ISS OPT appointment

- **Your OPT I-20 request will not be finalized until you complete this appointment.** During your appointment, your ISS immigration advisor verifies your F-1 status and OPT eligibility. An OPT I-20 will be created if you are eligible for OPT. **Do NOT file your OPT application if you have not been issued an OPT-Recommendation I-20!**
- **BEFORE YOUR APPOINTMENT**
    1. **Set up your myUSCIS account –** Go to https://my.uscis.gov/ and click "Sign Up". Follow the steps to set up an account.
    2. If you are requesting that your immigration advisor review your application, **you must have a draft of it saved to your myUSCIS account BEFORE your scheduled appointment**. Complete as much as possible and come to your appointment with any questions. Start your draft by selecting "File a Form Online" once signed in. Select I-765 as the form and select "C-3-B Student Post-Completion OPT" as the eligibility category. **Do not submit the application until after your appointment! You must have the updated I-20 first**.
- **BRING TO YOUR APPOINTMENT**
    - ☐ **All documents listed in step 2**
    - ☐ **Payment Method - $470 to USCIS** (Credit or debit card OR Bank Account and Routing Numbers)
    - ☐ **Passport style photographs** _taken within 30 days_ (US passport photo guidelines) – For the online application, you will need a digital copy. Be sure to request JPEG or PNG format.
    - ☐ Bring either your laptop or a draft of your I-765 to the meeting.
        - If you choose not to have a review of your form I-765, please let your immigration advisor know this during the meeting.
- Complete the **OPT 12-Month Responsibilities Acknowledgement Form** via DocuSign (sent by your immigration advisor through email). This may be sent during your appointment, but you must complete this step as soon as possible upon receipt.

Step 5 – Submit your online application

You must have your OPT application receipted by the USCIC **within 30 days of recommendation**. This means that the USCIS must have received the application and issued a "Receipt Note" within 30 days of the date the immigration advisor entered the recommendation in SEVIS. Online applications will be receipted immediately upon submission of the application and fee payment (NOTE: payment processing can take up to 48 hours).

- ☐ Submit your online application through your myUSCIS account. Your ISS immigration advisor can assist you with this process, if you'd like
- ☐ Premium Processing: USCIS offers premium processing of I-765 applications for an additional fee of $1,655. This is OPTIONAL. You may add this to the application at the time of filing or add it after filing. Please let your immigration advisor know if you have any questions about adding premium processing to your application.

The US Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) ultimately provides the decision on your OPT application. It is your responsibility, as the OPT applicant, to ensure that your OPT application is accurate and complete before you submit it to the US government. Incomplete applications could result in a delay in processing time or denial. Bellevue University in no event shall be held liable for any delay, denial, or mistake on your OPT application.