RIT

# Applying for OPT

## International Student Services

# How to Apply for OPT online

*Do not submit an online application if you have already filed by mail.*

**Please use these instructions as a guide. These instructions are for post-completion OPT (eligibility code c3B) only.**

**This resource is not offered as legal advice. Your OPT application remains your own, and any errors in your application are YOUR responsibility.**

## Students who wish to apply for Optional Practical Training (OPT) must complete a two-part application process:

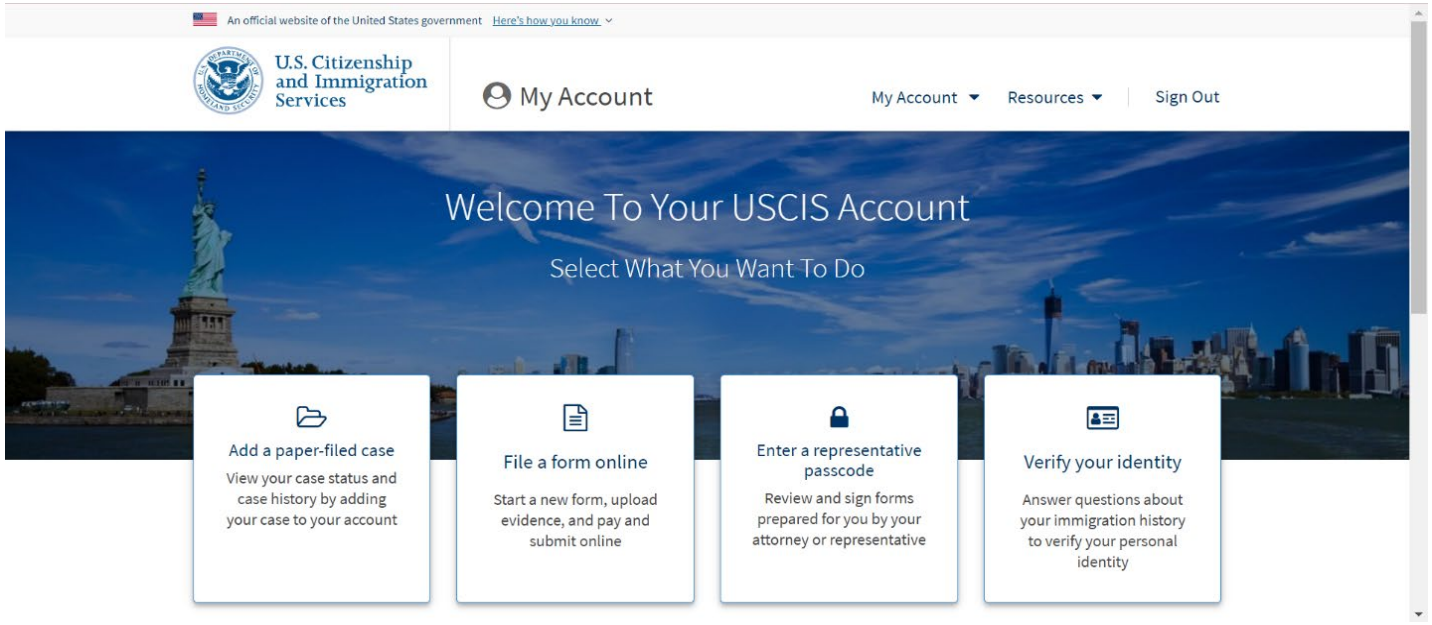
1. Request an updated I-20 recommending Post-Completion OPT using this **OPT REQUEST FORM**. Please submit this form to ISS no more than 90 days before your I-20 program end date. **Please allow 7-10 business days for processing.** The ISS advisor processing your I-20 will email it to you when it is ready.
2. Once you receive your OPT I-20, complete the online application following the instructions below. ***USCIS must receive your application online within 30 days of the creation of the OPT I-20. We strongly recommend that you keep a copy of your complete OPT application for your records.***

# Gather and Scan Required Documentation

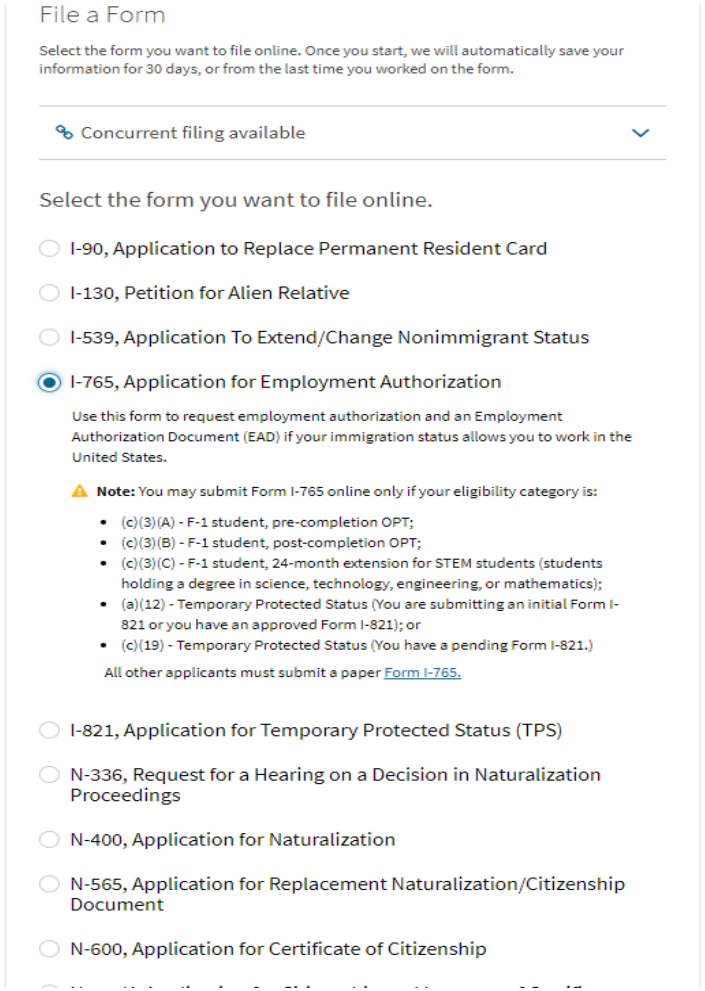
- **Passport style photograph**. Photos must be taken within the last 30 days and cannot have previously been used for a passport, visa, or other US government-related application. See Department of State's guidelines.
- **Form I-94**: Provide a copy of your most recent I-94 arrival/admission record from CBP's website. Do not include the travel history page, only the I-94 with your name and most recent admission details.
- One of the following: **Previously-issued Employment Authorization Document (EAD)** (scans of both front and back) OR **Government-Issued ID (passport)** if you have never been issued an EAD. The copy you submit must clearly show your facial features and contain your biographical information.
- **I-20 Recommending OPT** - be sure you have signed and dated page 1.
- **Copies of any previously authorized CPT and OPT**, including any from previous schools. **As of 11/29/21, ISS no longer recommends you submit copies of every single I-20, only those specifically requested on the USCIS online application pages (previous CPT/OPT, new OPT recommendation).**

# Create a USCIS account and then file for OPT online

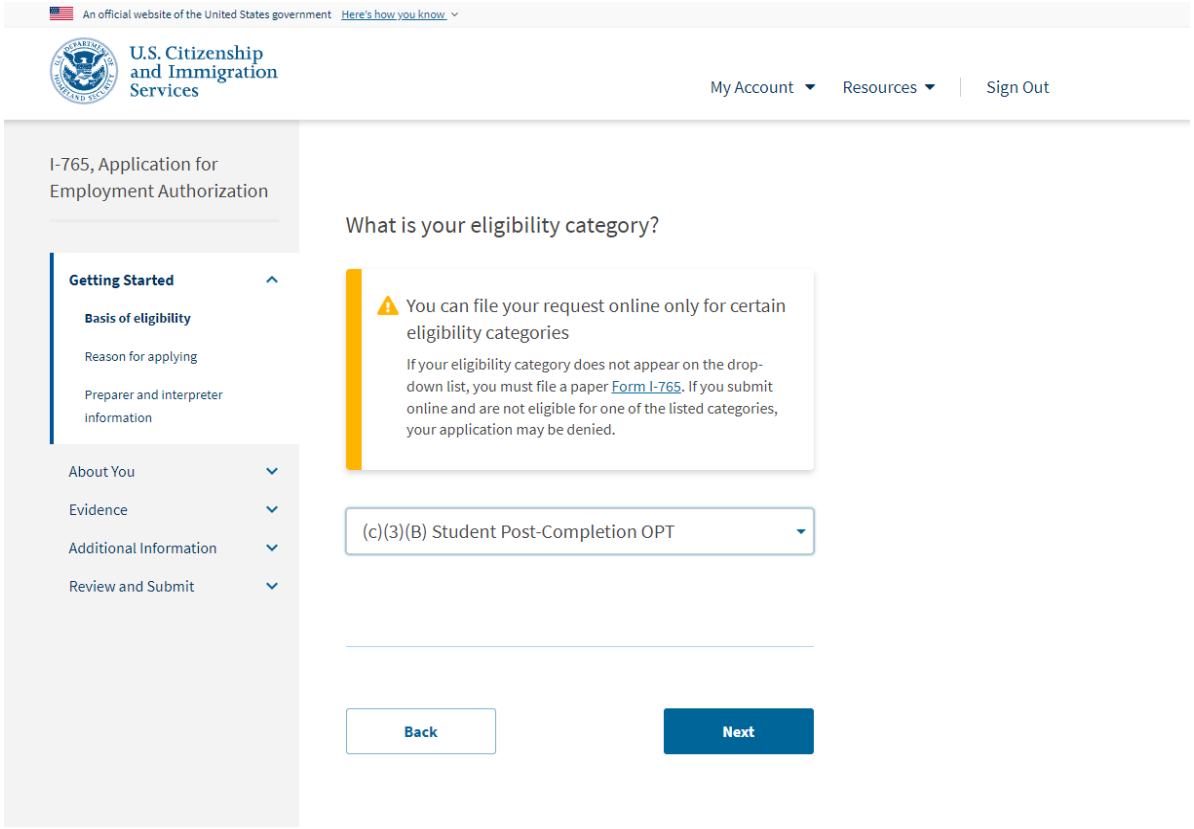
## After creating your account, select "*File a form online*" on the landing page:



# Then select "*I-765, Application for Employment Authorization*"



# Basis of Eligibility




If you are applying for work authorization that begins after you graduate or once you are course-complete and completing your thesis, capstone, or project, select **(c)(3)(B) Student Post-Completion OPT**

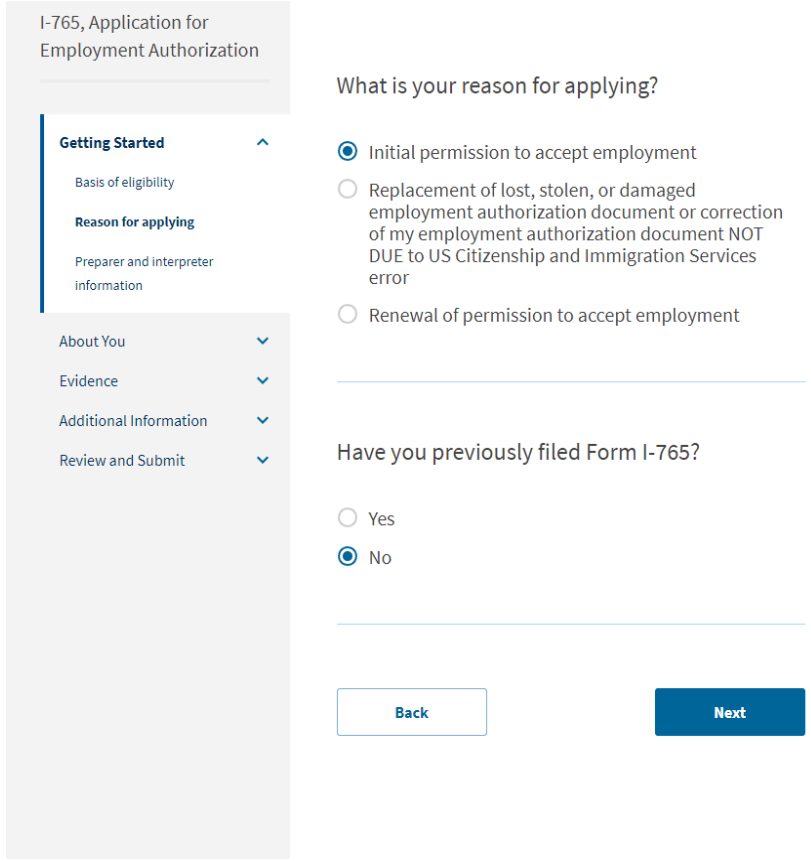
# Reason for Applying

## What is your reason for applying?

- Select “Initial Permission to accept employment”. If you lost your EAD and are applying for a new card, select "replacement of lost, stolen, or damaged employment authorization document” NOT DUE to US Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) error.

## Have you previously filed Form I-765?

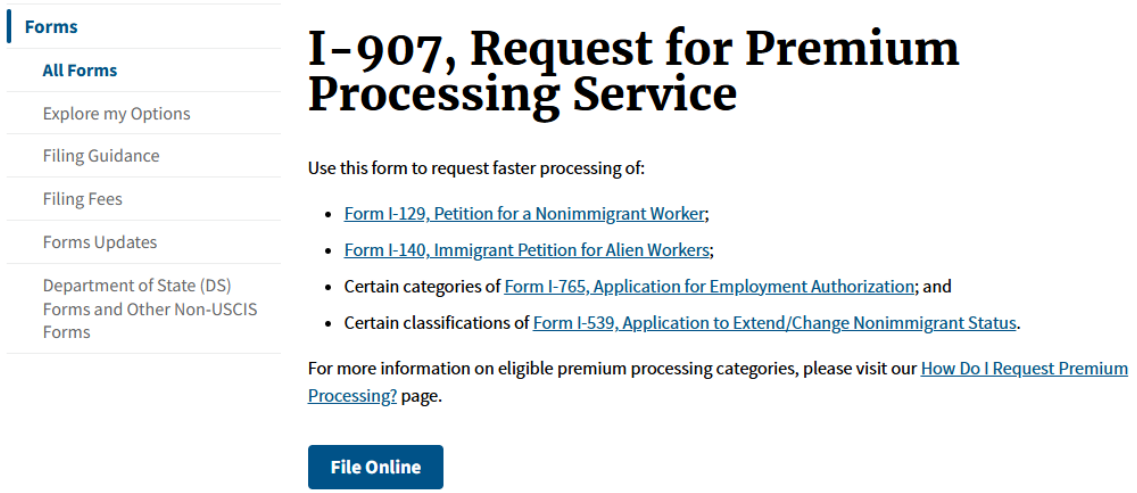
- Select “No” if you have only ever worked on campus or been authorized for CPT, or if you have not previously worked.
- Select “Yes” if you have previously applied for OPT or ever submitted the I-765 for work authorization to the US Citizenship and Immigration Services



# Premium Processing Fee

**OPTIONAL:**

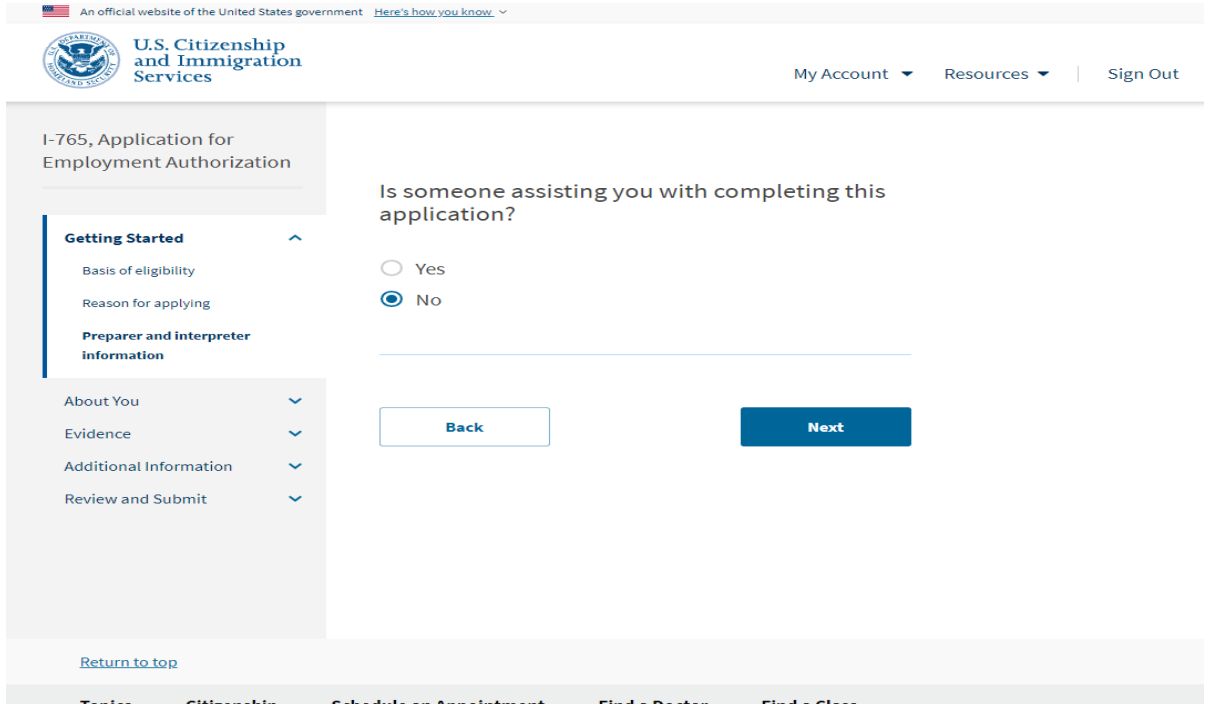
- USCIS has introduced a Premium Processing fee option for OPT applications for an additional fee and a case decision in 30 business days
- Premium Processing can help students who are applying for OPT and have a time sensitive deadline to receive the EAD before starting work.
- Please consult with an International Student Services advisor if you have questions and before requesting Premium Processing.
- Fee for Fall 2026: $1,780(Premium Processing) + $470(Regular Application Fee) = $2,250



# Preparer and Interpreter Information

## Is someone assisting you with completing this application?

Select “No”



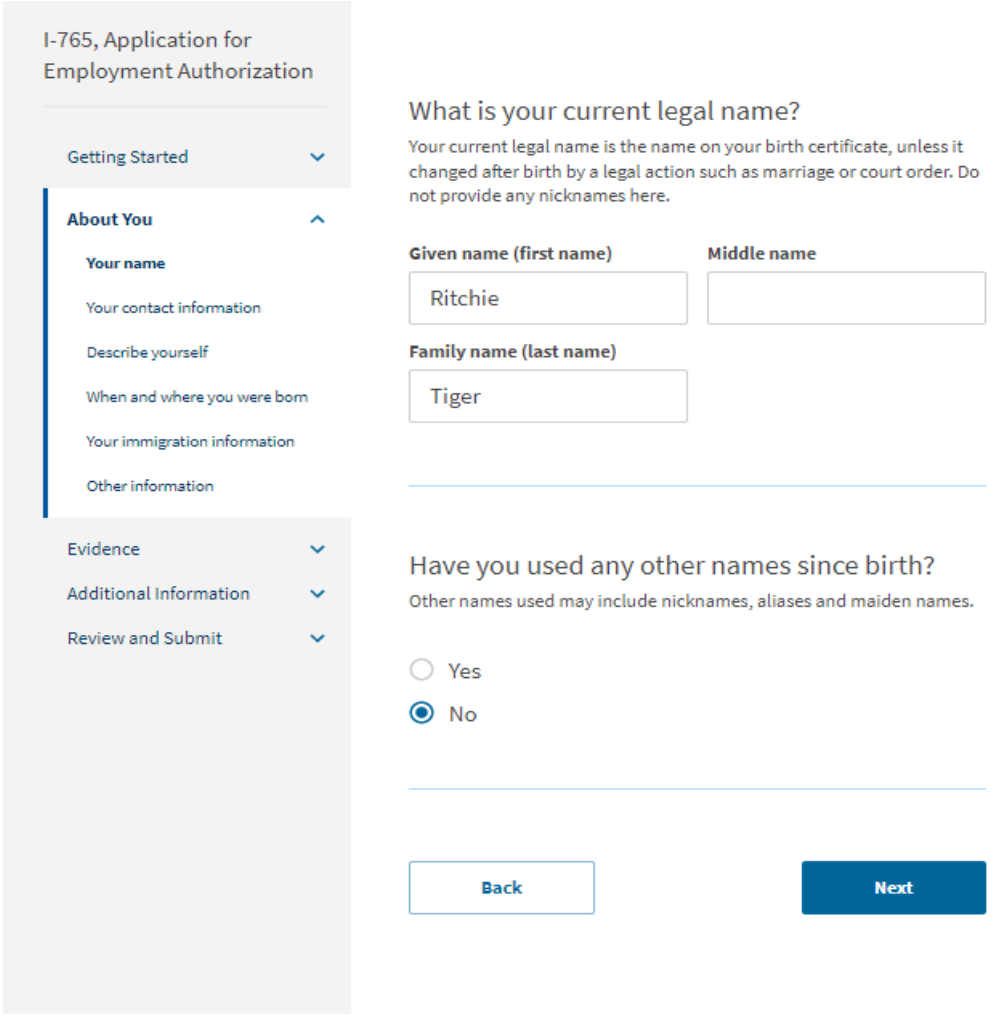
# About You

**What is your current legal name?**

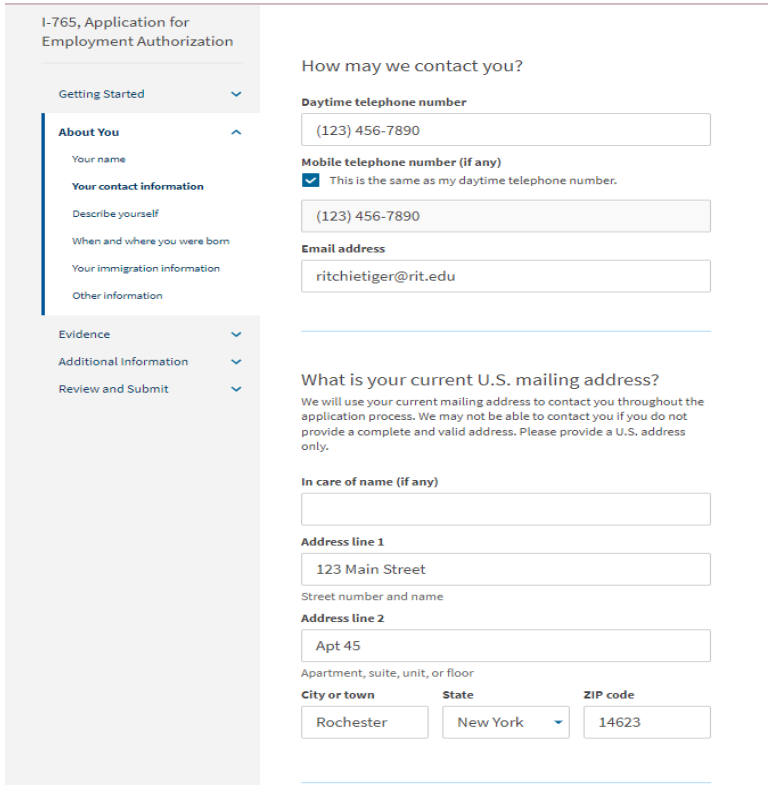
This name should match what is indicated on your passport. If you do not have a middle name you should leave the box blank; do NOT put N/A.

**Have you used any other names since birth?**

- If No, select “No” and continue to the next section.
- If Yes, select “Yes” and provide all other names you have ever used, including aliases, maiden name, and nicknames.



# Your Contact Information




## How May We Contact You?

Enter your phone number and your mobile phone number (if different). If the numbers are the same, you can click “this is the same as my daytime telephone number”. Enter your email address (we recommend using a personal email address).

## What is your current mailing address?

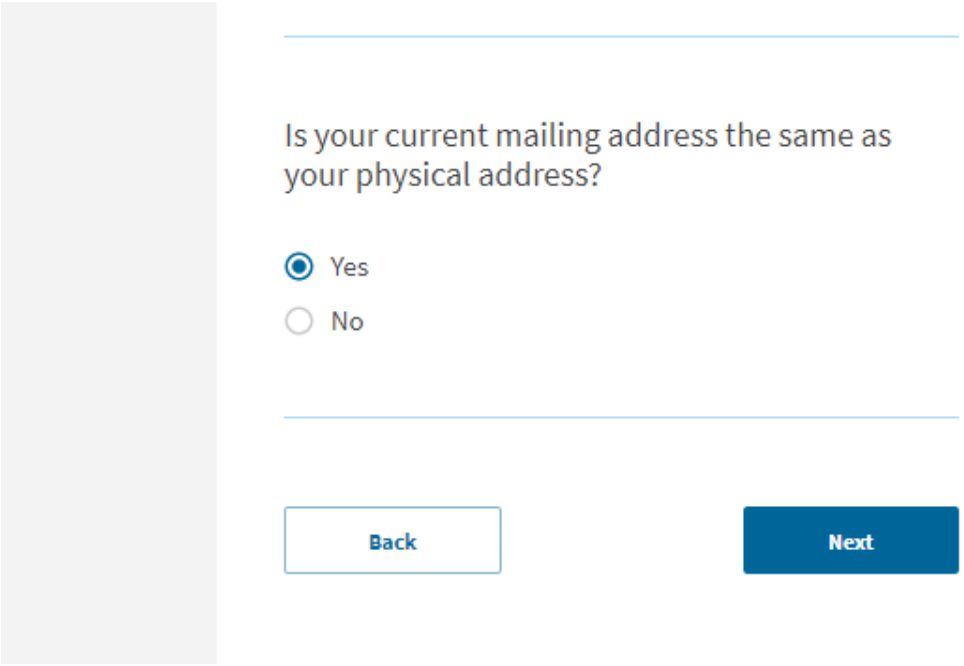
Enter the mailing address where you wish to receive your EAD Card. The address must be within the US and should be valid for next 3-6 months until your OPT application is approved. If you believe you will change addresses within the next three months we recommend you instead list the address of a trusted friend or family member. If you choose to enter your friend’s or family member’s address, you must also include an “in care of” name. You may list a US Post Office address (PO Box) if you have one. Please **do not use the ISS address.**

# Your Contact Information

**Is your current mailing address the same as your physical address?**

Check "Yes" if your mailing address (where you would like your notices/EAD card from USCIS to be sent to) is the same as your physical address (where you live).

Check "No" if it is not the same. If you check "No," you must then write your current address you live at in the "Where in the United States do you live?" question that will appear on your screen.



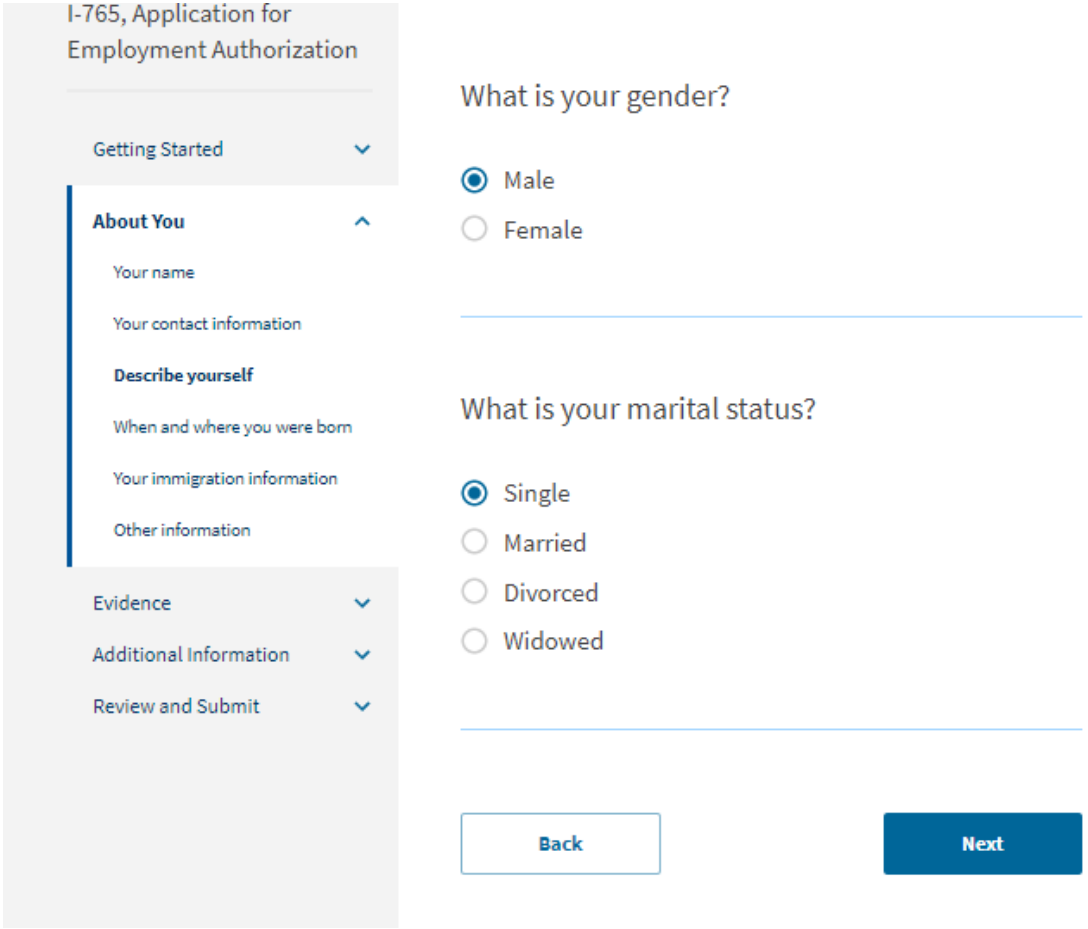
# Describe Yourself

**What is your gender?**

Mark the box that best describes you.

**What is your marital status?**

Mark the box that best describes you.



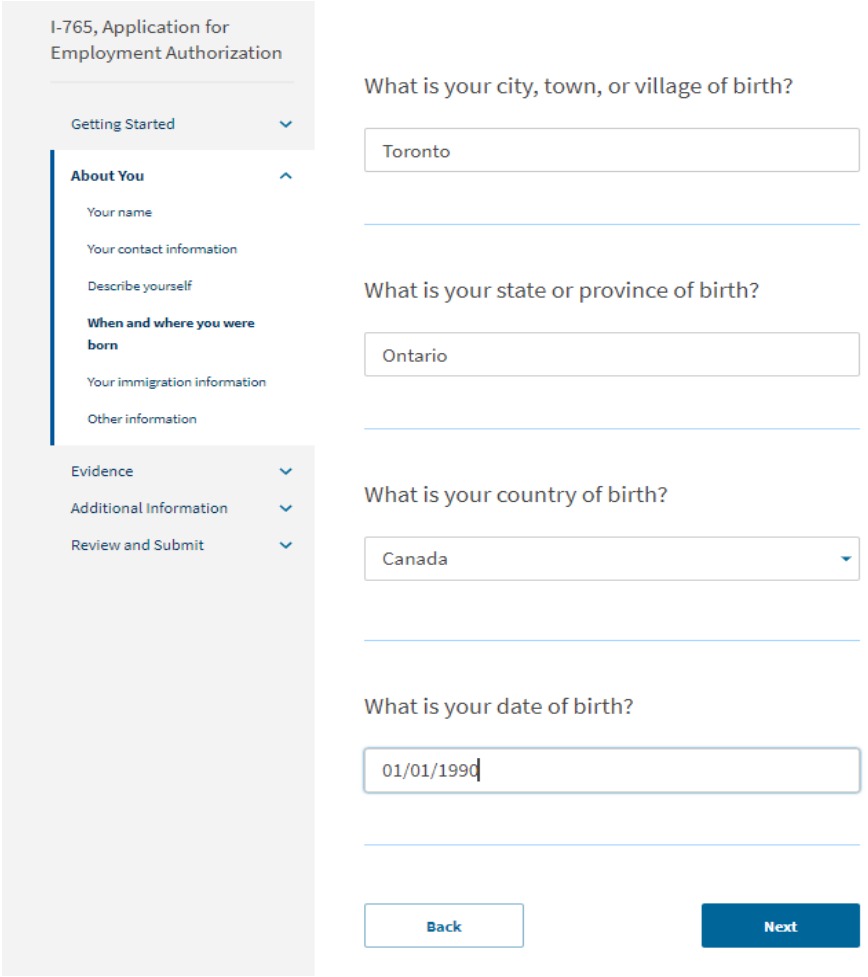
# When and Where Were You Born?

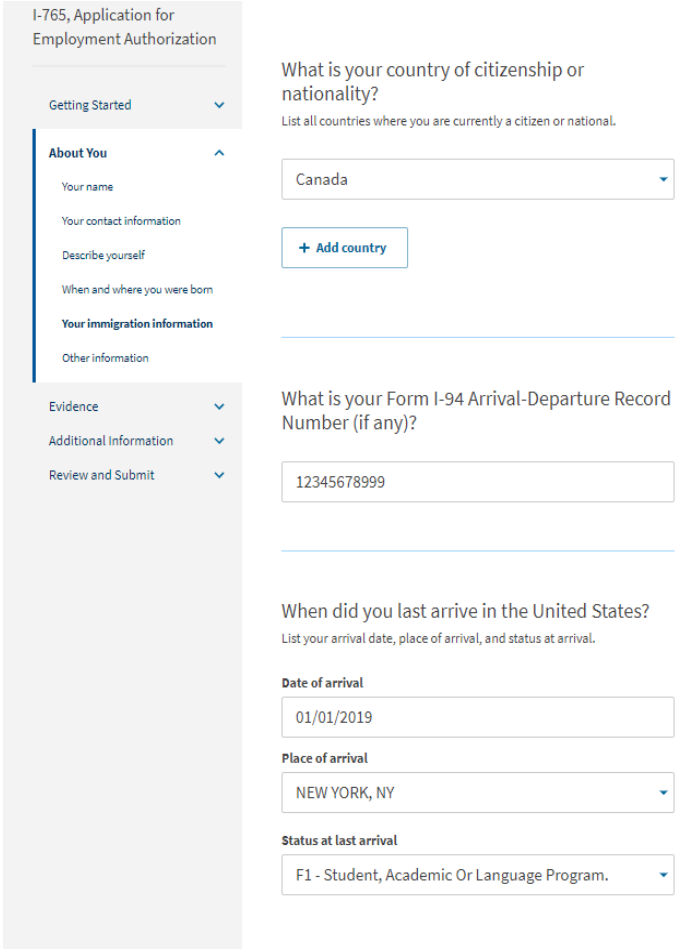
**What is your city, town or village of birth?**
What is your state or province of birth? What is your country of birth?

Fill in your place of birth information.

**What is your date of birth?**

Ensure you've written the date of your birth in MONTH/DAY/YEAR format. For example, if you were born May 07, 1990, you would enter 05/07/1990.






# Your Immigration Information

## What is your country of citizenship or nationality?

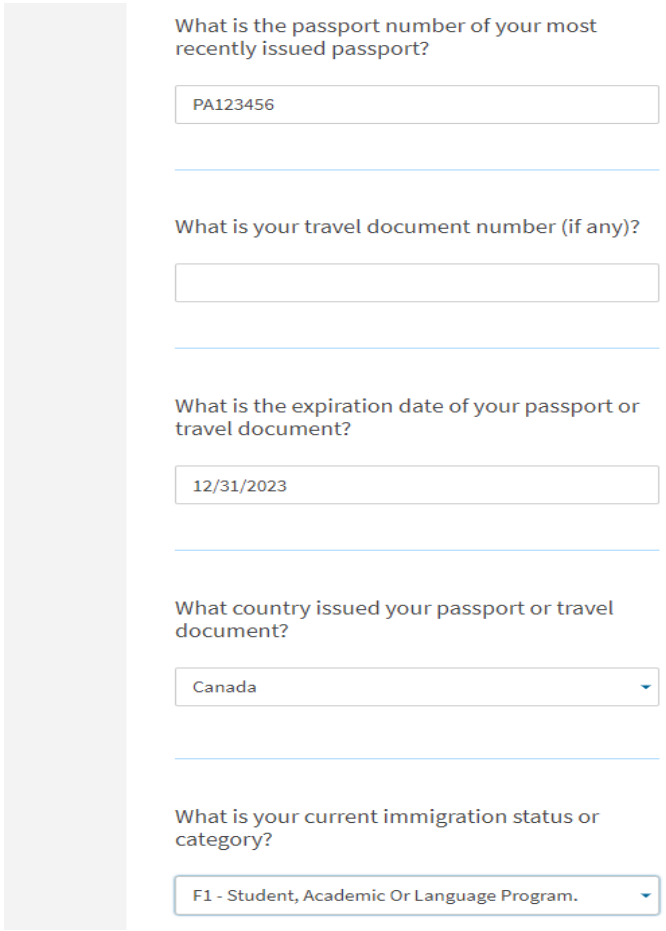
Type the name of the country or countries where you are currently a citizen or national. If you are a citizen or national of more than one country, select + Add Country to add all of the countries where you hold citizenship.

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

This information can be found on your most recent I-94 record under Admission Number. You can access your most recent I-94 at here.

## When did you last arrive in the United States?

List your arrival date, place of arrival, and status at arrival per your most recent I-94 record. If your ‘status’ listed says anything other than F-1, please call VIS for information about getting this information corrected.




**What is the passport number of your most recently issued passport?**

Enter the passport number, found on the biography page of your currently-valid passport.

**What is your travel document number (if any)?**

Leave this blank.

**What is the expiration date of your passport or travel document?**

This information can be found on the biography page of your passport. Your passport should have at least 6 months' validity remaining from the date of your application to USCIS. Please speak with an ISS advisor before applying if your passport has expired or will expire within the next 6 months.

**What country issued your passport or travel document?**

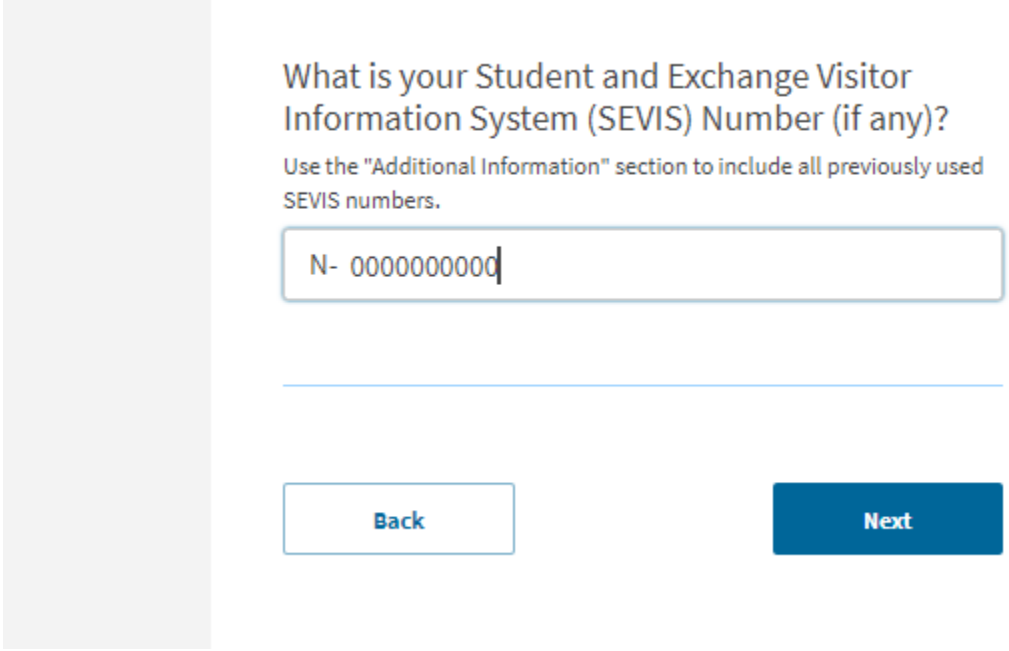
This information can be found on the biography page of your passport.

**What is your current immigration status or category?**

Select “F-1 - Student, Academic or Language Program”

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

Use the SEVIS number listed in the top left corner of your most recently issued I-20. Use the "Additional Information" section to include all previously used SEVIS numbers.



# Other Information

**What is your A-number?**

Either list your A-number (if you have one; most students applying for OPT do not have one) or select “I do not have or know my A-number”. If you were previously approved for OPT, list the USCIS # on your EAD card.

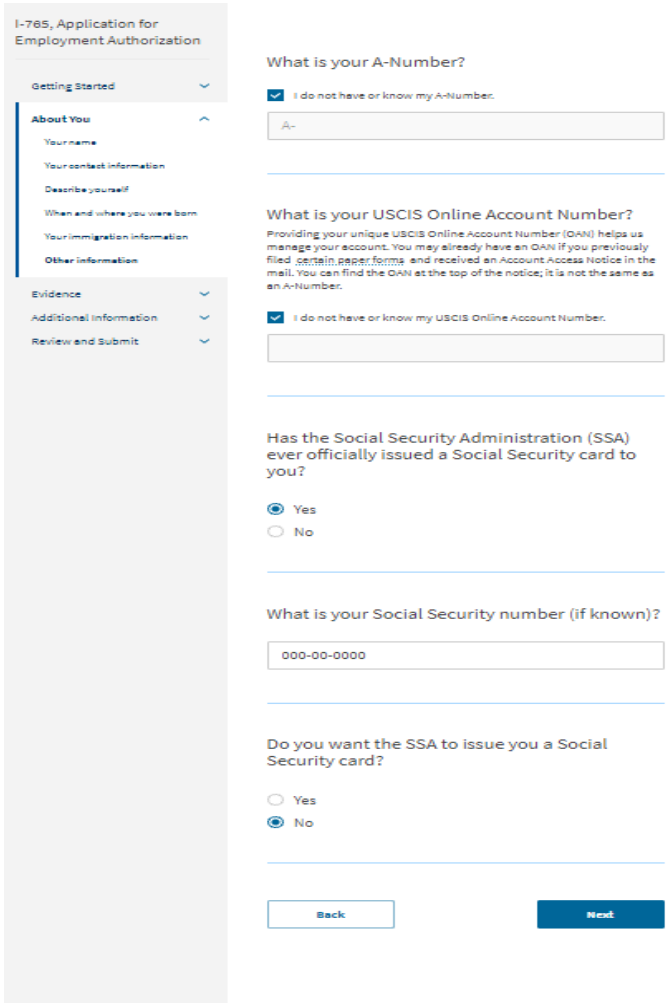
**What is your USCIS Online Account Number?**

Either list your account number (if you have one) or select “I do not have or know my USCIS online account number”.

**Has the Social Security Administration (SSA) ever officially issued a Social Security card to you?**

If Yes, list your social security number in the box provided

If No, select that you would like an SSN card, select “yes” to consent of disclosure” then list your parents’ birth names.
If you need to apply for a SSN, you will need to apply directly to the SSA office.

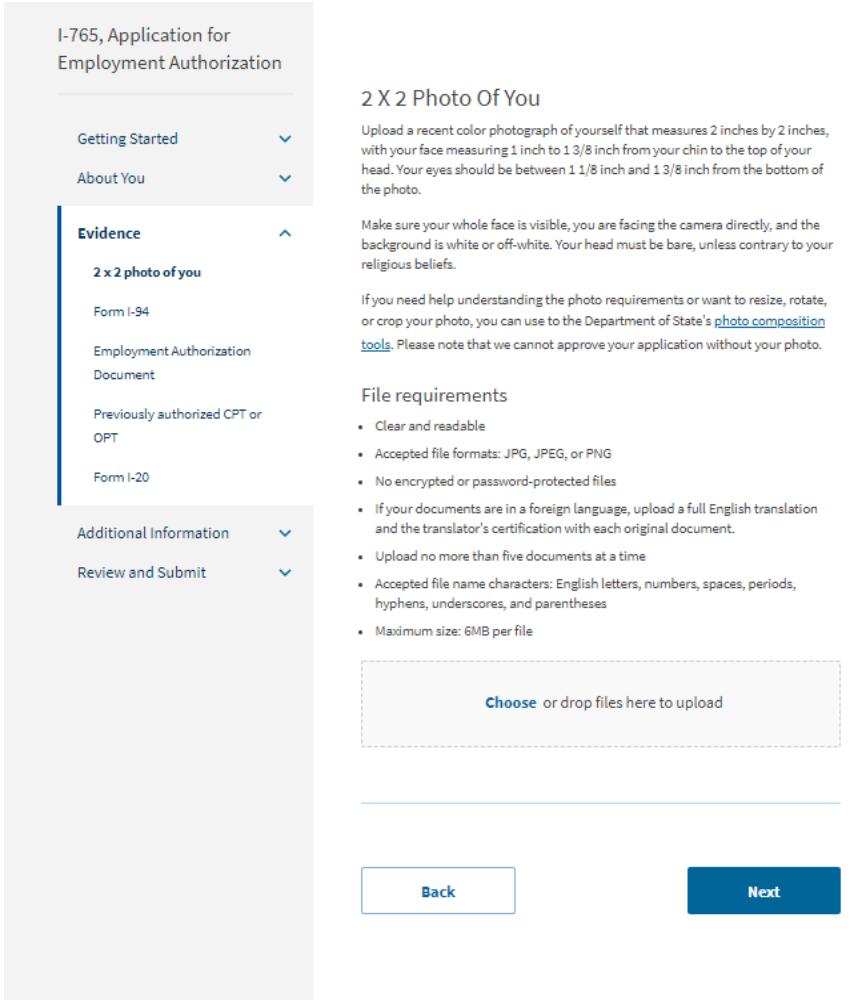


# Evidence

In this section you will be able to upload the supporting documents you previously gathered in preparation for completing the I-765 form.

- **2 x 2 photo:**

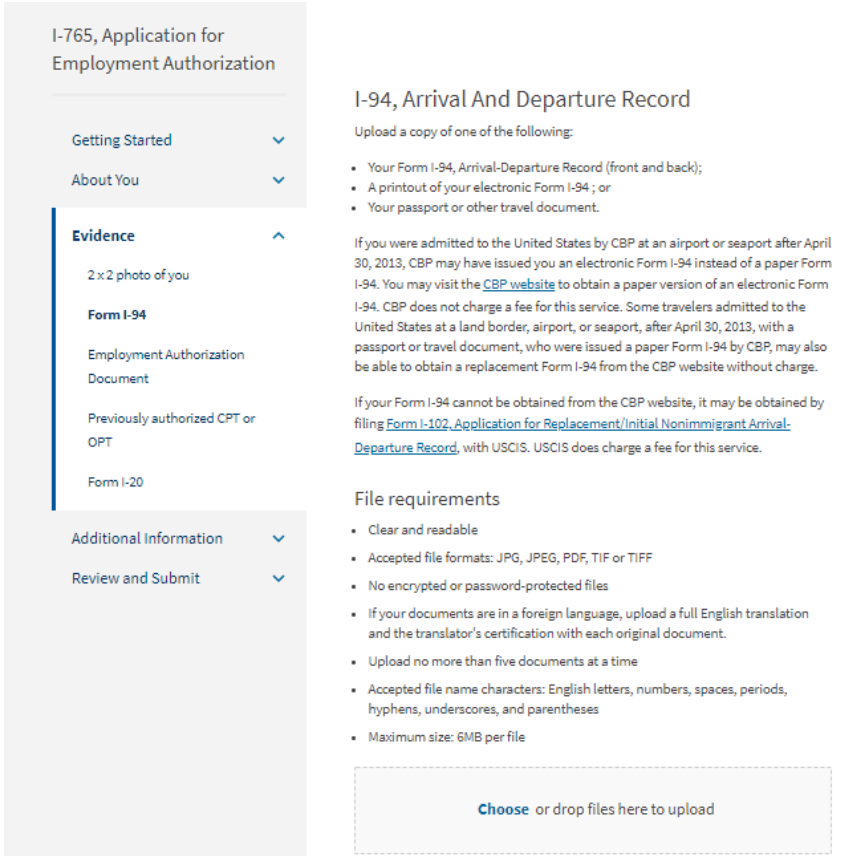
You can use the Department of State's photo composition tools to upload a photo that meets all the requirements.



# Evidence

**Form I-94:**

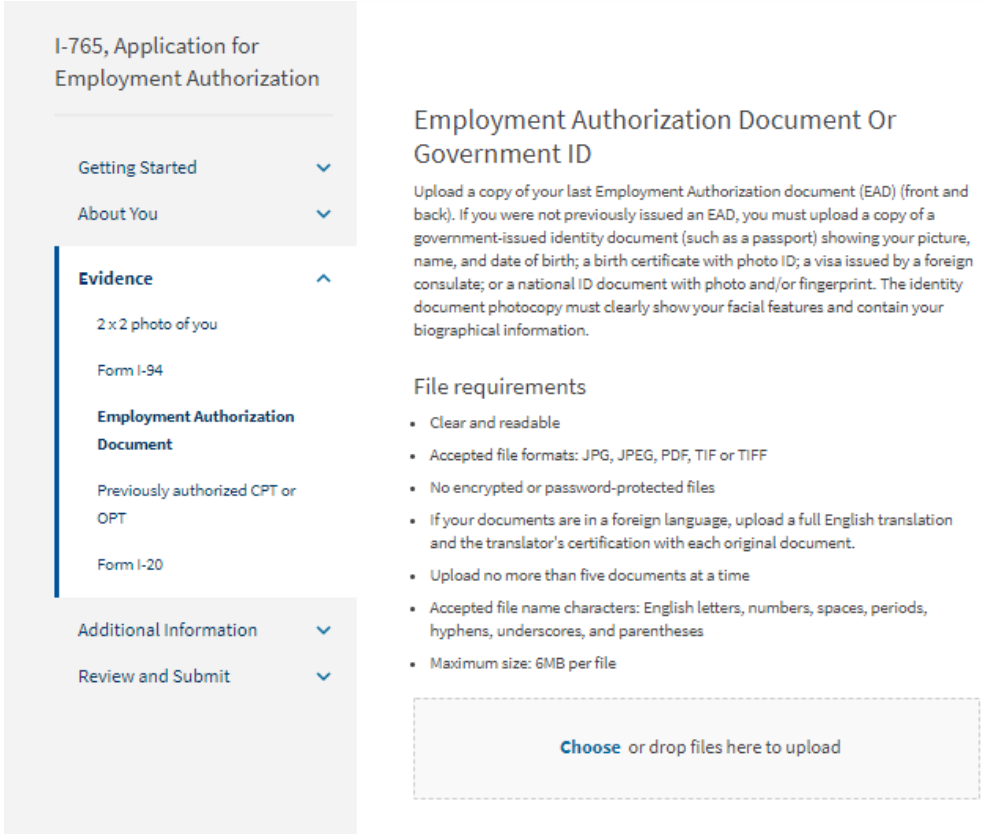
You can find your most recent I-94 on CBP's website by selecting "Get Most Recent I-94". Do not upload your travel history.



# Evidence

**Employment Authorization Document**:

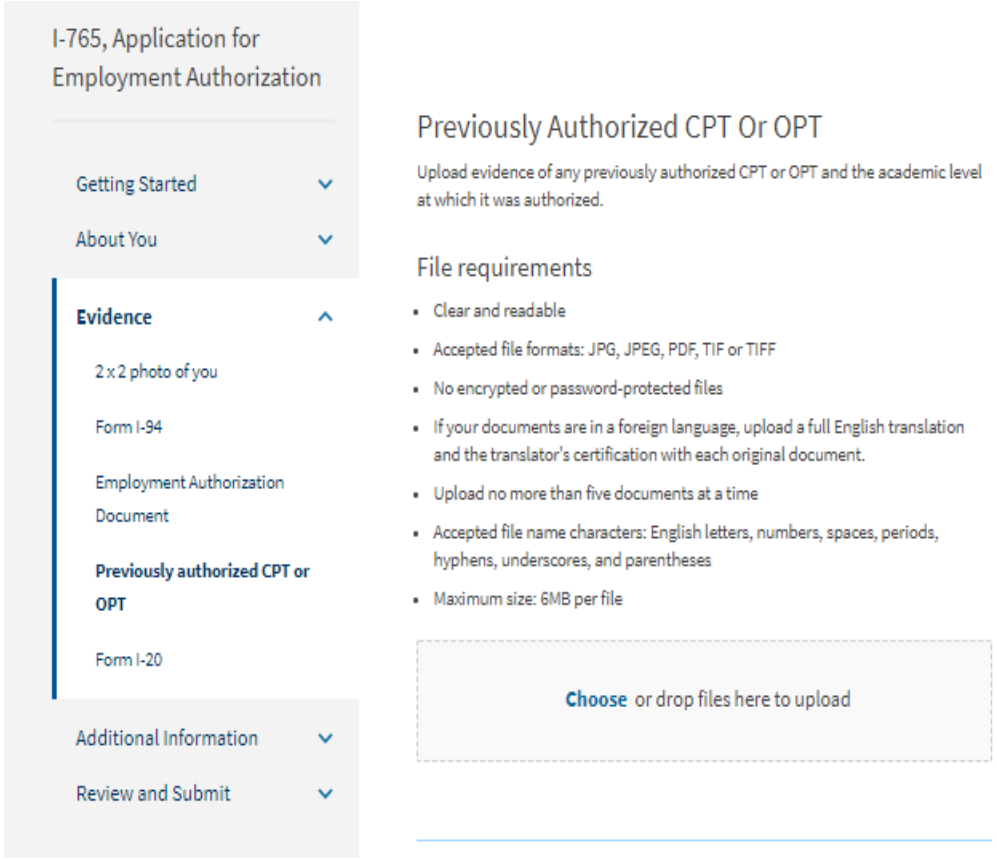
If you have never been issued an EAD before, you should upload your passport or US visa to fulfill this requirement.



# Evidence

**Previously authorized CPT or OPT**:

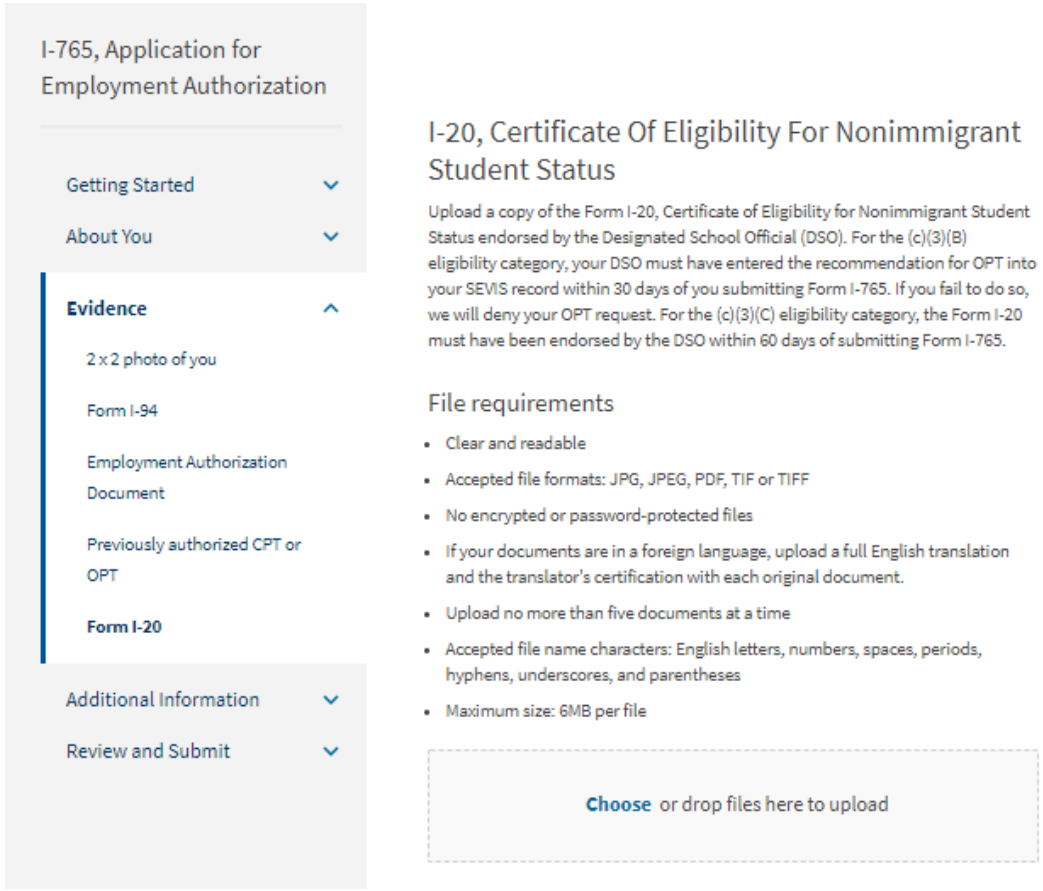
If you have ever been authorized for CPT or OPT previously, upload your I-20s that show those authorizations. If you have never been authorized for CPT or OPT before, you can skip this section.



# Evidence

**Form I-20:**

Upload your I-20 recommending OPT that was recently issued by an ISS advisor. You cannot apply for OPT without the I-20 recommending OPT.

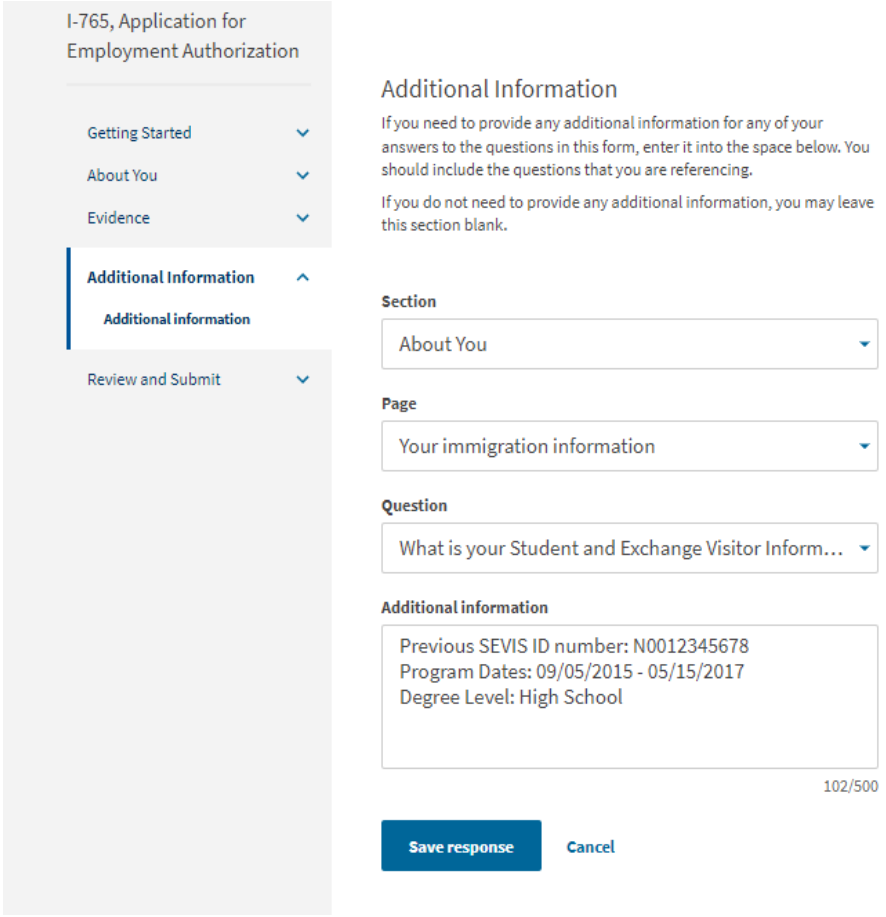


# Additional Information

Include any other additional information you have received that should be included in your OPT application.

**Example #1: If you have a previous SEVIS number**:

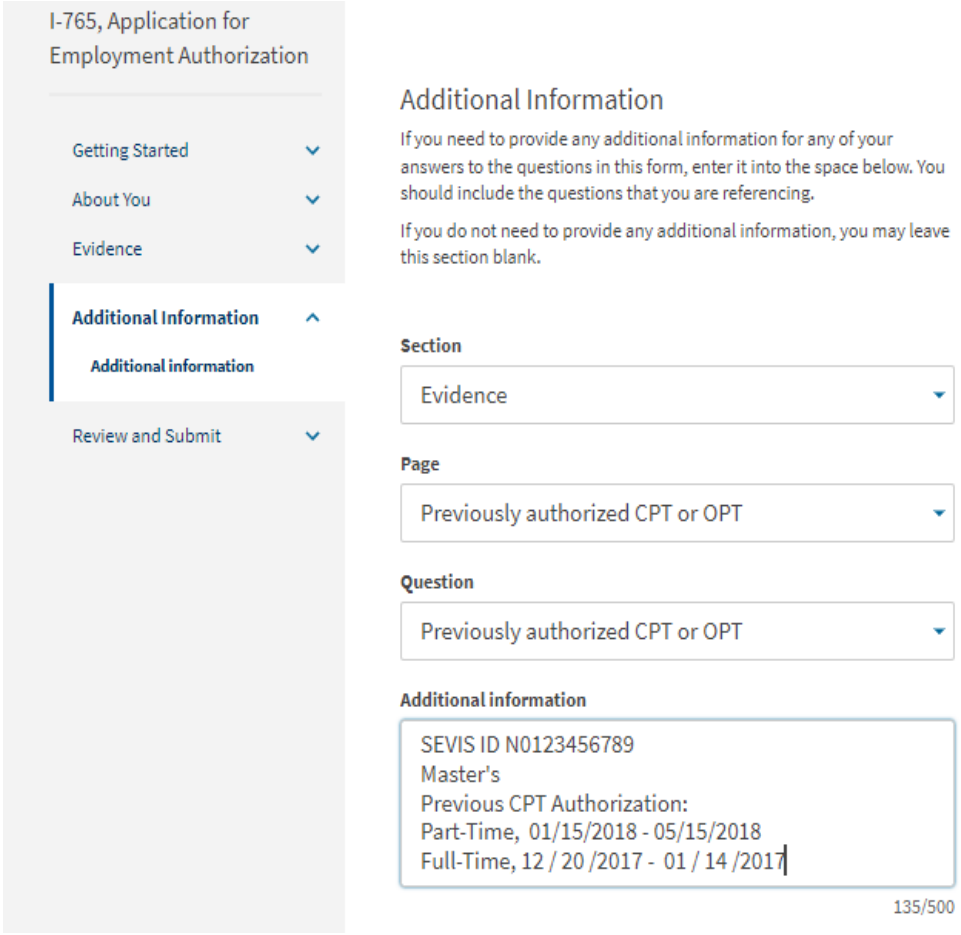
- Section: Select "About You"
- Page: Select "Your immigration information"
- Question: Select "What is your Student and Exchange Visitor Information (SEVIS) Number (if any)?"
- Additional information: Enter your previous SEVIS ID number, degree level, and program dates. A previous SEVIS ID is a SEVIS ID other than what is on your most recently issued I-20. For example:
    - Previous SEVIS ID number: N0012345678
    - Program Dates: 09/05/2015 - 05/15/2017
    - Degree Level: High School



# Additional Information

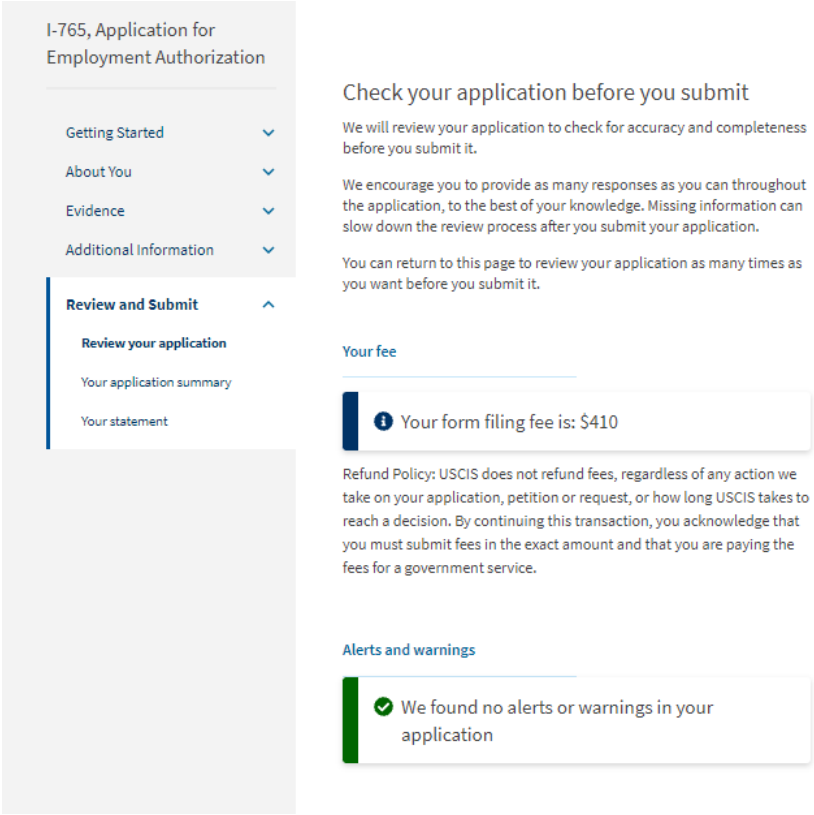
**Example #2: If you have previous CPT or OPT authorization:**

- Section: Select "Evidence"
- Page: "Previously authorized CPT or OPT"
- Question: "Previously authorized CPT or OPT";
- Additional Information: Enter the SEVIS ID, degree level, type of authorization, full- or part-time status, and dates. For example:
  - SEVIS ID N0123456789
  - Master's
  - Previous CPT Authorization:
  - Part-Time, 01/15/2018 - 05/15/2018
  - Full-Time, 12 / 20 /2017 - 01 / 14 /2017



# Review application, submit application, and pay fee

Once you review your application and no errors or incomplete fields pop up, you can submit, confirm you can read and understand English, and then digitally sign your application. You will then be taken to pay.gov to pay the application fee. You can pay with credit card, debit card, or US checking or savings account. No biometrics fee is required, only the I-765 application fee.




Please note that fees change every year.

# Thank You

Questions? www.rit.edu/iss/contact