

HAMILTON COLLEGE
International Student Advising
Elihu Root House
315-859-4022

H1-B CERTIFICATION OF COMPLETION POLICY AND OPTIONS

Students with job offers prior to graduation may be asked by employers who wish to sponsor them for an H1-B visa to submit a letter from Hamilton certifying completion of the degree. Hamilton CANNOT provide a letter certifying completion for a student who continues to be enrolled in classes.

Students who anticipate wanting to apply for an H1-B visa in April prior to graduation may wish to consider completing all degree requirements in the Fall semester and starting Optional Practical Training in January. In that case, although the degree will not be awarded until May, the Registrar will be able to certify completion of the degree.

If a student is enrolled in classes in April and is asked for a completion letter, the College CAN issue a letter summarizing the College's degree requirements and the student's progress toward completing them, and stating the expected completion and graduation date. An immigration lawyer working on an H1-B petition may determine that this information can be used along with evidence of work experience (previous CPT or OPT) to show the equivalent of a bachelor's degree. In that case, the lawyer may be able to submit an H1-B application in April prior to graduation. Only a lawyer can make that determination.

Alternatively, if H1-B visas are still available after graduation, a student can receive certification of completion and apply for the H1-B visa at that time.

Finally, students are entitled to up to a year of OPT upon graduation. Assuming remaining OPT will last through April 1 of the year following graduation, a student can utilize OPT, apply for an H1-B and, if awarded an H1-B, take advantage of the current interim rule providing for a "cap-gap" extension of OPT until the H1-B visa begins.

To Request a Certification Letter Prior to Graduation

The Registrar's Office requires a written letter, with the student's signature, to request an H1-B certification letter. The letter may contain information from the academic record which requires the student's written approval to release. A letter asking the Registrar to provide the Certification Letter for the H1-B Visa application and to provide any academic information that is necessary should be delivered to the Registrar's Office, Elihu Root House.

Because the Registrar will need confirmation from instructors of all courses in which a student is currently enrolled, and a certification of the completion of requirements from the relevant academic department(s), please allow sufficient time (at least one week) when requesting this letter.