

**INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS OFFICE
OPTIONAL PRACTICAL TRAINING
INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS ON F-1 STATUS**

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**INTERNATIONAL STUDENT OFFICE
OPTIONAL PRACTICAL TRAINING
INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS ON F-1 VISA**

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Phone # (212) 772-4864 Fax # (212) 650-3147

WHAT IS OPTIONAL PRACTICAL TRAINING?

It is paid employment directly related to your major area of study.

WHAT ARE THE REQUIREMENTS TO APPLY?

You must be in F-1 Student Status, having been a Full-Time Student and maintaining lawful status for at least one academic year or 9 consecutive months.

WHEN CAN I APPLY?

Under the new OPT filing rule; students may file up to 90 days (3 months) prior to the completion of their course of study and up to 60 days after its completion.

Please check the last day of instructional classes by going to www.hunter.cuny.edu click on registrar's tab then click on academic calendar to obtain the date for the last day of classes for the current semester.

DO I HAVE TO GIVE THE STAFF OF THE INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS OFFICE A COPY OF MY EAD CARD?

YES. In order to maintain your status while on OPT; it's mandatory that you give us a copy of your EAD card, as soon as you have received it.

HOW LONG CAN I ENGAGE IN PRACTICAL TRAINING?

You can engage in OPT for a total of 12 months (one year).

IF I PURSUE MORE THAN ONE DEGREE WHILE I AM IN THE UNITED STATES CAN I BE ELIGIBLE MORE THAN ONE TIME FOR PRACTICAL TRAINING?

Yes. You are eligible to apply for OPT at completion of each higher level (Bachelor's, Master's) degrees.

DO I NEED A JOB OFFER TO APPLY FOR PRACTICAL TRAINING?

NO. You do not need a job offer.

HOW CAN I APPLY FOR OPTIONAL PRACTICAL TRAINING?

Make an appointment with our office via e-mail: intlss@hunter.cuny.edu (the appointment time must correspond with our walk-in hours). Please check

http://studentservices.hunter.cuny.edu/international/international_officecalendar.htm

the walk-in hours and bring **COPIES** of the following documents with you:

1. Your valid Passport with the biographical information, passport expiration date attached Form I-94 (photocopy)
2. All your I-20s (photocopy)
3. **\$340.00** money order or personal check made payable to "U.S. Department of Homeland Security"
4. **2 photos** ([Passport style](#))
5. Completed Form I-765 (enclosed in the Optional Practical Training package or [online](#))
6. **ALL previous I-20s**, not just the Hunter College ones.
7. **2 letters**; One letter from your Departmental Chair or Academic Advisor which states your expected date of Completion of Studies and another letter from the Graduation Audit in OASIS (217 North). Please see the attached SAMPLE LETTERS.

NOTE: The **2 letters** are **not** to be mailed out. They are for *office purposes*.

The Application has to be sent to the following address to Vermont Service Center by certified mail with a return receipt requested.

**United States Department of homeland security
Vermont Service Center
75 Lower Welden Street
St. Albans, VT 05479-0001**

IMMIGRATION CURRENTLY REQUIRES 12 WEEKS TO PROCESS YOUR EAD.

Office of International Students at least 4 months in advance.

<https://egov.uscis.gov/cris/jsps/Processtimes.jsp?SeviceCenter=VSC>

**EMPLOYMENT MAY NOT COMMENCE UNTIL YOU HAVE OBTAINED YOUR EAD
(EMPLOYMENT AUTHORIZATION DOCUMENT).**

DO I PAY TAXES?

Yes. You are required by United States law to file for income tax for each fiscal year. Please check the www.irs.gov website for updated information about your country=s tax treaty and its pay.

WHILE ON OPTIONAL PRACTICAL TRAINING DOES MY STATUS CHANGE?

No. You are still under F-1 status.

EXTREMELY IMPORTANT

It is mandatory that you give us a copy of your EAD card, based on OPT, as soon as you have received, in order to maintain your status while on OPT.

WHAT DO I NEED IF I TRAVEL OUTSIDE OF THE UNITED STATES?

- A valid Passport
- Have your I-20 endorsed for travel by the International Student Advisor
- The EAD (Employment Authorization Documentation) Card also known as the O.P.T. Card
- Carry your I-797 (notice of action form)

**SAMPLE LETTER
POST-COMPLETION OPTIONAL PRACTICAL
TRAINING**

(Complete all course requirements including thesis or project)

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 200___. 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,

Name:

Title:

IMPORTANT RULES

IF YOU ARE TRAVELING OUTSIDE THE UNITED STATES while you are authorized for practical training, you must take your Employment Authorization Document (E.A.D.) Card with you and show it to the Immigration Inspector when you re-enter the U.S. You must also have a travel endorsement on the back of your I-20 Form from the Foreign Student Advisor. The endorsement must not be more than three months old.

YOU MIGHT NOT GET A NEW VISA if you travel while you are engaging in Optional Practical Training. We advise against traveling during this period if you do not have a valid F-1 visa. There is no rule that says you can not have a new visa, but they are difficult to get while on Optional Practical Training.

YOUR WORK AUTHORIZATION STOPS if you complete the transfer procedure to attend a new school, even if your E.A.D. card has not expired. You may attend a new school Part-Time while engaging in O.P.T. as long as your I-20 for transfer is not released from the old school to the school that you are currently attending. However, you must obtain the new I-20 and complete the transfer procedure within 30 days before or after your Work Authorization expiration date, so that you may not be in violation of your F-1 status.

UNEMPLOYMENT LIMIT

Graduates are now limited to an aggregate of 90 days unemployment out of the 12-month of OPT.

[OPTIONAL PRACTICAL TRAINING VALIDATION FORM](#)

You must fill out the OPT validation form and send it to us via mail, fax (212) 650-3147 or e-mail intlss@hunter.cuny.edu on a timely manner, as soon as you are employed.

THE FORM (I-765)
MUST BE FILLED
OUT WITH A
BLUE INK PEN

If you are filling out the PDF format of the form online, after you are done and printed it out, you must sign the form with a blue ink pen. Instructions are in the following pages:



Dear applicant:

You can actually fill out this form online instead of filling it out with a pen. All you need is access to a computer and a printer to immediately print out a hard copy of the form. Please visit the website below and type in your information and once you are done, print the I-765 form then sign it with a blue ink pen.

<http://www.uscis.gov/files/form/i-765.pdf>

Tips for filling out the I-765 form

I am applying for

Permission to accept employment should be checked.

Items #12 and 13

The answer can be found on your **I-94** card (the white card stapled inside your passport).

Item # 15

The answer for it should be student, if your last entry into the U.S. was with an F-1 visa.

Item # 16

- (c) (3) (B)** Post-completion Optional Practical Training
- (c) (3) (A)** Pre-Completion Optional Practical Training
- (c) (3) (C)** STEM-Science Technology Engineering Mathematics

You must sign (endorse) and enter your telephone number and date on the I-765. Failure to do so will cause a delay in receiving your employment card.

Form I-765

If you made a mistake in one of the forms that are enclosed in the O.P.T. package, please go to these websites to download the forms: <http://www.uscis.gov/files/form/i-765.pdf>

Any USCIS (United States Citizenship and Immigration Services) form fees are subjected to change at any time. So, for updated fees of a particular USCIS form or to download a form, please visit <http://uscis.gov>

Photo standards

For photo standards, please visit http://travel.state.gov/passport/guide/quality/quality_876.html

To locate a U.S. Embassy (Consulate) in your country, please visit http://travel.state.gov/travel/tips/embassies/embassies_1214.html or http://travel.state.gov/visa/visa_1750.html

I-94 replacement

If you have lost your I-94, you can apply for another by filing form I-102
<http://www.uscis.gov/files/form/i-102.pdf>

OPTIONAL PRACTICAL TRAINING MAILING CHECKLIST

- I-20 form Photocopy of I-20 form endorsed for Optional Practical Training (*will be given on the day that you apply for OPT in our office*)
- Previous I-20s Photocopies of all previous I-20s.
Please make sure you copy all of the pages of your I-20s except for the instruction sheet page.
- I-765 form Original (May be typed or must filled out with a [blue ink pen](#))
- I-94 form Photocopy of your most recent I-94 (front and back)
I-94 is the white card stapled inside your passport. I-94 is also known as the Admission number.
- Photocopy of your **VALID** passport (picture & biographical information only)
- Check or Money Order \$340.00 payable to **U.S. Department of Homeland Security**
- Photocopies of previous EAD (Employment Authorization Documentation) card(s), if applicable
- 2 Passport-like photos
On the back of them, write your **Name, Date of Birth (month, day, year) and I-20 SEVIS number**, using a pencil.

These photos can be taken in the OASIS, Room 217 Hunter North for \$10.00 per set (2 pictures)

Please visit the following website to check their operation hours for passport photos beforehand.

http://registrar.hunter.cuny.edu/subpages/oasispages/oasis_passportphoto.shtml

** You **MUST** keep photocopies of ALL documents for your own record BEFORE mailing to USCIS

Mail the documents to:

**UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY
VERMONT SERVICE CENTER (EAD)
75 LOWER WELDEN STREET
ST. ALBANS, VT 05479-0001**

By: Certified return receipt requested

POST OFFICE

If you would like to mail your OPT documents immediately, there is a post office near Hunter College located on: **70th Street between 2nd and 3rd Avenue**

EAD (Employment Authorization Documentation) Card

Please give our staff a **copy** of your **EAD** card for OPT, once you receive it from USCIS

Note: Fees for U.S.C.I.S. forms are subject to change at any time. Therefore, before you mail any documents to U.S.C.I.S. Please visit their website to obtain the fee for the respective form. <http://uscis.gov/>

Updated on: 10/17/2008