

HUNTER

The City University of New York
International Students
Office (ISO) Division of
Student Affairs
Phone: (212) 772-4864



INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS OFFICE OPTIONAL PRACTICAL TRAINING APPLICATION FOR INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS ON F-1 STATUS

International Students Office Website

<http://www.hunter.cuny.edu/student-services/is/>

Contact information – International Students Office

Email address: intlss@hunter.cuny.edu

Telephone: (212) 772-4864

Address

Hunter College
695 Park Avenue, Rooms 1109E & 1133E
New York, NY 10065

Updated on: 03/27/2024

International Students Office

Optional Practical Training (OPT) Application

FOR INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS ON F-1 STATUS/VISA

Email: intlss@hunter.cuny.edu | Telephone (212) 772-4864 | [Welcome to the International Students Office \(ISO\)](#)

What is Optional Practical Training (OPT)?

OPT is **practical** work experience in your **field** of study (typically after completion of a degree) and Initial OPT can last up to 12 months. Students on OPT are still considered to be F-1 students at Hunter College even if working elsewhere in the U.S. The Employment Authorization Document (EAD) is an extension of your F-1 status for the purposes of practical training.

Who is Eligible to apply?

- F-1 students who are legally maintaining their status; **and**
- Who have been enrolled full-time for at least 9 months at Hunter College; **and**
- Who will be completing a course of study this term; **and**
- Whose proposed OPT employment will be directly related to their course of study.

What should you do before applying for OPT?

It is advisable that you attend an **OPT information session** before submitting your OPT processing packet. Plan early to avoid delay of your OPT application. File for graduation and bachelor's degree level students should obtain a print out of your degreeworks on CUNYfirst. Please note graduate level students can not use degreeworks.

How long can I engage in Practical Training?

You may engage in OPT for a total of 12 months (one year) and on the Science Technology Engineering Mathematics (STEM) extension for 24 months. You are eligible to apply for OPT at completion of each higher degree level (Bachelor's, Master's) degrees.

Do I need a job offer to apply for Optional Practical Training?

No. You do not need a job offer.

When should you apply for OPT?

You may apply for OPT up to **90 days before**, and within 60 days after the program completion date. **Program completion is the last day of the term in which you are registered for all the necessary credits for your program.** It does not mean graduation date nor does it mean that you can delay your OPT application until fulfilling incomplete credits. It is currently taking **approximately 1 to 2 months** for USCIS to process applications. **You must have your EAD card in hand** to start work on the date specified on your EAD card.

What should you know when applying for OPT?

- The OPT packet contains **detailed instructions** for preparing your OPT application; please follow these instructions to avoid delays of your application.
- Once your application for OPT has been approved, your **Employment Authorization Document (EAD)** will be mailed to the address on the I-765 form. The post office WILL NOT FORWARD mail from USCIS, if you change your address after you apply. USCIS will also not deliver your EAD card to a PO Box.
- It is impossible to **cancel** your practical training once you have received your EAD; the time granted on your EAD card will be counted regardless of your actual employment. You will not receive a refund of the fee paid and you are unable to apply for OPT again, based on that degree level.

OPT I-20 Processing

1. **Obtain and read the entire OPT packet.** [OPT application \(cuny.edu\)](#) and view the [File the Online I-765 for OPT 03-29-2023 -1.pdf](#)
2. **Complete an OPT Information session.** Information about workshops can be found at [ISO Hours/Calendar](#) <http://www.hunter.cuny.edu/studentervices/is/officecalendar>.
3. **Assemble the documents** required for the application and make an [appointment](#) at intlss@hunter.cuny.edu once you are ready to file. *If you have questions, please meet with an advisor during walk-ins.*
4. **An advisor will review your packet and issue your OPT I-20 Requested.** You must make an appointment with the Advisor when applying for OPT. You will complete the entire process on the same day, if all the required documents are complete.
5. **Submit the application**, receive receipt notice and track status.
6. **Submit a copy of the EAD card** to the staff of the International Students Office (ISO) when the EAD is received.
7. **Report** any changes of address, name, employer and unemployment to the ISO within 10 days of any change through [Optional Practical Training Employment Reporting \(cuny.edu\)](#)

How Can I Apply for OPT?

Make an appointment with the staff of the International Students Office via email: intlss@hunter.cuny.edu

For a quicker response, please list all the days and hours that you are available (during 9:00-4:00 pm, Monday to Friday) and one of the International Student Advisors will reply to confirm which day and hour is available in their calendar out of the ones you provided. It takes approximately 30 to 45 minutes to review the documents that you need to file for OPT.

DO NOT file for OPT on your own. Doing so will result in your OPT application being denied and you will lose the \$410 dollars I-765 application fee for OPT.

You must prepare all the documents that you need to apply for OPT and email them to the International Students Office email intlss@hunter.cuny.edu to obtain a new SEVIS I-20 which will state that OPT is requested on page 2.

The following are the documents that you need to prepare to apply for OPT. Please submit them to the ISO Advisor (with the exception of the payment method) via email attachments to intlss@hunter.cuny.edu

- Initial 12 month OPT request form.**
- Printout of your *degreeworks* which can be obtained in CUNYfirst; bachelor's degree seeking students only.
- Photocopy of original **Passport**. Your valid passport with the biographical information and passport expiration date.
- Photocopy of **I-94/Admission Number**. *If your last entry into the U.S. was processed electronically and you do not have a paper I-94 card, obtain and print your most recent I-94 online at <https://i94.cbp.dhs.gov/i94/#/home>*
- Copies of **all your I-20s with CPT and/or OPT on page 2 (if applicable)**.
- 1 full, frontal **passport size photo**
- Debit/Credit card or Checking account** can be used to pay the **\$410** before April 1st, 2024, or **\$470** on or after April 1st. Have it handy but do not submit information about the method of payment to us.
- 2 letters.**
 1. One from your **Departmental Advisor** on their department letterhead. and another letter from
 2. One Stop Office - Graduation Audit unit in Room 217 Hunter North, stating that you have applied to graduate. (Samples of these letters are shown on pages 11 and 12).

NOTE: These two letters are for *office purposes* only; **You can still maintain your appointment if you do not have them at the time of your OPT appointment. However it must be requested and inform the International Student Advisor when you will have them ready to submit.**

- Photocopy of any **previous EAD cards**, if applicable.

After submitting all completed documents, an ISO advisor will:

Issue you a new SEVIS I-20 with OPT requested. Once received, you must sign page 1 of the I-20 and submit the signed I-20 to the International Student Advisor for your ISO file.

The U.S. government MUST receive your application within 30 days of the ISO issuing you the OPT I-20.

DO NOT DELAY submitting your online OPT application!

While on OPT, you are still a Hunter College F-1 student

While on the OPT period, you are still considered a Hunter College F-1 student, you are required to READ and FOLLOW these instructions.

- I understand that I **cannot begin working until I receive my EAD card** and that I may only work during the **dates that are on my EAD card**.
- I must submit a **copy** (Front and back) of **your EAD** card to the staff of the ISO upon receiving it.
- Name, Address, or Employer changes-** I must **report all name, U.S. address, and employer name & address changes to ISO within 10 days**.
This is done via the OPT Reporting Form [Optional Practical Training Employment Reporting](#) on the ISO website. Your address must be where you live; it cannot be a PO Box.
- Periods of Unemployment-** I must **report to ISO** all periods of employment.
Failure to report can jeopardize your immigration status. I understand that I **cannot** have more than a **total of 90 calendar days of unemployment**.
- I will be subject to federal, state, and local taxes unless your country has a tax treaty with the United States. It is best to closely work with your employer's payroll department to ensure the correct taxes are deducted. **REMEMBER-** Tax returns must be filed by April 15 of each year for the previous calendar year. The ISO has employed a company which can assist with your tax related questions – [sprintax.com](#)
- Travel while on OPT** – Before you travel, remember to:
 - Make sure your **passport** is valid at least 6 months into the future
 - Make sure your **I-20** has your employer listed and has been signed for travel within the past 6 months. Request a new I-20 and/or travel signature from the staff of ISO by submitting a travel signature request form [Travel Signature Request Form \(cuny.edu\)](#).
 - Make sure your **visa stamp** is valid. If your visa is expired, you need to renew it at the U.S. Embassy in your country of citizenship, before returning to the U.S. If this is the case, please bring it up to an ISO advisor **before** traveling.
 - **Carry your EAD card and proof of employment** for the EAD time. Proof of employment can include a letter from your employer and recent pay stubs.
 - **Dependent Travel** – Since OPT is not noted on dependent I-20s, an F-2 dependent must carry copies of the F-1's I-20 with OPT recommendation, EAD card and job offer letter in addition to their own F-2 documents when traveling.
 - *If your OPT is pending or you are unemployed, talk to an ISO advisor before buying an airline ticket.*
- Change of Status** – If you change your immigration status during OPT, you are required to send us a copy of the approval document (i.e. H-1B) and Immigration Status Change Form. We recommend you begin the Change of status process before your OPT expires.
- Your **OPT will automatically terminate** if you transfer to another school or begin study at another educational level at Hunter College. Please **contact ISO** if you plan to apply for another degree program or transfer to another school.
- Remember, you have a **60-day grace period** following the end date of your OPT.
- If you are eligible for the STEM extension**, the earliest date that your application must be received by USCIS is 90 days prior to the end date of your OPT and before the last day of your Post-completion OPT, as the latest. Visit the ISO website for details on the STEM extension. [EMPLOYMENT — Hunter College \(cuny.edu\)](#)

STEM Designated Degree Program List [2023 DHS STEM Designated Degree Program List \(ice.gov\)](#)

OPT Application Instructions and Frequently Asked Questions

How to choose a Post-Completion OPT start date?

Note: U.S.C.I.S. is taking 1 to 2 months to process student's OPT-EAD card.

- It can take up to one week to prepare the OPT application before sending it to USCIS.

What is my "completion date"?

The "completion date" for OPT purposes is defined as follows:

- For undergraduates: the last day of final exams of the semester in which degree requirements are fulfilled.
- For Master's: the day on which all degree requirements are fulfilled, such as filing the thesis/dissertation in the Graduate Division.
- Changing your completion date can cause serious complications for your OPT application. If for some reason you need to change your completion date after the OPT I-20 is created, speak to an Advisor at the International Students Office (ISO) as soon as possible.

When should I apply?

Apply early! It takes about one to two months to receive your EAD from the USCIS. Expediting fee is available at a hefty price. Therefore, the best course of action is to apply as early as possible to avoid paying an expediting fee.

- The earliest USCIS can receive the application is 90 days before the date of your program completion.
- The latest USCIS can receive the application is within 60-day following your completion date.

What dates should I choose?

Your OPT start date must be within 60 days after your completion date. Your OPT end date will be 12 months later.

Earliest Start Date: The earliest possible start date is one day after the last day of your final semester. Therefore, you must apply for OPT three months prior to your last day of the semester.

Latest possible Start Date: the latest possible start date is two months after the last day of your final semester. You are still encouraged to apply as early as three months prior to the last day of your final semester.

Use the OPT Calculator from the NYU website by clicking on: [Post-Completion OPT \(nyu.edu\)](https://www.nyu.edu/iso/Post-Completion-Opt-Calculator)

It will map out for you the dates that you can request as your OPT start date once you type in your last day of classes/exams.

How do I fill out the I-765 form?

You must log in to your "[my USCIS.gov account](#)" and fill out the I-765 form. Do not submit your I-765 OPT online application until you meet with one of the International Student Advisors. Information added to the online I-765 form will be stored for up to 30 days from the initial date that you started the application. Again, **do not** submit your I-765 form.

What do I do if I have not submitted and paid my I-765 form for OPT packet within 30 days of the OPT issuance SEVIS I-20?

You must contact the staff of the International Student Advisors who will print another I-20 for you with today's date for you to upload online and submit. Again, this request for a more updated I-20 can not be requested after the deadline to apply for OPT has passed.

When can I start working?

You must wait until you receive your Employment Authorization Document (EAD) from USCIS and your start date on the EAD card has arrived to begin working. Once you complete your degree, you cannot work on-campus or off-campus until you receive the EAD card and your start date has arrived.

What counts as employment?

OPT is intended to enhance your academic program by providing a means to gain experience in your field of study. Work NOT related to your program of study is a violation of F-1 status. Students must work more than 20 hours a week in either a paid or unpaid position to qualify as employment.

What happens if I cannot find a job?

During post-completion OPT, students may not accrue a total of more than 90 days of unemployment. See "What counts as employment?"

What is my status while I am on OPT?

Students on OPT or with a pending OPT application are still in F-1 status and must maintain their F-1 status by following the employment and address reporting requirements. Students may remain in the U.S. while their OPT Application is pending.

Can I travel while I am on OPT?

Yes. You must get an endorsement for travel on your SEVIS I-20 from one of the International Student Advisors two weeks before your date of departure. While you are on OPT, the signature for travel is valid for multiple entries for only six months. Please fill out the [Travel Signature Request](#) form <https://ww3.hunter.cuny.edu/is/view.php?id=3> and remember, you must also travel with your EAD card and a letter from your employer stating that they are aware that you are traveling and that you plan to return to the U.S. to continue your employment with them.

What if my visa expires?

Students who plan to travel outside the U.S. will need a valid F-1 visa to re-enter the U.S. please fill out the [Travel Signature Request](#) form and you may also contact us at: intlss@hunter.cuny.edu or call (212) 772-4864 to discuss your travel plan and what documents you will need to renew your F-1 visa.

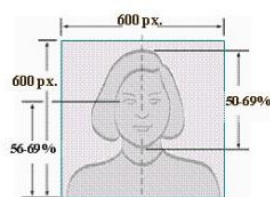
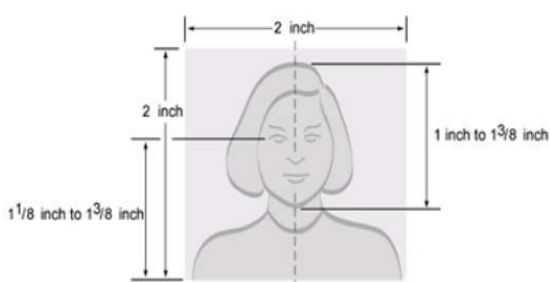
What else do I have to do while I am on OPT?

You must report your employment and current residential address via intlss@hunter.cuny.edu. Any changes should be reported within 10 days.

Photo Composition Checklist

7 Steps to a Successful Photo 2x2

- ☑ Frame subject with full face, front view, eyes open
- ☑ *Make sure photo presents full head from top of hair to bottom of chin; height of head should measure 1 inch to 1-3/8 inches (25 mm to 35 mm)*
- ☑ *Center head within frame (see below)*
- ☑ *Make sure eye height is between 1-1/8 inches to 1-3/8 inches (28 mm and 35 mm) from bottom of photo*
- ☑ Photograph subject against a plain white or off-white background
- ☑ Position subject and lighting so that there are no distracting shadows on the face or background
- ☑ Encourage subject to have a natural expression



Head Size

The head height or facial region size (measured from the top of the head, including the hair, to the bottom of the chin) must be between 50% and 69% of the image's total height. The eye height (measured from the bottom of the image to the level of the eyes) should be between 56% and 69% of the image's height.

Image pixel dimensions must be in a square aspect ratio (meaning the height must be equal to the width). Minimum acceptable dimensions are 600 pixels (width) x 600 pixels (height). Maximum acceptable dimensions are 1200 pixels (width) x 1200 pixels (height).

Well-Composed Photos (frontal position photo)



Initial 12-Month OPT Request Form

(First Name)	(Last Name)	(CUNYfirst ID#)
Hunter Email Address:	Personal Email Address:	Telephone Number:
Your Current Address, Including Apartment#:	City: State	Zip Code:
Major or Field of Study:	Degree Level:	Your last day to complete course of study:

Optional Practical Training is intended to provide hands-on, practical work experience that is complimentary to your academic program. An F-1 student may be eligible for **12 months OPT**, provided this practical training is **directly related to your field of study**, is **commensurate** with your educational level, and is **recommended** by your Academic Advisor.

My Desired OPT Start Date:

Check the box if the above desired OPT Start Date is within the 60-day after your completion of studies.

In making this request I understand and agree to abide by all requirements listed below and I will indicate that by checking each of the boxes after reading them.

- I will **report all changes** in my US or overseas **address** to ISO within 10 days of such change
- I will **provide ISO** with a **copy** of my Employment Authorization Document (**EAD**) upon receipt
- I understand that **I can not begin working until I have my EAD card in-hand** and only during the dates in which my EAD card date of employment is covered.
- I will report the name & address of my employer to ISO within 10 days of starting work**
- I know I **should have health insurance** coverage for the duration of my F1 status, including the OPT period.

OPT Workshop Attended on: _____ (give date, if applicable).

Your Signature

Date

NYU OPT Calculator

<https://www.nyu.edu/students/student-information-and-resources/student-visa-and-immigration/current-students/employment-and-tax/optional-practical-training/PostCompletionOPT.html>

You may check the Hunter College academic calendar to find out the last day of classes for the semester.

<https://hunter.cuny.edu/students/registration/academic-calendar/>

OPTIONAL PRACTICAL TRAINING MAILING INSTRUCTIONS

<input type="checkbox"/> Debit/Credit card or Checking account	To submit the I-765 form successfully, you will be prompt to use a checking account or debit/credit card to pay \$410 I-765 fee. Note: the I-765 form will increase on April 1 st from \$410 to \$470 . Prepare and request to apply for OPT before the increase date.
<input type="checkbox"/> Passport Photo	1 passport size photo
<input type="checkbox"/> I-765	Complete I-765 form online.
<input type="checkbox"/> I-20 with OPT Requested listed on page 2 of your I-20	I-20 Form. Newly issued SEVIS I-20 form endorsed by one of the International Student Advisors for Optional Practical Training, which will be given to you either prior or on the day that you apply for OPT with our assistance.
<input type="checkbox"/> I-20s	Photocopies of all previous I-20s with CPT or OPT , (if applicable)
<input type="checkbox"/> Electronic I-94	<p>F-1 Visa Students. Photocopy of your electronic I-94/Admission Number. You may print your most recent I-94 online at I94 - Official Website (dhs.gov)</p> <p>Canadian Citizens. If you are from Canada, have a copy of the I-94 front and back. The I-94 is the white card stapled inside your passport.</p> <p>Change of Status Students: If you did a change of status to F-1 in the U.S. a copy of your F-1 approval is needed since it has the I-94 on the bottom left side of the sheet.</p>
<input type="checkbox"/> Passport	Photocopy of original Passport . Your valid passport with the biographical information and passport expiration date.
<input type="checkbox"/> EAD card(s)	EAD card(s) Photocopies of EAD cards (front and back) for students who have applied for OPT and received EAD card(s) in the past, if applicable.

You **MUST** keep photocopies of **ALL** documents for your records on your laptop, Flash drive, or saved in the cloud or send to your email.

You must submit the **two letters** mentioned on the OPT packet. You do not need to submit them before or on the date of your OPT filing appointment with us. However, you must send us an email informing us that you have requested both letters and when should we expect to receive them for your ISO file. You must do any follow-ups needed on the two letters. View samples of the two letters on the following pages.

**SAMPLE LETTER FROM DEPARTMENTAL ADVISOR
FOR POST-COMPLETION OPTIONAL PRACTICAL
TRAINING
(Complete all course requirements including thesis or project)**

_____ (Today's date)

To Whom It May Concern:

This is to certify that Mr./Ms. _____ has been continuously enrolled as a full-time undergraduate B.A. B.S. M.S. Ph.D. student in the department of _____ since _____ semester 20____.

He/She has completed (or will complete) all course requirements for the B.A. B.S. M.S. Ph.D. degree in _____ on _____ (Month, day, year).

I would recommend, therefore, that Mr./Ms. _____ be allowed to pursue his/her Optional Practical Training in the United States.

Sincerely,

Your

signature

Print

Name:

Title:

Sample letter from One Stop – Graduation Audit – [Room 217 Hunter North](#)

HUNTER COLLEGE OF THE CITY UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK

HUNTER

The City University of New York

Page 1 of 1

Hunter College - Office of the Registrar

Hunter College
695 Park Avenue
New York, NY 10021
United States

Enrollment Verification as of 10/10/2014

Name

ID No.

Career
Statement

Current Program of Study

Gen Code No.

Academic Plan
Economics BA

Academic Program
Master of Arts

Degree
Doctor of Philosophy

Enrollment History

Year	Career	Begin Date	End Date	Units	Status
2014 Fall	BA				

IT you have additional questions, please refer all inquiries to:
OFFICE OF THE REGISTRAR

Due to the large number of requests we must process each year, we have installed an automated system for the generation of enrollment verifications. This document, when verified by the Registrar's signature and seal, officially verifies enrollment and graduation status for the terms listed as of the printed date above. Your acceptance of this document, in preference to your own form, will permit us to respond to your request more quickly and efficiently.

Aylee Brandon

OFFICE OF THE REGISTRAR
HUNTER COLLEGE

TOURCOMP

In accordance with the Family Educational Rights Act of 1976, as amended, this document may not be released to others without the written consent of the student. This officially issued and signed document has a green background with the name of the college printed across the back.

Hunter College - 695 Park Avenue
New York, New York 10021
AYLEE D. BRANDON, REGISTRAR

HUNTER
The City University of New York
695 Park Avenue • New York, NY 10021
(212) 774-2474
http://registrar.hunter.cuny.edu

OFFICIAL LETTER OF CERTIFICATION

THIS WORD COPY APPEARS WHEN PHOTOCOPIED

NOTE: THIS DOCUMENT IS PROTECTED USING AN INVISIBLE FOIL UNDER A REGISTERED AND ENCLOSED SEAL