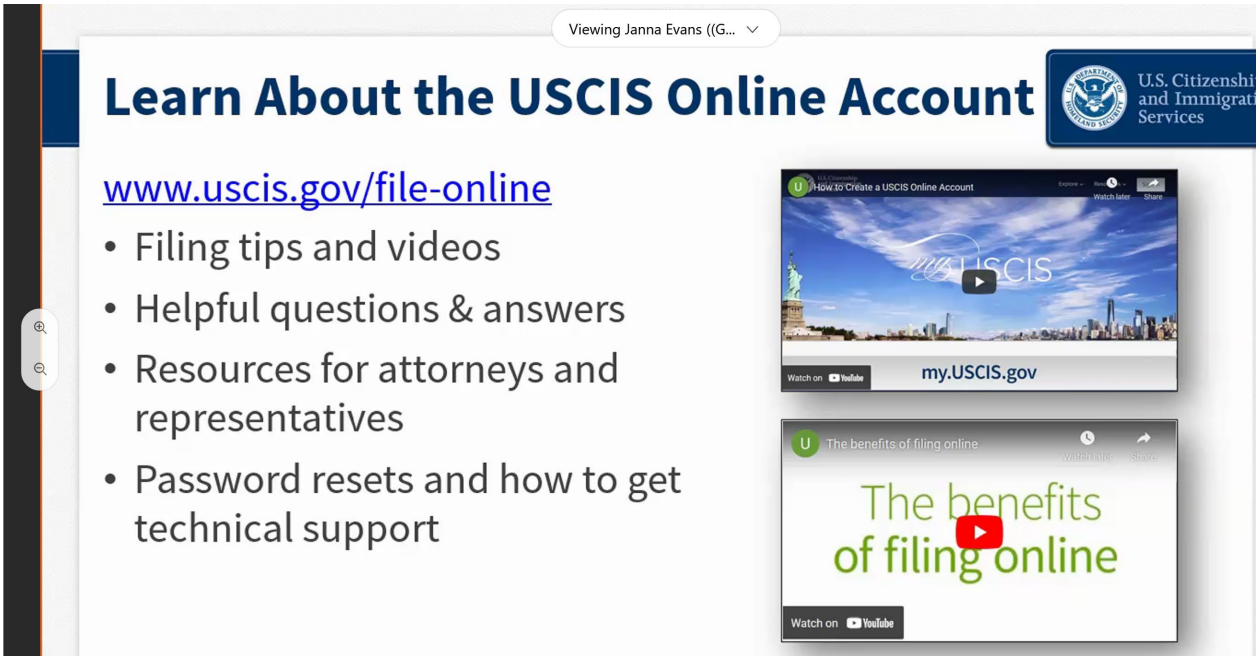
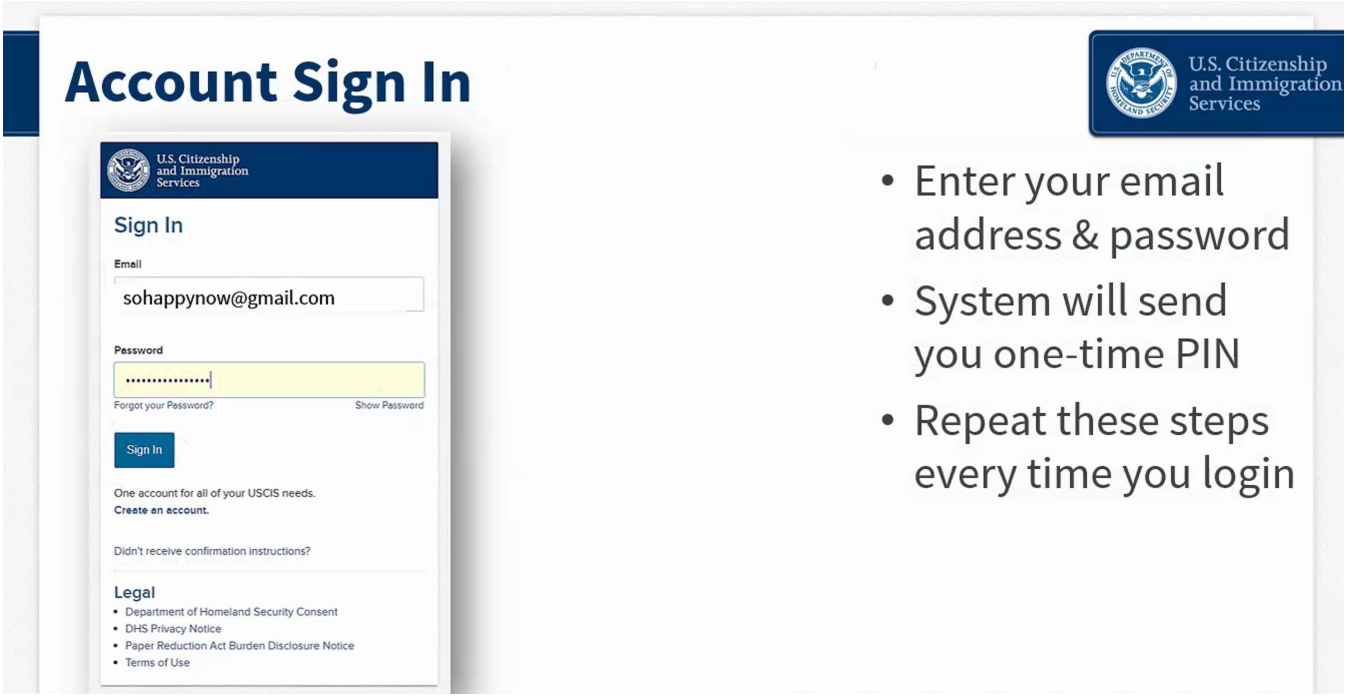
COLGATE UNIVERSITY
Office of International Student Services

Optional Practical Training (OPT)
Online I-765 Step-by-Step Instructions

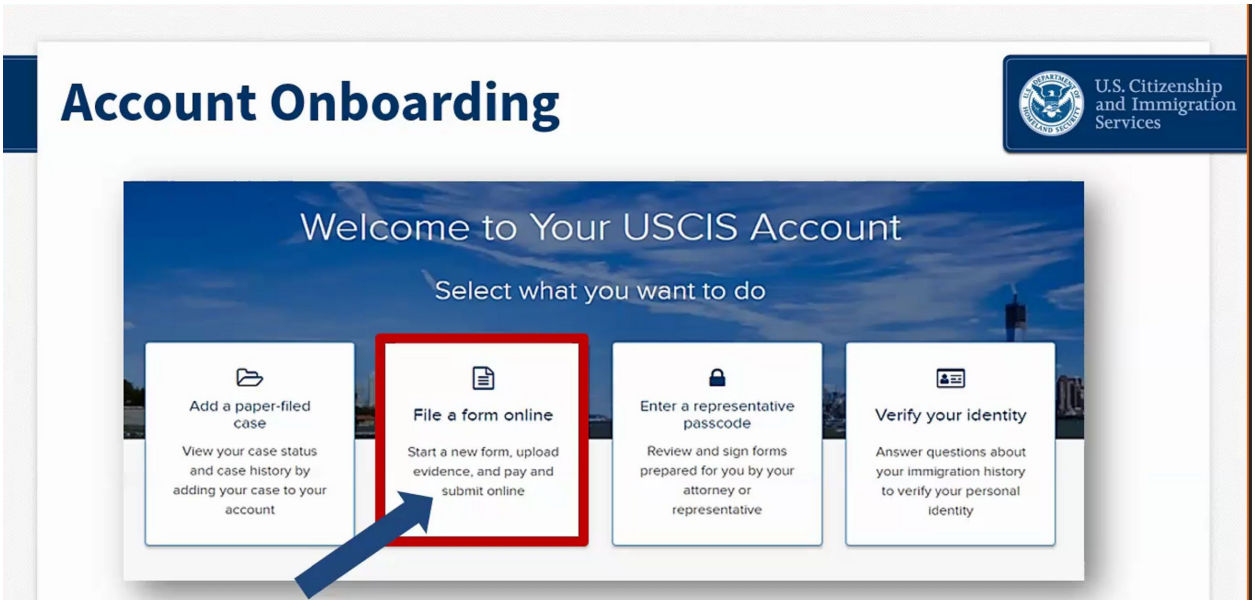
Create your account at https://myaccount.uscis.gov.



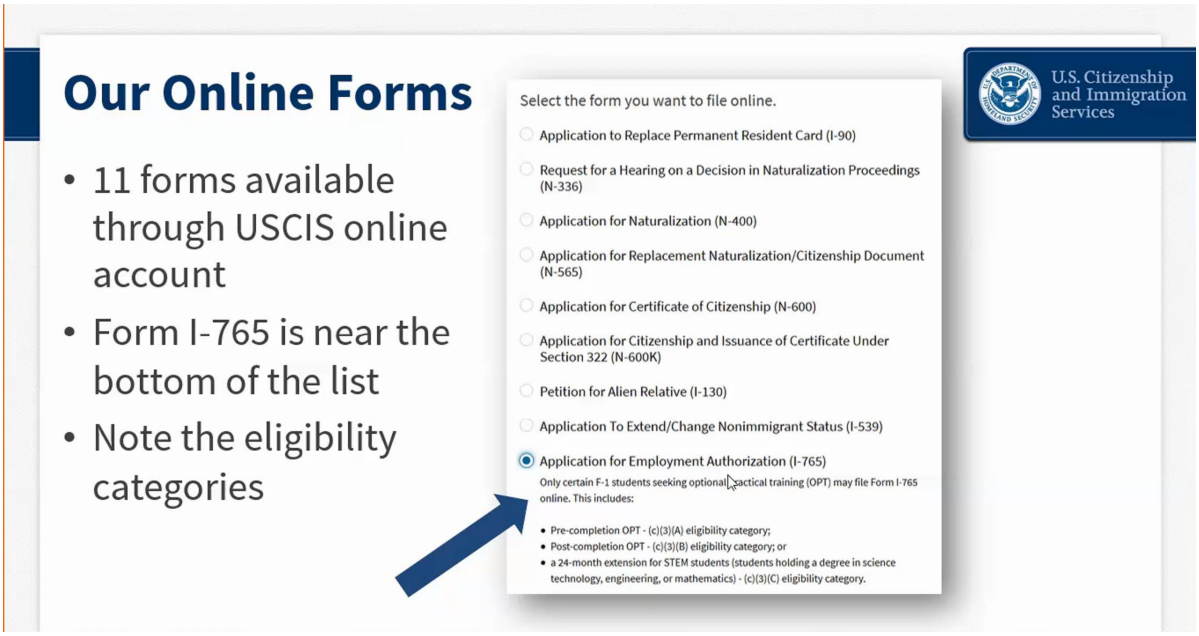
If you need them, there are online help guides available at www.uscis.gov/file-online.



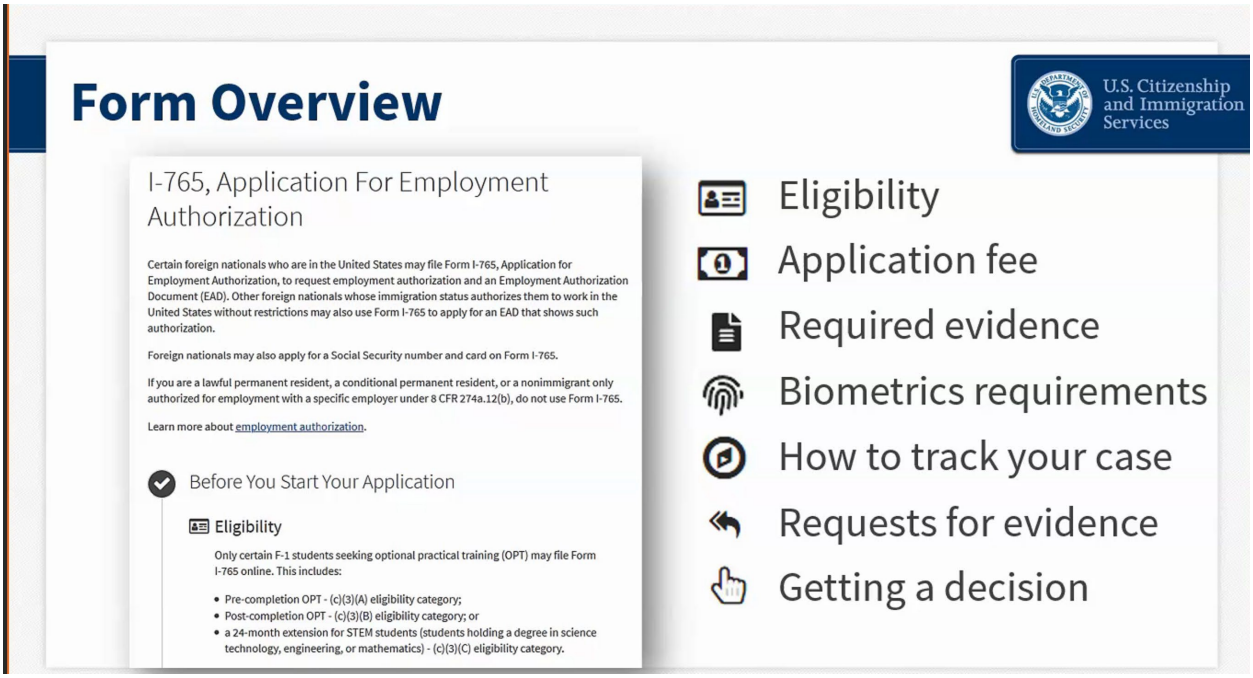
Click on Create an Account to set up your account OR log in to an existing account. **Bookmark this page for easy use later!** If you are setting up an account you may use a **personal non-Colgate email** that youwill have access to forever. That way, you do not need to recreate an account after you leave Colgate.



Once you have logged in, click on "File a form online" to begin your application process.

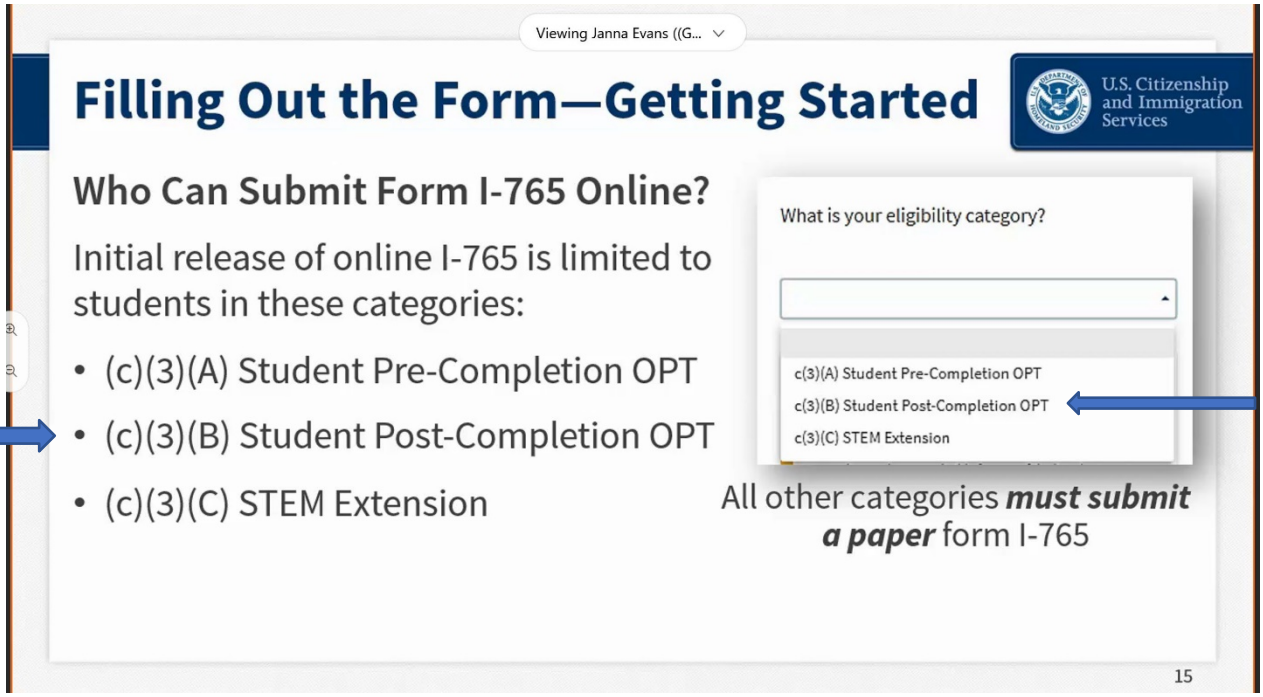


Select "Application for Employment Authorization (I-765)" from the drop down list.

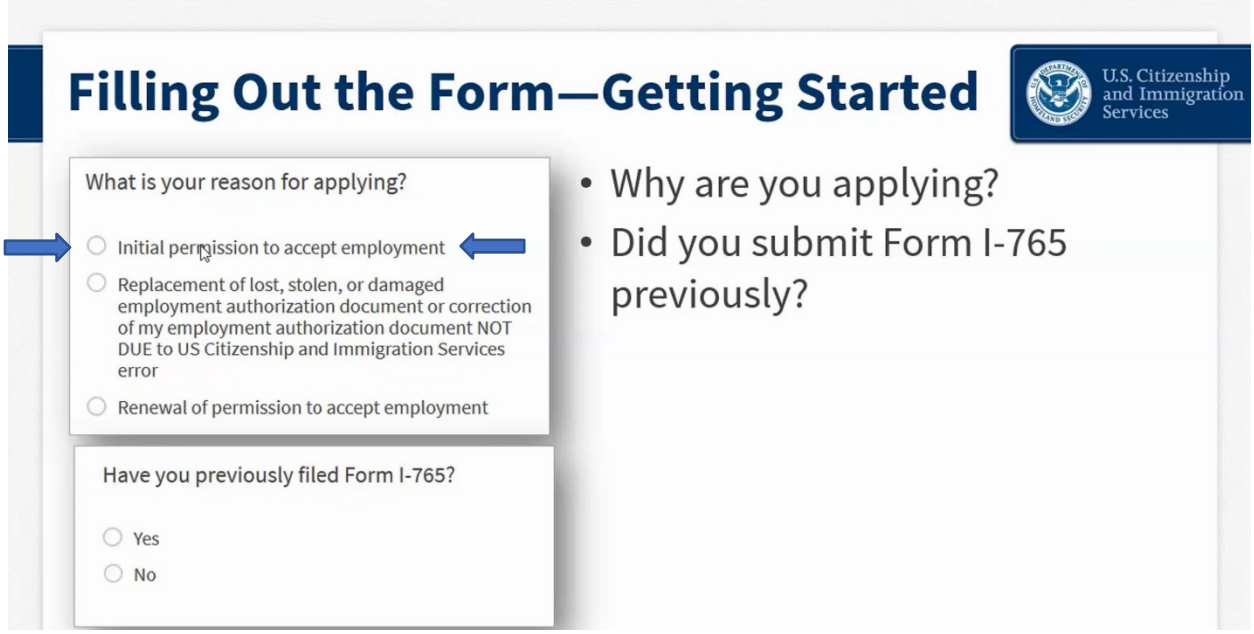


Review the information on this page carefully. It will tell you everything you need to file online. **Make sure you have all the items on the list of required evidence prepared before starting your application**. Answer the form questions in order – do not skip ahead. The form has conditional logic that will display the next set of questions according to your answers.

Go in order so that you only see the questions you need to complete. The form will auto-save your answers in each section.



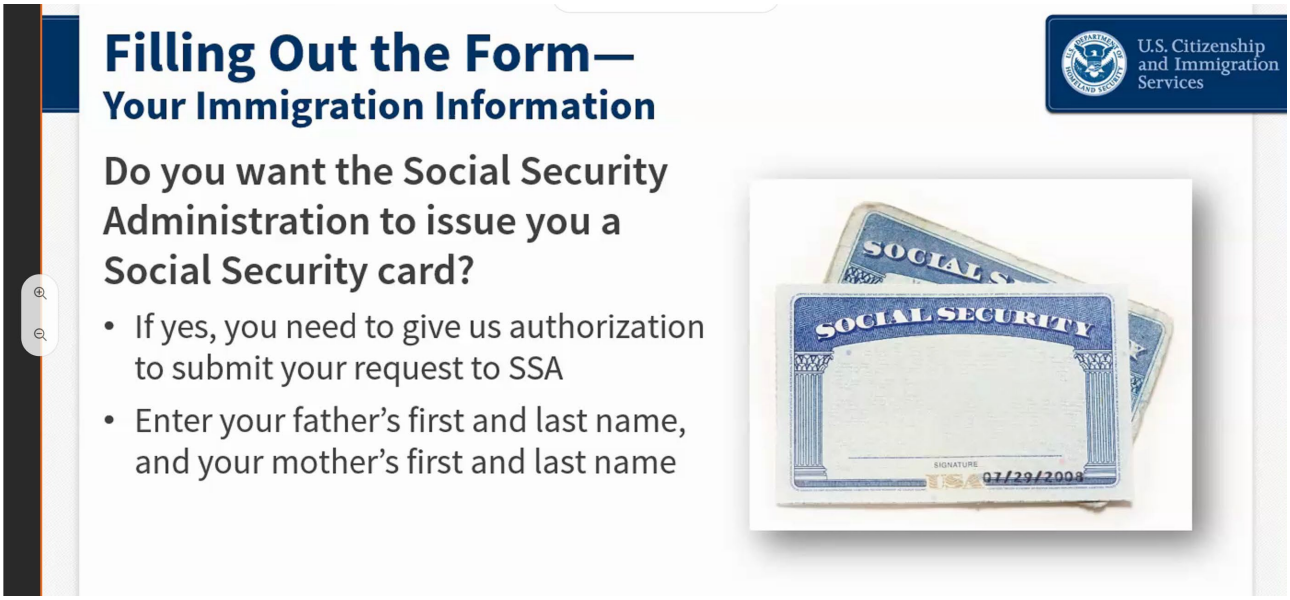
You will be applying for **(c)(3)(B) Student Post-Completion OPT** or **(c)(3)(C) Student STEM Extension OPT**. Make sure you select correct category.



You must select **"Initial permission to accept employment."** If you have ever filed form I-765 before (even if it was denied), you must say Yes.

Remember: you can only apply for OPT if you have not already done OPT at this or a higher educational level. **If you have already done OPT at the same level (i.e. certificate or associates), or have done OPT previously at a higher level, do not apply. You are not eligible and will not be refunded.** If you did not disclose this to our office and have already received your OPT I-20, please contact us immediately to cancel your recommendation and discuss your next steps.

The next sections in the application will ask information about you. You will need your I-94, passport, and I-20 to complete the immigration information section. You will generally not have A-Number or USCIS account number. It is ok to leave these blank.



If you do not have a social security number (SSN) already issued, you can apply for it at the same time as you apply for your EAD card!

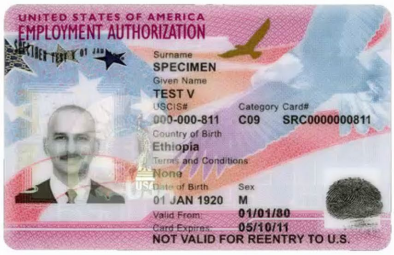
Note: do not say yes if you were already issued an SSN and have simply misplaced your card. Contact your local Social Security Office to apply for a replacement document (non-citizens must apply for replacement cards in person).

Filling Out the Form—Evidence

U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services

All F-1 I-765 applicants must provide:

- Passport-style photograph
- I-94 card, travel document, or electronic I-94
- Most recent EAD, if you have one, or government-issued photo ID
- Proof of enrollment at SEVP-certified school



****Other evidence depends on student's category. See this checklist for details:*
www.uscis.gov/forms/filing-guidance/checklist-of-required-initial-evidence-for-form-i-765-for-informational-purposes-only

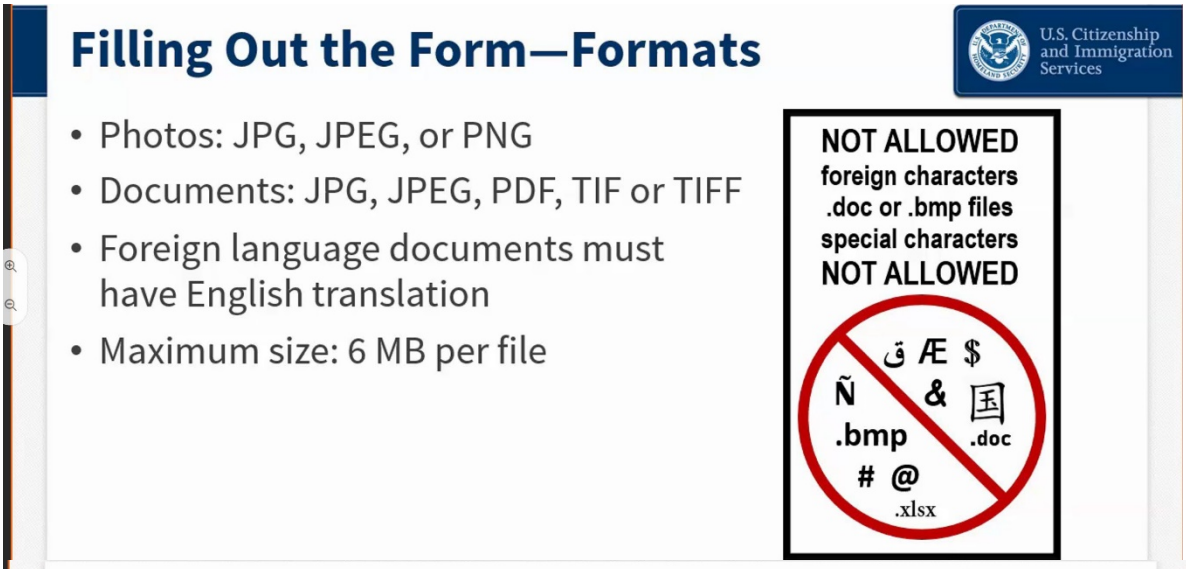
Post-completion OPT (c)(3)(B)

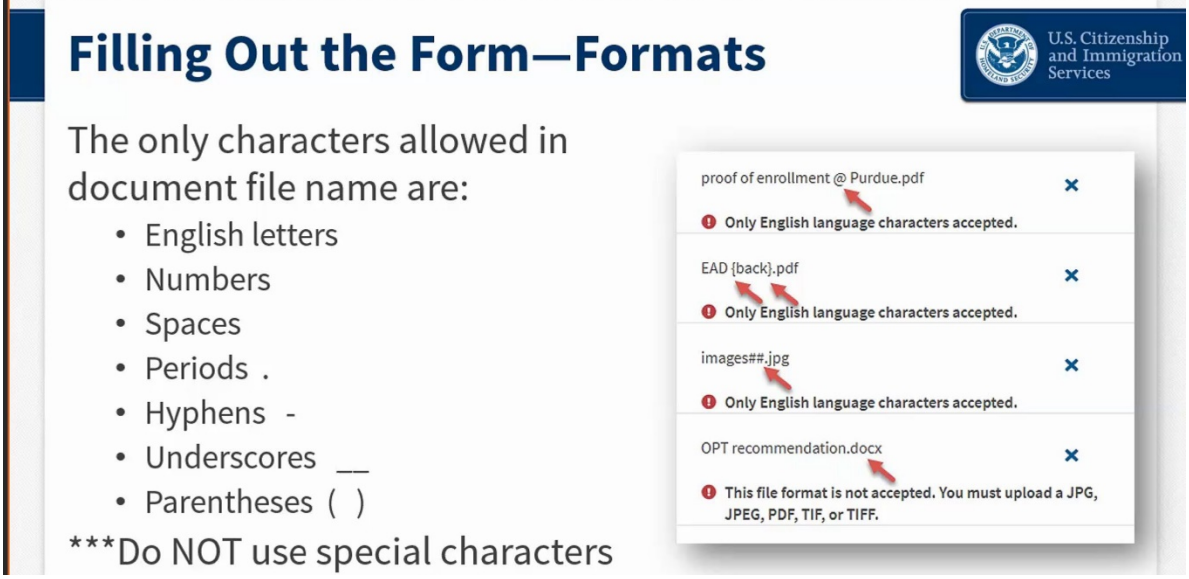
- All prior SEVIS numbers and proof of previously authorized CPT / OPT and corresponding academic level—include under **Additional Information**
- DSO must enter OPT recommendation in SEVIS within 30 days before you submit I-765, if not, we will deny OPT request

For the government-issued photo ID, upload your passport picture page. You will see it listed that your "DSO must enter OPT recommendation in SEVIS within 30 days before you submit I-765" – this will be done at your OPT appointment. **Do not submit your application until then. You will be preparing a draft of your I-765 for review at this time.**

You will be given an I-20 showing your OPT recommendation after your appointment. **Your I-20 must be printed and physically signed (in ink) before uploading.** Do not electronically sign or insert a digital signature on an I-20. This must be uploaded or your application will be denied.

Review the formatting requirements required for your uploads (see next page). It is your responsibility to format your documents properly for USCIS, according to their instructions.

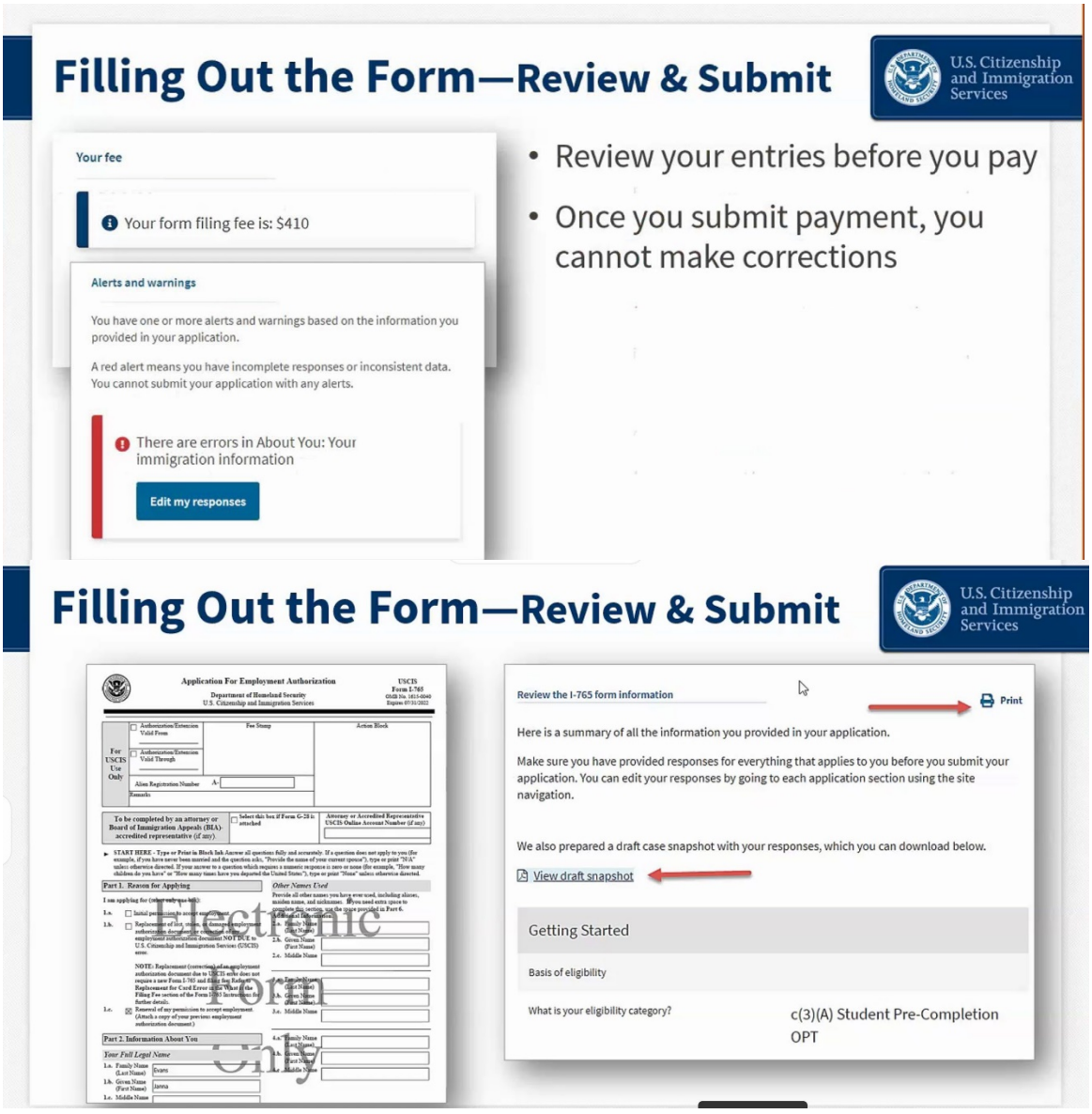




If you use a formal scanner/copier, you will be creating documents. Documents must be in PDF, JPG/JPEG, or TIF/TIFF formats only. Photos taken with a camera must be formatted as a JPG/JPEG or PNG only. **When naming your documents, use English only.** Characters in other language will cause your file to be rejected. The only characters accepted in your titles are periods [.], hyphens [-], underscores [_] or parentheses [( )]. Do not use any special characters.

Examples of proper formatting are:
FamilyName_FirstName_OPTI20.pdf
FamilyName_FirstName_Passport.jpg

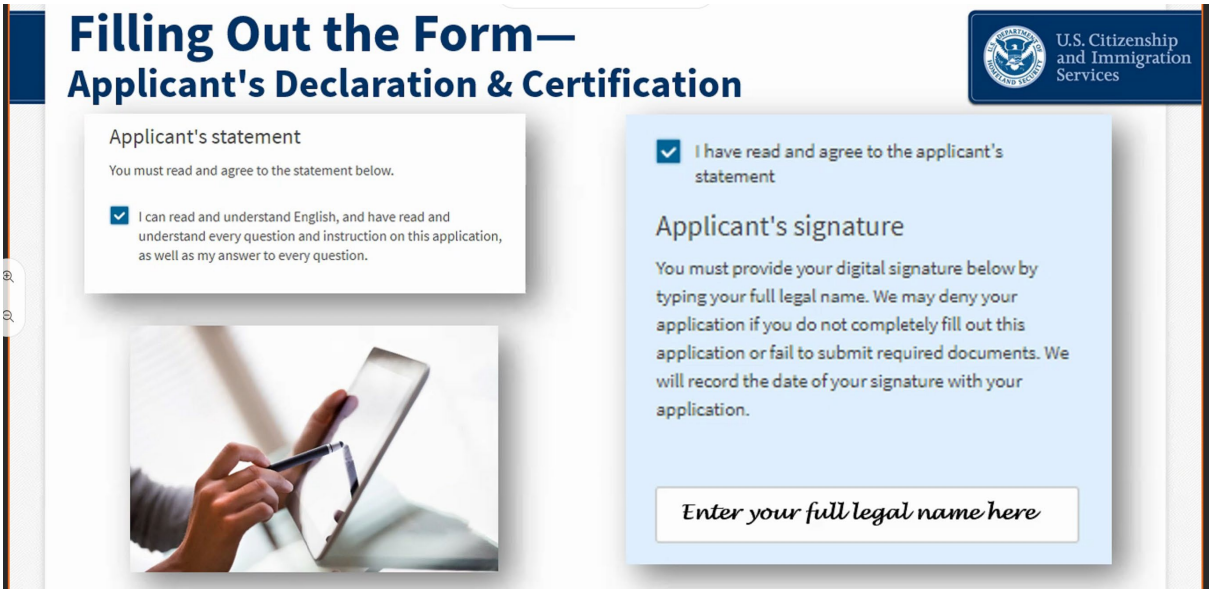
It is highly recommended that you do not take pictures. We recommend scanning your documents from a scanner/copier machine and uploading "clean" clearly-legible PDFs, free of shadows, and with nothing in the "background" – no fingers, tabletops, other paperwork, etc.



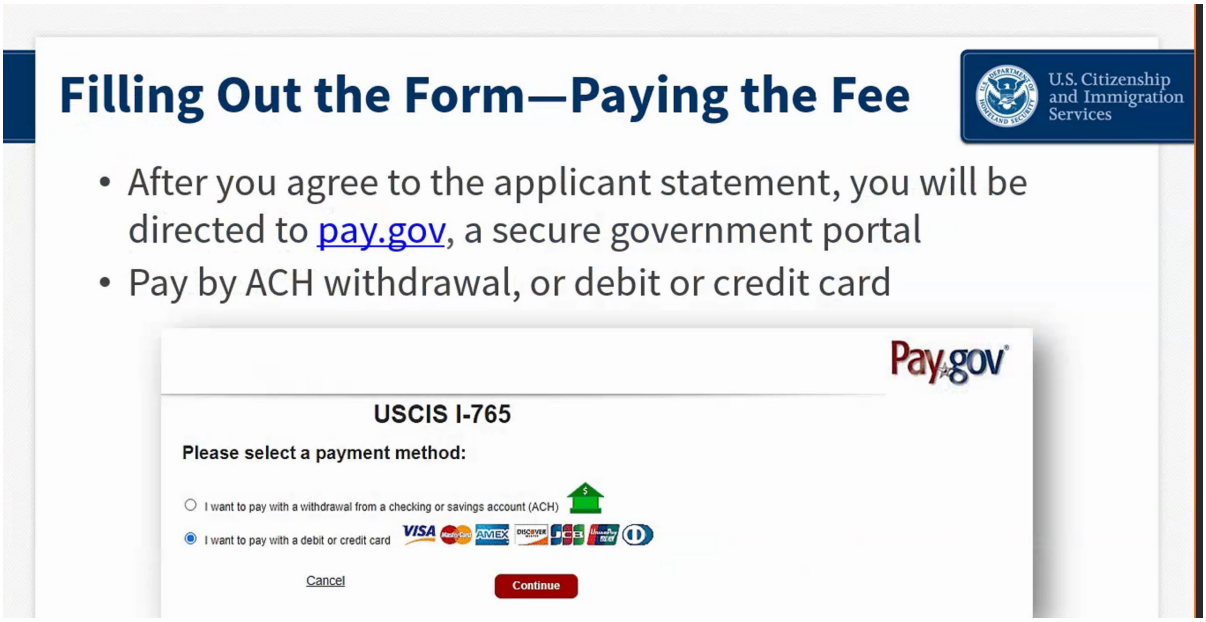
Before moving to payment, the application will check for errors and notify you if you may need to edit your response. **Errors will NOT be checking your answers for accuracy – you must make sure that the data you provided in your application is correct**. An "error" simply means you may have missed something on the application or formatted something incorrectly. If an error is highlighted in **red,** it must be corrected before you can submit your application. A "yellow" error calls your attention to something that *may* need correction. Review it to make sure your information is correct. If it is, you can submit without changing your response.

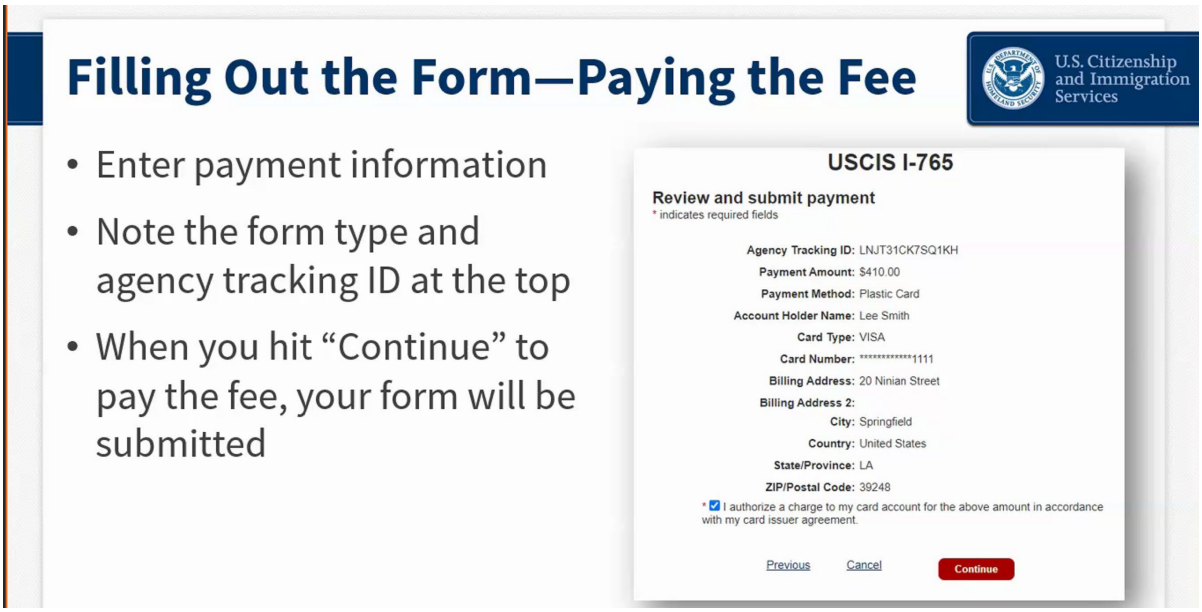
STOP: DO NOT move to the next step of payment and submission of your application until after you have had your OPT appointment with OISS DSO, received your OPT I-20, and uploaded thisevidence to your application.

After you have had your appointment,received your OPT I-20, and uploaded it to your application, proceed to the submission and payment page.

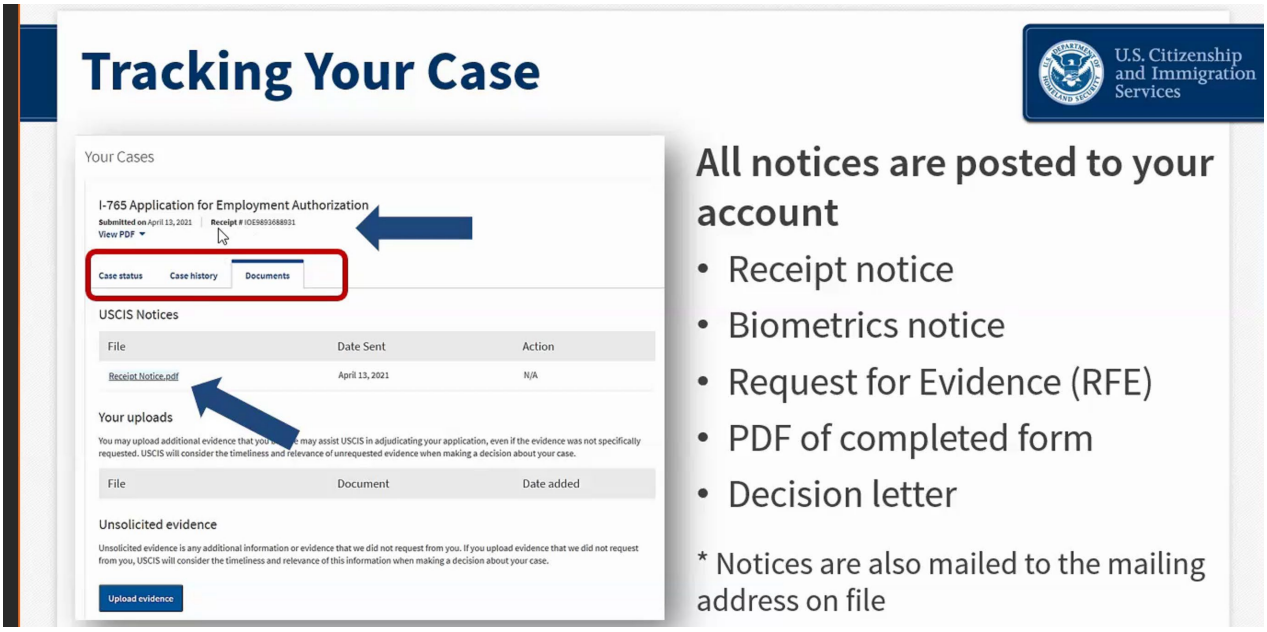


You will electronically sign your I-765. This is the only electronic signature allowed (again, your I-20 copy must show a signature signed physically, in ink). You will then be directed to pay.gov to pay your application fee.

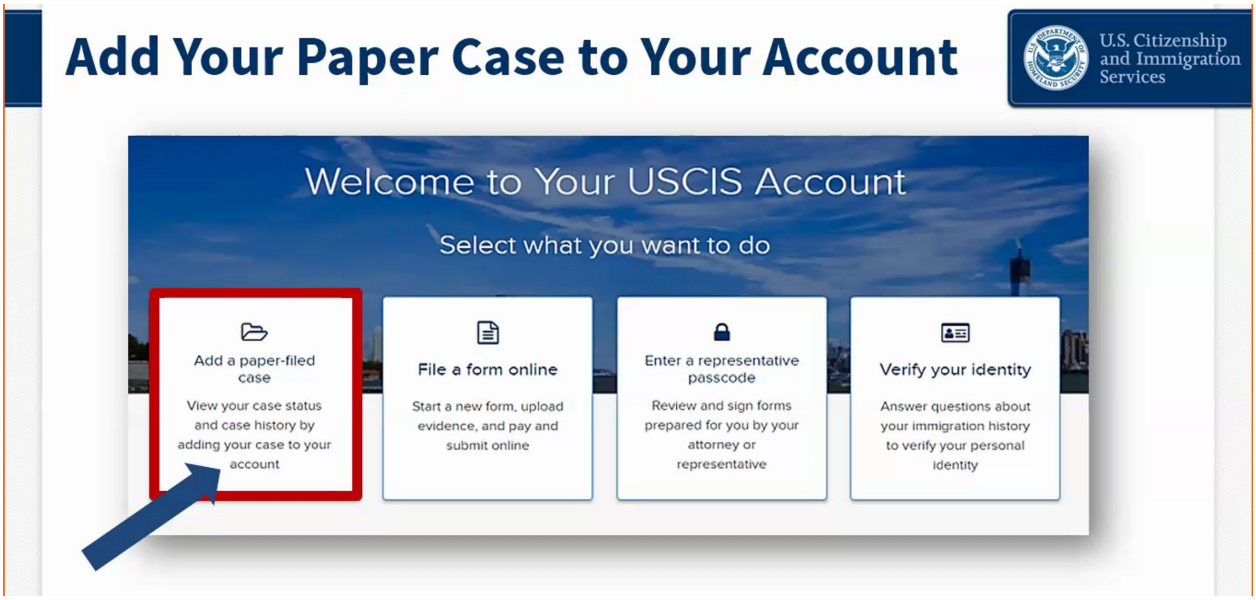




You may pay by bank transfer (ACH) or via a debit/credit card issued by a US bank. The US billing address provided must match the details on your bank/credit card account.



Make sure that you have completed submission. A confirmation will be displayed on the screen, and you will immediately get a receipt notice with your case number. Click on "Go to my cases," then click on "Documents," to download and send your receipt to oiss@colgate.edu(please include your full name and ID number when emailing us). If you receive an RFE, speak with us before responding.



If you previously paper-filed, you can link your paper-filed case to your account after you receive your receipt. You can then see all notices in the account after that step, just as if you had filed online.