

HAMPTON UNIVERSITY

International Office
200 William R. Harvey Way
Armstrong-Slater Building
Hampton, VA 23668



Hampton University
Hampton, Virginia 23668

International Office
Armstrong-Slater
Building
757-728-6914

Dear International Student:

Welcome to Hampton University!

This handbook is designed to help you adjust to life at Hampton University, an American University with a unique and distinguished history. The first international students were enrolled when Hampton University was founded in 1868, since then we have had thousands of international students find their place within our university. We hope that your years with us in our "Home by the Sea" will be educationally, socially and culturally rewarding for you. We are grateful that your presence in our community will continue to enrich and broaden the multi-cultural environment.

The handbook clarifies many of the regulations and procedures that apply to you as an international student. Please pay particular attention to the 2009 Federal Regulations affecting your program of study, as well as your right to work while studying in the United States. Among other areas, Federal Regulations affect the following important aspects of your study program:

- The length of your program of study,
- The number of courses in which you are required to enroll each semester,
- The procedure to follow when changing institutions or programs of study
- When and where you may work

Please review the regulations carefully*, and note that they are subject to modifications. Contact the HU International Office, if you have any questions.

Be sure to check in as soon as you arrive on campus with the HU International Office, Armstrong-Slater Building. The email is InternationalOffice@Hamptonu.edu and telephone number is 757-728-6914. We look forward to seeing you!

Very cordially,

Carolina V. Butler, International Office Coordinator

*You will receive this document in the near future with updates.

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I. Hampton University International Office --Overview

The Hampton University international students' community includes over 60 students from numerous foreign countries and five continents.

The International Office oversees matters related to international educational programming at the university. The International Office handles study abroad programs, student foreign exchange programs and advises faculty on related grants opportunities, as well as scholarly exchanges.

The office houses the Designated School Official (DSO), whose role is to assist international students in complying with regulations of the Bureau of Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS). Special orientation programs and workshops for international students and scholars will help you maintain status as you pursue your degree. Topics include enrollment requirements, the time frame for completing your program of study, special registrations that may be required from periodically, permission to work under authorized circumstances, travel regulations, tax information and other important matters.

The International Office is focused on coordinating educational outreach, social activities and academic enrichment opportunities for all students, faculty and the community at-large. In addition, the office provides referrals on related issues such as international student activities, community outreach, individual and group assistance concerning the cultural aspects of studying in a foreign country.

Contact Information

Hampton University International Office
Armstrong-Slater Building
Phone 757-728-6914
Email: internationaloffice@hamptonu.edu

International students are required to sign up for a Hampton University pipeline email address. For important announcements: check the Hampton University website, where documents, this handbook, special announcements and other information are posted.

II. Applying for your Visa

The certificate of eligibility I-20 you have received from Hampton University is an official government document. The information has been submitted to the US Department of State, in order to confirm that you have been admitted to the university and are eligible for an F-1 (or J-1) visa to enter the country. For further explanations of each document, see the State Department Website: <https://travel.state.gov/content/visas/en/study-exchange/student.html>.

If, for any reason, you will not enroll at Hampton University by the date indicated on your I-20, please **return the I-20** to the HU International Office with a brief explanation of the reason (i.e., change of plans, denial of visa, decision to defer study). The returned I-20 will be canceled.

Please notify the Admission Office or Graduate College if you wish to defer your enrollment at Hampton University. New forms will be sent to you and a new or updated certificate of eligibility will be issued for the semester when you intend to enroll.

For current information on how to apply for a visa and how much time you should allow for the application procedure, please go to the State Department website: <https://travel.state.gov/content/visas/en/study-exchange/student.html>. After reading the introduction, go to the further information about the application process section, for your country.

Preparing For Your F-1 Visa Interview

This information was prepared by the Association of International Educators (NAFSA) for people who plan to enter the United States for the first time, specifically to study. For information on bringing dependents to the US, returning to continue studies, or renewing your visa, or for more details on how to apply for a student visa, refer to the US Department of State website: <https://travel.state.gov/content/visas/en.html>.

Steps

1. Contact your local [U.S. Consulate or Embassy](#) to ask about how to get an F-1 international student visa.
2. After you receive an I-20 form from the school that you want to attend, follow the U.S. Embassy/Consulate's instructions to schedule an interview for your F-1 student visa. It is important to apply for your student visa as far in advance as possible. Many consulates recommend that appointments be made no more than 90 days from the intended date of travel, but some can make earlier arrangements for interviews.
3. Pay the visa application fee by following instructions on your local [U.S. Embassy's or Consulate's web site](#).
4. If your I-20 was issued on or after September 1, 2004, and is marked for "dual/initial attendance" (see #3 on your I-20 form), you will also need to pay the \$200 SEVIS fee. http://www.nafsa.org/Resource_Library_Assets/Regulatory_Information/SEVIS_Fee_for_IEP_Students/

To Pay by Mail

- Get a Form I-901: Fee Remittance for Certain F, J, and M Nonimmigrants."
- Download the [I-901 form](https://www.ice.gov/sevis/i901) from <https://www.ice.gov/sevis/i901> or
- Ask for the form by phone at **703-603-3400** (inside the United States)
- Complete the Form I-901. Be sure to write your name exactly how it appears on your I-20 form.
- Payment can be made in U.S. dollars by credit card on fmjfee.com, or by check, money order or bank draft in the amount of \$200 USD, and is made payable to "The Department of Homeland Security, Immigration and Customs Enforcement."
- Many foreign banks are able to issue checks or money orders drawn on a U.S. bank. You may therefore obtain a check from a bank chartered or operated in the United States, a foreign subsidiary of a U.S. bank, or a foreign bank that has an arrangement with a U.S. bank to issue a money order or foreign draft that is drawn on a U.S. bank
- Mail the completed I-901 and payment to the address listed on Form I-901.
- A Form I-797C receipt confirmation letter should be mailed within 3 days of processing the fee. Be sure to make copies of this receipt letter, and keep it with your other important immigration documents.

To Pay Online

- Find the [I-901 Form](#)
- Complete the form online and supply the necessary Visa, MasterCard or American Express information. *Be sure to write your name exactly how it appears on your I-20 form.
- Print a copy of the online receipt.
- Be sure to make copies of your receipt, and keep it with your other important immigration documents
- You must bring the receipt of fee payment with you to the interview. If you have lost the receipt, the Visa Officer should be able to view your payment history in their database.
- If you are transferring schools, extending your program, applying for an F-2 dependent visa, or have paid this fee and been denied a visa within the last twelve months, you do not need to pay the \$200 SEVIS fee.

5. Prepare and bring to your visa interview the following:

- A passport that is valid for at least the next six months
- Form I-20 (sign the form under Item 11)
- School admission letter
- Completed visa applications (DS-156, DS-158, and, if applicable, DS-157)
- Two 2"x 2" photographs in the [prescribed format](#)

- A receipt for the visa application fee
- A receipt for the SEVIS fee. If you have not received an official receipt in the mail showing payment and you paid the fee electronically, the consulate will accept the temporary receipt you printed from your computer. If you do not have a receipt, the consulate may be able to see your payment electronically, if your fee payment was processed at least 3 business days before your interview.
- Financial evidence that shows you have sufficient funds to cover your tuition and living expenses during the period you intend to study.
- Any information that proves that you will return to your home country after finishing your studies in the United States. This may include proof of property, family, or other ties to your community.

Please see the State Department website (www.state.gov) and check the page for the U.S. consulate in your country for the most recent updates and details.

Ten Points to Remember when Applying for a Nonimmigrant Visa

(Modified from NAFSA, Association of International Educators & the U.S. Department of State)

You may apply for your visa up to 120 days prior to your start date. Please check the embassy website for information on how to schedule your appointment.

1. TIES TO YOUR HOME COUNTRY: Under U.S. law, all applicants for nonimmigrant visas, such as student visas, are viewed as intending immigrants until they can convince the consular officer that they are not. You must therefore be able to show that you have reasons for returning to your home country that are stronger than those for remaining in the United States. “Ties” to your home countries are the things that bind you to your hometown, homeland, or current place of residence: job, family, financial prospects that you own or will inherit, investments, etc. If you are a prospective undergraduate, the interviewing officer may ask about your specific intentions or promise of future employment, family or other relationships, educational objectives, grades, long-term plans and career prospects in your home country. Each person’s situation is different and there is no magic explanation or single document, certificate, or letter that will guarantee visa issuance.

2. DOCUMENTATION: Evidence of sufficient funds to cover expenses, as well as evidence of educational preparation may be requested. Make sure to include your letter of acceptance from Hampton University alongside your I-20. If you have immediate family members (parents, siblings) in the U.S., be prepared to explain why they are here and what they do in. It should be immediately clear to the consular officer what written documents you are presenting and what they signify. Lengthy written explanations cannot be read quickly or evaluated. Remember that the interview time is typically less than ten minutes.

3. LANGUAGE: Anticipate that the interview will be conducted in English and not in your native language. One suggestion is to practice English conversation with a native speaker before the interview, but do not prepare speeches. Americans generally use direct eye contact when communicating so it is advisable to do the same.

4. SPEAK FOR YOURSELF: Do not bring parents or family members with you to the interview. The consular officer wants to interview you, not your family. A negative impression is created if you are not prepared to speak on your own behalf. If you are a minor (under age 18) and need your parents there in case there are questions, for example about funding, they should wait in the waiting room.

5. KNOW THE EDUCATION PROGRAM AND HOW IT FITS YOUR CAREER PLANS: If you are not able to articulate the reasons you will study in a particular program in the United States, you may not succeed in convincing the consular officer that you are indeed planning to study, rather than to immigrate. You should also be able to explain how studying in the U. S. relates to your future professional career when you return home. Lastly, be prepared to answer the following question: What will you do if your visa application is denied?

6. BE BRIEF: Because of the volume of applications received, all consular officers are under considerable time pressure to conduct a quick and efficient interview. They must make a decision, for the most part, on the impressions they form during the first minute of the interview. Consequently, what you say first and the initial impression you create are critical to your success. Keep your answers to the officer's questions short and to the point and remember to speak clearly.

7. NOT ALL COUNTRIES ARE EQUAL: Applicants from countries with a history of terrorist activities may encounter additional assessment. Countries suffering economic problems or applicants from countries where students have remained in the U.S. as immigrants may also have a more difficulty obtaining visas – statistically, applicants from those countries are more likely to be intending to immigrate. If you are from such a country, you may be asked about job opportunities at home after your study in the U.S.

8. EMPLOYMENT: Your main purpose in coming to the United States should be to study, not for the chance to work after graduation. While a number of students do work over the course of their studies, such employment requires authorization and is incidental to the main purpose of completing their U.S. education. You must be able to clearly articulate your plan to return home at the end of your program.

9. APPLY IN YOUR HOME COUNTRY: Applicants for student visas should generally apply at the U.S. Embassy or Consulate with jurisdiction over their place of permanent residence. Although visa applicants may apply at any U.S. consular office abroad, it may be more difficult to qualify for the visa outside the country of permanent residence.

10. MAINTAIN A POSITIVE ATTITUDE: Do not engage the consular officer in an argument. If you are denied a student visa, request the reason you were denied in writing and ask the officer for a list of documents to bring in order to overcome the denial.

Travel Issues

International students enrolled at Hampton University who plan to travel outside the U.S. should be aware of the following issues:

1) **I-20:** A valid travel signature on page 3 of your current I-20 is necessary for travel. The travel signature is valid for one year and multiple entries for those studying. It is valid for 6 months for those on post-completion OPT.

2) **Passport:** The passport should be valid for 6 months beyond the date which they plan to re-enter the U.S.

3) **A valid U.S. visa.** If the visa has expired, arrangements should be made to get a new visa. For more information, see the OIE website at: <https://oie.gatech.edu/iss/home>.

4) **Automatic Revalidation of Visa if the student:**

- has an expired visa;
- is currently maintaining status in the U.S.;
- is NOT a national of Cuba, Iran, North Korea, Sudan, and Syria, Iraq, Egypt, Libya, Mali, Somalia, South Sudan, or Yemen
- and is visiting Canada or Mexico for less than 30 days

Under these qualifications, the student may re-enter the U.S. with an expired visa. The student will only need a valid passport, the passport with the expired visa (if in a different passport), and an I-20 with a valid travel signature. When the student leaves the US, they should keep their current I-94 card. It is important to know, however, that travelling to Canada or Mexico for convenience sake, in order to renew your visa is risky. If your visa is denied or your application is subjected to background or security checks, you more than likely will be stuck in Canada or Mexico for a significant amount of time. If your visa is denied for any reason you will be required to return to your home country, in order to re-apply. You will not be able to take advantage of automatic revalidation.

To view the Code of Federal Regulations regarding Automatic Revalidation of Visa, visit the following website: http://www.usimmlaw.com/VisaRevalidationReg_FAM.pdf

5) **Department of Homeland Security recommends students have their transcripts and proof of financial support** with them when they return.

6) **Special Registrants:** Special registrants must appear before an inspecting officer at the port of departure before leaving the US.

Frequently Asked Questions on Reentering to the US are on the Immigration and Custom Enforcement Website: http://www.ice.gov/sevis/travel/faq_f.htm

III. Maintaining Lawful Immigration Status

J-1 Scholar:

J-1 scholars must contact the Hampton University's Office of Human Resources (ext. 5250) for instructions related to maintaining status, work requirements and the like. For information about changes of status from F-1 to J-1 or from J-1 to F-1, scholars should consult both Human Resources and the Hampton University International Office (757-728-6914) for a complete review of current procedures.

F-1 Student:

Please read page two of your I-20 carefully before you sign it. All international students in F-1 status are obligated to follow regulations of the Bureau of Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) in order to maintain lawful immigration status during their stay in the US. The student is also responsible for maintaining F-1 status. When you complete and sign section 11 of the I-20, you certify that you have read and understood all of the terms and conditions of the F-1 document and agree to abide by them.

Students who fail to comply with the requirements listed below will be **out-of-status**. In order to maintain lawful F-1 immigration status, it is your responsibility, as a student, to do the following:

1. Keep your passport valid at all times. Provide the HU International Office with a copy of the passport pages showing the passport number, dates of validity and F-1 visa. Passports may be revalidated or reissued in the US by the embassy of the country that issued your passport. Students should apply for a new passport about 7-8 months PRIOR to the date of expiration. Keep your new passport stapled to the old one that still contains your F-1 visa. See the State Department website for new requirements for passports.
2. Keep your I-20 valid at all times. Students should check sections 4, 5, and 8 of the I-20 on a regular basis and notify the HU International Office immediately about any changes/declarations of major, degree level, or financial support. If you drop out of classes or below full-time course of study, your I-20 automatically becomes invalid. Students should also notify the HU International Office about any errors or misspellings on the I-20. Failure to maintain a valid and accurate I-20 can result in serious immigration problems for you. Your I-20 records are maintained on the State Department website (SEVIS) that must be up-to-date in order for you to maintain status and travel. When you are issued a new I-20, please staple it to the old one(s) as a continuous record of updates to your F-1 status.

Note: Notify the HU International Office the semester before you intend to graduate. Your expected completion date will need to be updated. The option to enroll in fewer classes for the final semester may affect your opportunity to qualify for Optional Practical Training and other benefits of F-1 status.

3. Attend the school you are authorized to attend as noted on your I-20 (section 2) and as noted on your visa or as changed by issuance of a new I-20. A student who attends Hampton University without authorization and an I-20 issued by the university, or who fails to comply with proper USCIS transfer procedures, is considered to be out-of-status and should consult the HU International Office immediately.

A student who has another school listed on his/her visa should consult with the HU International Office immediately to make sure the records are in order. However, if you transferred to Hampton University after attending another US institution, your visa remains valid with the former school's name on it.

4. Maintain full-time enrollment each semester and make progress towards the completion of your course of study (degree). Full-time enrollment is defined as 12 credit hours for all undergraduate students, including students in programs of the Department of Continuing Education, and 9 credit hours for graduate students. **Do not allow your course load to drop below this minimum.** Please see the section on Academic Probation. If you are not able to enroll in the next level of courses required for your major, you must still maintain a full course of study or arrange to leave the country until you can resume your intended course of study.

A few exceptions can be made to this full-time rule, but only with **prior written approval** from the Hampton University International Office. Students who fail to **obtain prior written approval on a new I-20 from the HU International Office before dropping below full-time enrollment** will be in violation of F-1 status.

If you are notified that you are on **academic probation** and must withdraw from classes and/or that you must follow certain restrictions in your course of study, contact the HU International Office **immediately** and follow procedures. Be prepared to return home in order to take the next steps to continue your studies. Failure to comply with regulations could result in denial of permission to resume your studies or to transfer lawfully to another institution.

5. Do not work off-campus without **prior written** authorization and a new I-20 from the Hampton University International Office. See instructions below. An Employment Authorization Document (EAD) from USCIS may also be required for certain types of employment. Do not work off-campus more than 20 hours per week while school is in session (during the fall and spring semesters).

6. Work on-campus no more than 20 hours per week while school is in session (during fall and spring semesters). Full-time on-campus employment (of more than 20 hours per week) is only permitted during vacation periods, if the student was enrolled full-time during the previous semester and will be enrolled full-time the following semester.

Reminder: J-1 scholars must comply with the requirements of their program. In most cases, this will limit their work opportunities. For any questions about authorization to work, J-1 scholars should contact the Office of Human Resources.

8. Report any changes of **address/name** and **phone number** to the Hampton University International Office **within 10 days**. This is a requirement of federal regulations. The Hampton University International Office must update your SEVIS records. Please note that University is required by law to keep this information up-to-date for all international students.

► In addition, you must notify the University Registrar's Office (the Hampton University International Office cannot do this for you). Include both your physical address and your mailing address and phone number.

9. Notify the HU International Office about any change of degree level (i.e. from a bachelor's to a master's degree.), or any changes or declarations within your major, and apply for a new I-20 within 30 days after completing your first degree or changing/declaring your major. You must also notify the Hampton University International Office of any other changes such as an extension of your program (i.e. the date when you expect to graduate) or an interruption of your program of study for academic or other reasons.

10. Notify the HU International Office if you plan to withdraw, transfer, or cease your enrollment at Hampton University for any reason; including academic probation. Students must notify the HU International Office before they interrupt or terminate their studies at the university (without completing the degree) and will have 15 days to depart the US. Students who do not notify the Hampton University International Office before terminating their studies must depart the US immediately and could face serious immigration problems if they are found to be in the United States during the academic year without being enrolled in an approved program of study.

11. Transfer Students— notify the HU International Office that you are transferring, notify the International Office or Designated School Official at the school you will be attending, and follow instructions for transferring your SEVIS records from one institution to the other, as well as for obtaining a new SEVIS I-20 from the new school. Report to the International Office (or other Designated School Official) at the new school within 15 days of beginning attendance. Failure to do so is a violation of the F-1 status. You will not be properly registered in SEVIS and will be out of status.

12. Apply for an F-1 program extension at least 60 days before the program expiration date on your current I-20, if you cannot complete your degree by the date listed in section 5 of your current I-20. F-1 program extensions can only be granted for certain reasons, and can only be granted prior to the date of expiration on the I-20, so it is essential to consult with the HU International Office in advance and take the proper steps to maintain status.

13. Notify the Hampton University International Office and leave the United States within 60 days after the program expiration on your I-20 (section 5) **or** your actual completion date, whichever is first. Failure to do so is a violation of the F-1 status.

Exceptions are made for the summer vacation between graduation and the beginning of studies at another institution, and for certain other brief periods **provided authorization is given.**

Note: Academic Probation: A student who is placed on academic probation may be ineligible to enroll at Hampton University and may **automatically lose F-1 status.** If you are notified that you are placed on academic probation, you must contact the HU International Office immediately. If you are not allowed to register for classes, you are required by law to leave the country within two weeks. You may need to reapply for admission to the university. A new I-20 will be required to re-enter the United States, in order to re-enroll at Hampton University and temporary restrictions to work eligibility will apply.

14. Maintain contact with the Hampton University International Office and the USCIS website to learn about any announcements, changes in USCIS regulations, mandatory USCIS registration requirements or other matters that affect international students in the United States. Check your Hampton University pipeline email at least once per week for any important notices and sign-up for the International Students Association email list (see International Students Association, below).

▶ Additional immigration related information is provided in the section below, “Important Immigration Terms and Information for Students in F-1 Status”, is available by email from the HU International Office (internationaloffice@hamptonu.edu):

All immigration request forms (such as Request for a Withdrawal, Request for a Dependent I-20, etc.) can also be obtained electronically and are included with this handbook.

▶ Periodic email messages and announcements via the Hampton University student email system will contain important immigration information that you will need to know about concerning your lawful F-1 status, so you are expected to read them very carefully. If, for some reason, you are not receiving the email messages, it is your responsibility to inform the HU International Office immediately.

▶ If you have any questions or uncertainties about your responsibilities for maintaining your lawful F-1 status about the new state or federal reporting requirements, or if you think you may need to apply for a reinstatement of lawful status, it is your responsibility to see the HU International as soon as possible.

▶ If you apply to change to another status such as H-1, you should work closely with the Hampton University International Office and notify the office when the change of status is approved so that your SEVIS records can be updated.

What does "Out of Status" Mean?

Students who violate their status (even by accident) are considered “**out-of-status.**” A student may fall out of status by failing to maintain a full course of study, failing to leave the country after interrupting or completing a course of study, or failing to arrange for an extension prior to the expected completion date on the I-20. Students must contact the HU International Office and

apply to the immigration authorities for a reinstatement. Unless they are reinstated by the USCIS, they will not be eligible for any of the benefits of F-1 status, including employment of any kind. **A violation of status could result in immediate deportation**, as explained on the I-20. Please contact the Hampton University International Office if you have any questions about maintaining your status as a full time student.

Reinstatement: Students who have fallen out of status may be able to apply for reinstatement of lawful status under certain circumstances. They must see the HU International Office as soon as possible for current procedures. Those who remain in the US while out of lawful immigration status, and do not take appropriate steps to apply for reinstatement may be subject to detention. They may be barred from reentering the US for up to 10 years or may suffer other, permanent restrictions on their right to obtain visas for entry into the United States. This regulation applies to students placed on academic probation who are not eligible to enroll for classes. Please see the International Office Coordinator if you have any questions or uncertainties about maintaining your lawful immigration status.

Important Definitions

Immigration Terms and Regulations for Visa Holders

New regulations for F-1 visa holders went into effect on January 1, 2003. These regulations are updated regularly. Please remain in touch with the HU International Office for the most current information. If you hear contradictory information from someone who came to study in the United States some years before you did, you should check with the HU International Office to be sure about current requirements. Materials and announcements will be available by email, from the Hampton University International Office and on the website of the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (<http://www.uscis.gov/portal/site/uscis>).

Passport: Your passport is your government's permit for you to leave and reenter your country, and to visit other countries as well. Make sure your passport meets the requirements before leaving and returning to the United States, as the US government requires you to keep your passport valid at all times. Check the expiration date on your passport. If the passport will be expiring within the next six months, you should request an extension or renewal. Only your country's government can renew your passport. You will need to contact your Embassy or Consulate here, in the US, (www.embassy.org) and ask about forms, fees, procedures, and the time necessary to extend or renew your passport. If your US visa is still valid, keep your expired passport with your new one so that the valid visa can be used for reentry to the US. Otherwise, you will need to apply for a new visa the next time you leave the US. **A photocopy of the validity dates and number of your passport must be provided to the HU International Office and updated when you obtain a new passport.**

Visa: The visa is the stamp placed in your passport with your photo, which allows you to enter the US. It is only for entry into the country. Your I-20 and I-94 confirm your status while studying in the US. The visa was issued at the US Embassy/Consulate when you presented your I-20 or DS-2019, financial certification, and other required documents. The visa notes the purpose of your visit to the US (student, visitor, etc.), the last date you can enter the US, and the number of entries you are permitted. Some visas are valid for the duration of your studies, and some visas are issued for a shorter time. It is not necessary to maintain a valid visa while you remain within the US, but you must have a valid visa to reenter and continue your studies after travel abroad. An F-1 or J-1 visa cannot be obtained or renewed within the U. S.

Visa renewals: An F-1 visa can only be obtained at the US Consulates/Embassies outside the country. Please see the International Office Coordinator if you need to apply for a new visa. **A photocopy of your visa should be provided to the HU International Office and updated each time you renew your visa.** If you entered the US on another type of visa and changed to F-1 status, you must apply for an F-1 visa the next time you travel abroad, in order to re-enter the country. Please check with the International Office Coordinator at least 30 days in advance of travel abroad to make sure your documents are in order and to allow enough time for the visa application or renewal procedure.

Visa procedures may take from one to six or eight weeks to process, depending on your country of origin. Security checks are required in certain countries. The J-1 program sets strict limits on renewal, extension or change of program. Contact the appropriate school official prior to the expiration date on your documents if you have questions about renewals or extensions.

Visas for travel to other countries: If you plan to leave the US and travel to Canada, Mexico or any other country you may be required to obtain a visa. Policies vary from country to country depending on your citizenship.

Renewal in a third country: Some students wish to renew their visa in Canada, Mexico or another country rather than returning to their home country. US embassies are not required to review visa applications from third country applicants (students who are not citizens of the country where they apply for the visa), but most will do so if the applicant contacts them for an appointment. Security background checks may be required, and if the application is denied, the student will not be able to re-enter the US. See the State Department website and International Office Coordinator for updates on this matter. As of December 2003, F-1 students may visit Canada and Mexico for thirty days and return without a new visa, but if they apply for a visa and are denied, they may not return to the United States.

Visa with the name of another institution: If you obtained a visa to attend another institution and then transferred to Hampton University, you may continue to use the visa as long as it is valid, provided you have an I-20 proving that you are in status at Hampton University.

I-94 Arrival/Departure Record (I-94 Card): This was issued to you by the airline personnel and is usually stapled to your passport by the Immigration Officer at the US Port of Entry (POE). This very important card contains your name, date of birth, country of citizenship, immigration status, the date you entered the US, the amount of time you can remain in the US, and your "Admission Number;" which is used to keep record of the dates you leave and reenter the US. F-1 students are admitted into the US until "D/S" or "Duration of Status." For F-1 students, Duration of Status is defined as the period of time for which you are pursuing a full course of study with a valid I-20, and any authorized period of practical training, plus a 60-day grace period during which you have to depart the US. For other classifications, the length of stay will depend upon the terms of the program. The I-94 card must be kept in a safe place.

I-20(Certificate of Eligibility): The I-20 is the document that is used to obtain the F-1 visa abroad, to enter the US for the first time, and to transfer from one school to another. This 3-page document is created by the institution on the SEVIS website that is operated by the State Department and USCIS. On this document, the school certifies your academic level, major field of study, expected completion date, financial ability, and reporting date. This information can be checked and verified by USCIS or State Department Officials.

A new SEVIS I-20 must be requested from Hampton University:

- a. when you begin a new level of study (such as moving from a master's degree to a doctorate, etc.),
- b. when changing or declaring your major,
- c. when requesting authorization to work off campus,
- d. when preparing to leave the US for vacation periods or necessary travel. In many cases, the Coordinator will endorse your current I-20, but it may require issuance of a new one.
- e. when extending beyond your original program completion date,
- f. if you need to drop below full time enrollment (prior authorization from the International Coordinator is required for this).
- g. if you are re-admitted to Hampton University after an approved leave of absence or a period of academic probation.

Your initial I-20 (or DS-2019) is stamped by the Immigration Officer at the US Port of Entry and returned to you the first time you enter the US for your studies. For F-1 students and J-1 scholars, this important document becomes your permanent record of all immigration related matters while you are in the US. You should keep all I-20s, DS-2019s or other immigration documents in your permanent records because they may be requested if you change status or return to the US in future years. All important immigration information is recorded on this form or in the SEVIS records, including your admission number, school of approved study, school transfer information, employment authorizations, and travel endorsements. Do not surrender your I-20 or DS 2019 when leaving the US or surrender it to anyone other than an INS official or the Inbound Immigration Specialist. **When you arrive at your institution, you must present the stamped initial I-20 to the HU International Office, (or in Human Resources for J-1 scholars) who will record in SEVIS the fact that you have arrived and begun your studies.**

D/S: The immigration officials write this on your I-20 and your I-94. It stands for "Duration of Status" and is the period of time for which you have been admitted into the US. For F-1 students, this period is defined as the time during which you are pursuing a full course of study, with a valid I-20, plus any authorized period of practical training, plus a 60-day grace period. F-1 students have 60 days after graduation to obtain a new I-20 to enroll in another degree program, after completing your Hampton University degree. After completing all full time study (or, for J-1 scholars after your program end date) you are required to depart the US. You must notify the coordinator of the International Office and leave the United States immediately if you drop out of status, withdraw from school prior to completing a degree, or go on academic leave.

EAD: (Employment Authorization Document): This is a card issued by the USCIS that allows a student to work off-campus for a specified period of time. It does not grant permanent residency and is not a "Green Card." Applications for the EAD must be submitted by the International Coordinator, accompanied by a recommendation for the type of work authorization requested and other documentation that the student is required to prepare, including

payment of the required fee.

Full-Time Student Status: If you are in F-1 student status, you must register for and complete each semester as a full-time student. Full-time study is 12 credits per semester for undergraduates and 9 credits for graduate students. F-1 graduate students needing to drop below 9 credit hours, and F-1 undergraduates planning to drop below 12 credit hours, must consult with the International Office Coordinator to determine whether they are eligible and **to obtain prior written USCIS authorization** before dropping below a full-time course load. If your academic advisor recommends that you take fewer hours, please ask the professor to contact the HU International Office at 757-728-6914 immediately. Only special circumstances, such as medical reasons or a one-time-only adjustment of course load may be approved. Failure to receive prior written approval from the HU International Office will result in the immediate loss of the student's legal immigration status. A student on academic probation is not eligible to enroll at the university. **Academic probation automatically revokes F-1 status and all privileges thereof and the student must leave the country immediately.** For J-1 students, the required amount of study and other activity such as teaching or research will depend on the terms of your exchange program.

Transfers: F-1 students who are planning to study at a new school, including those who are about to graduate from Hampton University, must notify the International Office Coordinator at Hampton University. You must also contact the Inbound Immigration Specialist at the new school to ask about their transfer procedures. The required paperwork may differ from school to school. After you have been admitted to the new institution, the HU International Office at Hampton University must transfer your SEVIS records to the new school. The transfer of records on SEVIS is permanent. Students who transfer must register with the Inbound Immigration Specialist at the new school within **15 days** of beginning attendance, in order to complete the USCIS transfer process on time. Failure to do so will result in the loss of your lawful F-1 status. If a student graduates from one US institution and enrolls for a new degree, the USCIS still considers this a "transfer" of his/her immigration status and record to the next school and requires students to follow the same transfer process (notify the first school and request transfer of the records to the second). After graduating from one school, you have 60 days to obtain an I-20 for a new program of study. If you have not completed this procedure within 60 days, you must leave the country and complete the process from your home abroad.

Extension of Program: The Bureau of Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) allows students in F-1 status to apply for a program extension under certain circumstances. If you are unable to complete your program before the end-date listed on your I-20 (section 5) because of compelling medical needs such as documented illnesses, or academic reasons such as changes of major or research topics or unexpected research problems, you may be eligible for a program extension. Delays caused by academic problems are not acceptable for a program extension. USCIS has a very strict deadline regarding the extension of program. Students who fail to submit the required paperwork by the deadline may fall out-of-status and may need to apply for reinstatement to legal F-1 status. If you anticipate that you will not be able to complete your degree by the date listed in section 5 of your I-20, you should talk to the HU International Office

at least two months before the completion date on the current I-20.

USCIS Website

The US Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) replaced the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) in 2003. It is under the Department of Homeland Security. The USCIS is responsible for administering the regulations concerning all temporary visitors to the United States, as well as those applying for citizenship. It provides frequent updates and announcements on its website www.uscis.gov/portal/site/uscis/. In addition, all of the necessary forms are available for download in PDF form. Please note that some of the forms have not yet been updated to reflect new regulations, procedures and fees. Before using or submitting any of the forms, be sure to check with the HU International Office for the latest USCIS/SEVIS procedures and fees. This includes forms that you can fill out and submit online. Be sure to ask for help.

Department of State Website

For all information about student visa requirements, including procedures for students from certain countries, please see the Department of State Website at <https://travel.state.gov/content/visas/en.html> and review all of the information and requirements carefully, in advance of your first student visa application or application to renew your visa.

Work Authorization for International Students in F-1 Status Before or After Completion of Studies:

Employment: Employment, including self-employment, is defined as the rendering of services on either a part-time or full-time basis for compensation, financial or otherwise. Many international students care to know whether they may work while studying in the US. In general, there are 4 types of employment options available to students in F-1 status:

1. On-campus Employment,
2. Optional Practical Training,
3. Curricular Practical Training, and
4. Severe Economic Hardship Employment (2, 3 and 4 serve as examples of off-campus employment).

Employment is a “benefit” of F-1 status and is available only to those students who have maintained lawful F-1 status. The HU International Office has reference materials and other information to help you understand the regulations that affect you and how to maintain status.

On-campus employment

F-1 students in status may work **on campus 20 hours a week or less** (full-time during vacations). For suggestions about finding on-campus work, please consult with the HU International Office. Please note that you must present a written offer of work and apply for a US Social Security number before you can begin working.

Off-campus employment

International Students in F-1 status are only permitted to work off-campus under certain circumstances and only after receiving **prior written** endorsement on a new I-20 from the HU International Office. For some types of employment, an application must be submitted to USCIS with a fee payment, and the applicant must await issuance of a work card (EAD). The process takes at least 90 days. USCIS regulates various types of employment authorizations that are available to international students through the F-1 federal regulations. The HU International Office is authorized to provide information on F-1 employment options. The Coordinator can authorize certain types of employment and is the only official on campus authorized to submit applications to the USCIS for other authorized forms of off-campus work for F-1 students.

Optional Practical Training (OPT) is one type of employment authorization for off-campus work. The two others are Curricular Practical Training (CPT) and work in cases of Severe Financial Hardship. Please see the descriptions and application forms at the end of this manual.

<p>If you are found by immigration authorities to be working without this authorization, you will immediately lose your F-1 status and could be subject to penalties including deportation.</p>

<p>I have read and understand this statement. _____</p>

Note: All students who have been authorized to work in the US must possess a social security number.

Termination of Legal Status

F-1 students must not work past the last date they are authorized to work by INS on their EAD card. Within 60 days of the last date of employment authorization on the EAD all students must depart the US, begin a new program of study or apply for a change of status. Failure to do so is a violation of the F-1 status. Any student placed on academic probation automatically loses status (see Academic Probation).

F-1 OPTIONAL PRACTICAL TRAINING (OPT) INSTRUCTIONS

Optional Practical Training is defined as “temporary employment for practical training directly related to the student’s major area of study.” To be eligible, you must have been enrolled for classes for at least one academic year (fall and spring semesters). Pre-completion OPT is always part-time and can be used at any time during your studies. Post-completion OPT is full-time and is granted only after graduation or completion of your degree program. A maximum of 12 months of OPT employment is permitted.

WHAT TO BRING TO YOUR OPT APPOINTMENT

You should make an appointment to meet with the Inbound Immigration Specialist. Please bring ORIGINAL versions of the following program documents with you for your appointment:

Your **current I-20**

The **Departmental Confirmation letter**, on department letterhead (see sample letter)

Your **ORIGINAL passport, visa, and I-94 card** (no photocopies)

Two passport photos (taken within the last six months), which meet the USCIS color photograph requirement. *Please write your full name and I-94 number in pencil on the back of each photo.*

OPT Questionnaire

Completed I-765 Form (Application for Employment Authorization).

Fee for processing your application - this should be a money order or cashier’s check, made payable to the *Department of Homeland Security*

If applicable, copies of any previously issued EAD cards (front and back)

The Inbound Immigration Specialist will review your documents and process a new I-20 for you, showing the information for the OPT Employment Authorization. The Inbound Immigration Specialist will also prepare your OPT package for you to mail to USCIS. This packet must be mailed and arrive at the USCIS Service Center within 30 days of the day it is prepared. After you send the application packet to USCIS, we will receive a Notice of Action at our office. This will serve as a receipt of your packet, and will contain a receipt number for you to check your case status online. We will then receive your Employment Authorization Document (EAD), which is your OPT card. When these items arrive at our office, we will copy them for your file, then send an email to you, so that you can pick them up.

IMPORTANT

If you choose to apply for OPT, you must do so between the 90 days before graduation or during the 60 day grace period from your graduation day. The OPT application MUST arrive at the USCIS Service Center before the 60 day grace period expires.

Students planning to apply must do so before the deadline (this date will become the “graduation/completion date”)

OPT FACTS

You must be in valid full-time student status for at least 2 semesters at the time of application (fall and spring semesters only).

Post-completion OPT is granted to students who will work after graduation/completion of the degree program.

You are eligible for 12 months of full-time OPT for each higher degree earned.

You may apply for OPT either within 90 days before you graduate or complete your coursework, or during the 60 day grace period following graduation day.

OPT is obtained through the US Citizenship and Immigration Service (USCIS).

If your OPT is approved you will be issued an EAD (Employment Authorization Document) card, which you must have before you begin working.

You choose the date you wish to begin working, but the start date cannot be more than 60 days after your graduation/degree completion.

You do not need to have a job when you apply for OPT.

You must work in a position directly related to your field of study.

Post-completion OPT is considered full-time employment.

The application fee for OPT is payable to the Department of Homeland Security.

Leaving the country after graduation but before you begin working is a risk.

If you leave the country, be sure to have your EAD card, your I-20 (signed within the last 6 months), a job or job offer, a valid passport, and a valid visa for re-entry.

You are required to maintain contact with HU International Office while on OPT, in order to keep your SEVIS record updated with your address and your contact information.

HOW LONG DOES IT TAKE?

It can take up to 3 months for you to receive your EAD card. If you have your receipt number from your Notice of Action, you may check the status of your application at:

<https://egov.uscis.gov/casestatus/landing.do>.

WHAT HAPPENS IF I START A NEW PROGRAM OR MY OPT EXPIRES?

When a student is admitted to a new program or transfers to another program, the remaining portion of OPT is terminated when the sponsoring school registers the student for the new

program in SEVIS. At the completion of OPT, students will have a 60-day grace period to leave the country, change visa status, or transfer to a new program of study with a starting date no later than 5 months after OPT completion date.

Obtaining a Social Security Number

Please Note: The Hampton University Identification Number (HUID) is not a Social Security Number! When you are accepted at Hampton University, the Registrar will assign you a unique student identification number. You may use this number to identify your records throughout your studies. However, it is valid only on the Hampton University campus. This is not a US Social Security number and you may not use it to work.

The nearest Social Security Office is located at 1521 Hardy Cash Drive, Hampton, VA 23666 which is approximately 5 miles from campus. The telephone number is (800) 772-1213.

A larger office that deals more frequently with international students is located in Newport News:

11706 Jefferson Avenue
Newport News, VA 23606
Phone: (800) 772-1213
Hours: 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Monday – Friday (Closes at 12:00pm on Wednesdays)

For additional information about this government agency, see the Social Security Administration official web-site: www.ssa.gov/

Income Tax Return Information for F-1 and J-1 Students

Withholding Tax: All students who work are advised that a percentage of their employment/assistantship/scholarship funds may be subject to tax withholding laws unless they are entitled to, and apply for, a tax exemption each and every calendar year in the Payroll Office. For assistance with this process, please see the School of Business. A professor who is experienced in tax matters is available to help with filing the income tax return.

Income Tax Withholding Exemptions and Tax Treaty Forms: Many countries have negotiated a tax treaty with the United States, which could exempt their citizens from tax liabilities for a period of time while studying in the United States. If you work on campus, the Payroll Office will help you find out whether any tax treaties that might exist with your country and will provide you with the necessary paperwork in order to apply for the treaty benefit.

Treaty benefits from tax withholding must be applied for each year; they are not granted automatically. Taxes will be withheld automatically unless treaty exemptions are applied for in advance of receiving payment. The Payroll Office cannot provide any tax refunds after the taxes have been withheld. All refunds for taxes withheld must be applied after completing the Income Tax Return each spring.

More detailed information about how foreign students pay income tax can be found on the website

of The Internal Revenue Service:

<https://www.irs.gov/individuals/international-taxpayers/foreign-students-and-scholars>

<https://www.irs.gov/individuals/international-taxpayers/aliens-which-form-to-file>

<https://www.irs.gov/forms-instructions>

Mail all Federal Income Tax Returns and 8843 forms to the following address:

Internal Revenue Service Center

Philadelphia, PA 19255

For requirements concerning the State of Virginia income tax requirements, please see the Payroll Office. Forms are also available on website of Virginia State Government:

<https://www.tax.virginia.gov/forms>

Obtaining a Driver's License

Before driving, it is necessary to have a driver's license from the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV). Check with the HU International Office for any changes to these procedures before applying for a Drivers' License.

Virginia Department of Motor Vehicles (804) 497-7100 located at 1 Franklin St. Hampton, VA 23669. – Note: See the Hampton University International Office **first** for any new procedures and documentation requirements, since procedures are constantly changing.

Applying for a Virginia Driver's License will take some time and requires special documentation. You will need precise instructions on the current procedures, which frequently change. If you already possess a valid driver's license from your home country, you should not need to take a Virginian driver's education course. Instead, you will need complete several steps at the DMV. Steps:

- Provide proof of legal presence
- Provide social security card
- Provide two documents that show proof of Virginia residency
- Take a vision screening at the DMV
- Take a knowledge exam at the DMV
- You will have to schedule an appointment for your on-road driving test at the DMV
- The fee for the license is \$32

Items you need to apply: <https://www.dmv.org/va-virginia/apply-license.php>

Acceptable documents to use to apply: <https://www.dmv.virginia.gov/webdoc/pdf/dmv141.pdf>

A few notes about acquiring an automobile:

When purchasing a car, there are several procedures that must be followed. Car insurance must be purchased before the car itself is bought. Consult several agents when inquiring about the cost of insurance. Many insurance companies require that you already hold a valid Virginia driver's license before beginning the application process. Once the car is bought, registration tags (which must be renewed annually) should be purchased from DMV. The car must always have a current State Inspection sticker (renewed yearly) displayed on the windshield. You can have the car inspected at many service stations for a small fee. Personal property tax is imposed on all car owners at a rate of 4.2% of the current book value of the car. You will automatically be billed semi-annually once you have registered the car with DMV. You must also display a current City decal (renewed annually) on your windshield; available from the City Treasurer's Office.

University Police (757-727-5259) Whipple Barn – Information on University registration and parking permits.

Treasurer's Office (757-727-6374) 1 Franklin Street, Hampton, VA – Sells city decals which are required for all vehicles registered in the City of Hampton.

IV. Hampton University and the Community

Getting Information about Hampton University

Check the website: Important information about the University is available on the University website www.hamptonu.edu.

Obtain an official Hampton University e-mail address: All students are required to obtain a Hampton University email address as soon as they register for classes. Official communications from the University, especially the Hampton University International Office, will come to that email address. Below are some details that may be helpful to new international students when they first arrive, prior to orientation and registration.

Pay close attention to important dates on the University Calendar, posted on the Website <http://registrar.hamptonu.edu/calendar.cfm>

Students should familiarize themselves with important dates, such as periods of time when the residence halls are closed and deadlines for changing their academic programs each semester.

American universities set deadlines after which students may not withdraw from the courses in which they enroll. Early in each semester there is a deadline to change (i.e. drop and add classes) without the changes appearing on their academic record. Please remember that F-1 students may not drop below 12 credits for undergraduate and 9 credits for a graduate student. After the middle of the semester, students may not drop a course under any circumstances. Students who have not attended a class and are unable to catch up with the required work may not drop the class. Instead, they will receive an "F" in any such class. **Attend class and keep up with your work!**

The residence halls close during the 5-day Thanksgiving break, at the end of the examination period each fall and spring semester, and during spring break. All students must arrange for a place to stay during those times, either with friends or relatives, or with a host family in the community. Please see the HU International Office if you have difficulty arranging for a place to stay. Local churches often invite international students to spend the 5-day Thanksgiving holiday with them.

Traditional American Holidays

The university is closed on those marked *

*Martin Luther King Jr. Birthday (3rd Monday in January) – A Baptist minister and passionate fighter for civil rights through non-violent action, King was assassinated in 1968. No classes are held, but campus observances are scheduled on that day.

Valentine’s Day (February 14) – Not a legal holiday. In the US, cards are often given to close friends and loved ones as well as to sweethearts.

President’s Day (Third Monday in February) – This national holiday honors U.S. Presidents. Government offices and banks are closed.

Easter Sunday (March or April) – A Christian holiday widely observed in the US, it celebrates the resurrection of Jesus. The secular Easter tradition is to dye eggs different colors and give baskets of candy to children.

*Memorial Day (Last Monday in May) – This national holiday is dedicated to the memory of all those who died during wars. Government offices, banks and the university are closed.

*Independence Day (July 4) – A national holiday celebrating the signing of the American Declaration of Independence. Most stores, government offices, banks and the university are closed.

*Labor Day (First Monday in September) – This national holiday honors the country’s working people. Most stores, government offices, banks and the university are closed.

Veteran’s Day (November 11) – A day set aside to honor all men and women who served in the Armed Forces of the US. Government offices, banks and some businesses are closed.

Halloween or Harvest Day (October 31) – A traditional day for children (and adults) to dress in costumes and have parties. Children go “trick or treating” to homes for candy.

*Thanksgiving Day (Fourth Thursday in November) – Established as a National Holiday by Abraham Lincoln, it honors the first settlers and is a day set aside to give thanks for the good things in our lives. Large family dinners are common. The University closes at noon on Wednesday and reopens on the following Monday.

*Christmas Day (December 25) – The celebration of the birth of Christ in the Christian faith. This is also a time when families decorate trees and exchange gifts. The American Christmas tradition is that Santa Claus brings gifts to children. The University closes during the 3rd week in December and reopens on the first Monday after New Years Day, with classes beginning one week later. Refer to your university calendar for specific dates.

Transportation

Closest Airports to the City of Hampton

The area is served by most major US airlines, including Delta, United, USAir, Continental and a variety of regional carriers. Connections are available to all major US hubs (Washington, New York City, Chicago, Philadelphia, Atlanta, etc.) and from there to destinations around the world. Groome Transport Service provides limousine service from the airports to any address in the City of Hampton.

Norfolk International Airport (ORF), 1.5 miles east of I-64, 2200 Norview Avenue, Norfolk, VA (857-3200). Try their website takeorf.com for special low fares. Visit <http://www.norfolkairport.com/>.

Newport News-Williamsburg International Airport (PHF), Bland Avenue at Jefferson Avenue, Newport News, VA (877-0221). <https://flyphf.com/>.

Trains

Amtrak – National rail passenger service provides service to the Hampton area with connections in Richmond and Washington, D.C. The nearest Amtrak station is about ten miles from the University at 9304 Warwick Blvd., Newport News, VA (245-3589). www.amtrak.com

Bus

Nationwide bus service is provided by **Greyhound Bus Service** - The Hampton Station is about two miles from the university at 2 W. Pembroke Avenue, Hampton, VA (722-9861). www.greyhound.com. Students can apply for a discount program.

City Bus Service

Hampton Roads Transit (HRT) - Hampton Transportation Center, 2 W. Pembroke Avenue, Hampton, VA (route information 723-3344 or visit gohrt.com or www.hrtransit.com) serves Hampton, Newport News, Norfolk and Yorktown seven days a week. Bus Routes 2 and 9 run near Hampton University. Transfers, available at Hampton Transportation Center and other transfer locations, are required to change buses and continue to your destination.

Hampton University Pirate Express Shuttle Bus

Each ride costs \$2.00 USD and cash is not accepted, students must use their Pirate Power Card (and it must have a minimum balance of \$4.00). Shuttle pick-up and drop-off is located at the HU Cafeteria Entrance. See this site for specific shuttle times throughout each week: http://police.hamptonu.edu/pirate_shuttle

Accommodations

For students arriving with their families, prior to the opening of the residence halls, the only hotel within walking distance is the Crowne Plaza Hotel – Hampton Marina. It is located on the harbor, overlooking the university, at 700 Settlers Landing Road, Hampton, VA 23669. (757) 727-9700 or www.crowneplaza.com (Rates approximately \$90-\$200 per night). A wide range of accommodations are available in the area, but a car or taxi is required to get to the university. A list of hotels serving the Hampton area may be found at www.hamptonva.areaguides.net/. Most are located near the Peninsula Town Center, a major shopping area about four miles north of the University on Interstate 64. These include The Comfort Inn, 1916 Coliseum Drive - Hampton, VA 23666 USA, EconoLodge, 2708 W Mercury Blvd - Hampton, VA 23666, Ramada (1905 Coliseum Drive), Hampton Inn (3101 Coliseum Drive), all in the same area. Others in the area include La Quinta, Quality Inn and Red Roof Inn. All of these hotels have websites for convenient reservation arrangements.

Housing

The university offers services to help you choose among available housing on campus and the community. A reminder: notify the Hampton University International Office and the INS whenever your address changes.

On campus the Dean of Women (727-5486) and the Dean of Men (727-5303) provide support services such as housing, counseling, guidance, residential programming, training in social and cultural values, and serve as the keeper of the student locator system for all students of the University.

The Off Campus Housing Office (727-6746), provides students with updated listings of apartments, townhouses and condominiums available for rent, lease or sale. Hampton Harbor Apartments, 8A Harbor Avenue (723-0559) offer two-bedroom apartments with two full baths, private patio or balcony, mini-blinds, formal dining room, washer/dryer connections, central air-conditioning, and a fully equipped kitchen. These apartments are in walking distance of the campus and are located close to shopping, dining and laundry/dry cleaners. NOTE: Hampton Harbors is independently operated and is not a subset of University housing services.

You may also consult the classified section of the local newspaper (The Daily Press) for housing. If you have a community host or student host, ask for assistance when considering housing choices.

Information for Renters (Leasing, Utilities, Rental Policies)

Before making any verbal commitment or signing any agreement, ask questions. Request 24 hours to review the contract before returning with a response. Never be afraid to ask questions concerning housing, details about the lease and all related information that is not clear to you. Before renting a room or apartment it is useful to ask the following:

What are the terms of the Lease?

Is the Apartment furnished? If not, consult “Furniture-Renting and Leasing” in the Yellow Pages of the phone book.

Is there a damage or security deposit? How much is it? When will it be refunded? What is the interest rate of the deposit?

When is the rent due?

What are the cooking facilities?

What utilities (such as electricity, gas, heat, telephone) are included in the rent, if any?

What is the average monthly utility cost not covered in the rent? (Sometimes utility companies will keep records of the highest and lowest bills for the house or apartment).

What are the restrictions on children or pets?

Is the area safe at night, especially for walking?

Is parking available? Where is the nearest bus line?

Is it possible to sublet?

Are there any special rules or regulations set up by the landlord?

Ask to see the house or apartment first before agreeing to rent.

A lease is a legal document, an agreement between the tenant and the landlord specifying the obligations of each. A lease is designed to protect both the tenant and the landlord. Before signing a lease, be sure that you have inspected the premises and that you understand all terms of the lease.

Utilities - Utility companies usually charge a deposit and/or connection fee that may vary depending on credit and whether or not you previously had service.

Local Utility Services:

Cable TV: Cox Communications 224-1111 (there are also other local providers such as Verizon, Direct TV, etc.)

Electricity: Dominion Virginia Power 1-888-667-3000

Gas: Virginia Natural Gas 873-1322

Water, Sewer, Trash Collection: Waterworks 247-8421

Telephone: Verizon 954-6222 and other providers

Telephone – In the US it is customary to use the telephone to set up meetings or appointments (with professors, doctors, repairmen, etc.). The billing policy for individual calls depends on your choice of service. It is not appropriate to make long distance calls from other people's phones unless you have the permission of the tenant/homeowner. Phone numbers preceded by "1-800", "1-888" and "1-866" are free of charge and are often available for services requiring long distance phone calls. If you are having problems with your phone, call your telephone provider. Using a pre-paid telephone card or cell phone can help you remain aware of how much you are spending on long distance calls. It is not appropriate to use a cell phone during classes or meetings. Cell phones are not allowed in examination rooms.

Moving out of a room or apartment – If you wish to move out before the end of the lease, consult the landlord. It may be possible to find someone to sublet your apartment from you. Written approval from the landlord might be required. Fulfill all terms of the lease by moving out when your lease ends.

The premises should be clean, including the refrigerator and the oven, to insure the return of the security/damage deposit. Feel free to remind the landlord to return the deposit to you. Ask questions about any money withheld from the deposit and the reason why it was withheld. Consult your list of damages signed by the landlord (which you read before signing the lease).

Notify the post office to forward mail to your new address. First class mail can be forwarded overseas for a period of time. Also notify the Hampton University International Office and the Dean of Men or Women of changes of your address and/or phone number. You should also notify the Office of the Registrar and your major departments of these changes.

If you have time in between leases or if you are in University housing during the academic year and are traveling for the summer, you may need a place to store your furniture and clothes. For information on storage holding, consult the Yellow Pages of the phone book under “Storage-Household and Commercial.”

Postal and shipping services – The United States Postal Service provides a variety of services, including air and sea mail, parcel post, express mail, registered mail, money orders, stamps, postage and information.

Local United States Post Offices:

Olde Hampton Station 89 Lincoln Street Hampton, VA 23669 Ph. 722-1903
Main Post Office 809 Aberdeen Road Hampton, VA 23669 Ph. 826-7585
Phoebus Station 102 E. Mellen Street Hampton, VA 23663 Ph. 723-0121

All mail coming to Hampton University will be received at the University Mail Room, located on the first floor of the Stone Building. Mail boxes are available through the mail room. Postal services are not provided; however, there is a vending machine on the opposite side of the lobby where postage stamps can be purchased. Stamps can also be purchased at the Collegiate Bookstore at Hampton Harbors. Telegrams, Moneygrams and Mailgrams are provided by Western Union. To find out about services, fees and locations call 1-800-325-6000.

Shipping – See “Freight Forwarding” and “Air Cargo & Package Express Service” in the Yellow Pages of the phone book.

Express Delivery Service – US Postal Service – 1-800-222-1811 www.usps.com Federal Express – www.fedex.com/us/

1-800-238-5355: United Parcel Service (UPS) – 1-800-742-5877. For more listings see “Delivery Service” in the Yellow Pages of the phone book. Central Warehouse (727-5242) offers the following shipping services: United Parcel Service and Airborne (next day; 2 day, 3 day and ground).

Banking

US banks offer many kinds of financial services, including checking and savings accounts, foreign currency conversion, bank drafts, money orders, credit cards, loans, traveler's checks and safe deposit boxes for valuables. Bank of America is located in the Collegiate Bookstore at Hampton Harbors. Most banks offer similar services, but there may be minor differences, such as the amount of interest earned in various types of accounts and services to accommodate currency exchange and the overseas transfer of money. It is important to investigate the differences before choosing a bank.

Opening an account – Money may be deposited in various forms: cash, a bank draft, cashier's check or traveler's check, all payable in US dollars. There is usually a minimum requirement for a deposit (the amount varies with the bank) and you must bring your passport with you. If you are a student, bring your Hampton University ID number; if you do not yet have an ID card, call the University Police Department at 727-5259.

You may open a checking and/or a savings account. A checking account allows the convenience of paying for things without carrying cash with you. A checkbook includes a set of checks imprinted with your name, address and account number, as well as, a register to record each check you write and each deposit you make. If you write a check and do not have enough money in your account to cover it, the check will be returned to the bank for "insufficient funds" (also called a "bounced check") and a fee is imposed, both by the bank and the merchant, of up to \$50.00 per returned check. A savings account allows you to reserve funds while earning interest (interest rates vary from bank to bank). Many people have a checking account for daily expenses and a savings account for reserve funds. Often, money may be transferred from one account to the other.

Overseas transfer of money – Most banks are capable of handling overseas transfer of money. Many will limit their services to customers who have accounts with them. (Keep this in mind when opening an account.) The process can sometimes be long and complicated.

When receiving or sending funds, first contact your home bank to find out the best way to transfer money. Find out if there is an American branch of the bank you are using in the US, in your home country. If receiving money, ask the sender to send the money through the corresponding bank. Include the receiver's complete address, telephone number, name of bank here and any specific instructions.

Banking Terminology

Account – Record of a person's financial resources in a bank.

Account number – Code number imprinted on checks to identify the bank.

ATM Card – A bank card used to withdraw money from your account from a machine.

Balance – Amount of money in an account after a sum has been added/subtracted.

Bank statement – Monthly record of checks written, deposits and withdrawals and the current balance sent by the bank. Each month you should check the bank statement with your own records.

Bounced check – Check that has been returned due to insufficient funds in the account. The bank and merchant will charge a fee for each bounced check.

Cash a check – To receive money in return for a check.

Canceled check – check that has been subtracted from the balance of an account.

Check – A printed form that represents dollars in your account and can be used as payment.

Debit – Amount subtracted from the balance of an account.

Deductions – Small amounts subtracted automatically from an account to pay for service charges, fees for bounced checks, etc.

Deposit – To put money into an account

Deposit slip – A form that accompanies your deposit (deposit slips are often found at the back of your checkbook).

Endorse – Your signature on the back of a check to verify that you are the person to whom the money is to be paid.

Interest - The amount earned on a bank account; the earnings are based on a percentage of the account's balance.

Overdraw – To withdraw more money than you have in the account. You should only withdraw money that you know is in your account to avoid penalties.

Service charge – Charge by the bank for its services, automatically deducted from your balance periodically.

Withdraw – To take money out of a bank account.

Shopping

The city of Hampton offers a wide variety of shopping. In order to get the best value, you must “shop around” and consult friends such as a host family or student host for current information and suggestions.

In the United States, one does not “bargain” for a price in a store, but rather we “shop around” and compare to find the best price before making a purchase. In some cases, such as a garage sale or yard sale, where used goods are sold privately, or in the case of purchasing a used car or used furniture, “bargaining” is acceptable.

What is in a Store?

Drugstore/Pharmacy carries non-prescription and prescription (“over the counter”) medicine, first aid supplies, personal health needs, film and film developing, cosmetics, candy, magazines, cards, stationery, etc. Many now offer Western Union Services and passport photographs.

Department stores carry almost everything! Clothes, jewelry, shoes, gifts, kitchen appliances/utensils, luggage, books, records, tapes, hair care products, notebooks and many other useful items.

Convenience stores (i.e. 7-11; Zooms) have a limited selection of food and basic health items, etc. They are open long hours and are more expensive. Some also offer Western Union services.

Grocery stores/supermarkets have a full range of basic health aids, household supplies and food products, both fresh and processed (canned, frozen, or dried). Foods are dated for freshness. Labels list product ingredients. Often a bakery and/or pharmacy is located in the store.

Specialty stores are smaller than a department store and sells a particular type of item, for example, a ladies' clothing store, children's clothing, bookstore, appliances, furniture, etc.

Second hand stores/thrift shops have clothes, shoes, housewares, etc. and often benefit a specific charity, such as a hospital. Try the Children's Hospital of the King's Daughters, the Disabled American Veterans, Goodwill and the Salvation Army, all located in Hampton or Newport News.

Malls

Peninsula Town Center
1800 W. Mercury Blvd.
Hampton, VA

Patrick Henry Mall
12300 Jefferson Avenue
Newport News, VA

Department Stores

Wal-Mart
1900 Cunningham Drive
Hampton, VA
826-6377

K-Mart
210 W. Mercury Blvd.
Hampton, VA
722-3916

Target (located in the Peninsula Town Center)
Mercury Blvd and Coliseum Drive
Hampton, VA
(757) 951-2300

Grocery Stores

Farm Fresh (Phoebus)
608 E. Mercury Blvd.
Hampton, VA
723-0771

Be-Lo
Buckroe Plaza Shopping Center
1957 E. Pembroke Ave.
Hampton, VA
723-9326

Food Lion
3855 Kecoughtan Road
Hampton, VA 723-
8802

The City of Hampton: History and Attractions

The city of Hampton is located at the southern tip of the Virginia Peninsula, and is a historic waterway that opens into the Chesapeake Bay. The City of Hampton is the oldest continuously occupied English-speaking community in Hampton Roads. It is rich in history, from the earliest colonial period, through the Revolutionary and Civil Wars, to the contributions of the modern aerospace industry.

The area offers residents and visitors a historical adventure, ranging from its colonial beginnings to America's 20th-century adventures in space. You'll also find cultural activities, a wealth of scenic beauty and a vast variety of outdoor activities.

Air Power Park and Museum, 413 W. Mercury Blvd., Hampton, VA (727-1163) <http://hampton.gov/1187/Parks-Recreation> – Contains an impressive collection of missiles, rockets and authentic vintage jets.

Buckroe Beach, end of Pembroke Avenue – For gentle surf, sand and fishing, Hampton's Buckroe Beach is the perfect location. Bordering the Chesapeake Bay, Buckroe offers wide beaches and seasonal lifeguards. The pavilion hosts concerts and other events during the summer. Picnic shelters are available for a nominal fee and reservations may be made by calling (757) 951-2300. Open daily, year round. Official season is Memorial Day through Labor Day. Free admission.

Bluebird Gap Farm, 60 Pine Chapel Road, Hampton, VA (727-6739) www.hampton.va.us/bbgf/ – This unique city park, designed to resemble a working farm, is a 60-acre site featuring barn yard animals, petting zoo playground, picnic areas and recreational facilities. Open year round. Wednesday – Sunday, 9:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. Closed Monday, Tuesday, Thanksgiving, Christmas and New Year's Day (also closed when a major holiday falls on Monday or Tuesday). Free admission.

The Casemate Museum of Fort Monroe, 20 Bernard Road Hampton, VA (727-3391) <http://www.fmauthority.com/visit/casemate-museum/>. Constructed in the 1800's, Fort Monroe is the largest stone fort ever built in the United States, with emphasis on its importance as a strong hold during the Civil War and the only moat-encircled fort still in active use. Within the historic walls in the Casemate Museum, the focal point is the cell in which Confederate President Jefferson Davis was imprisoned after the Civil War. Open year round. 10:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m. Closed Thanksgiving, Christmas and New Year's Day. Free admission.

Charles H. Taylor Arts Center, 4205 Victoria Blvd., Hampton, VA (722-ARTS) www.hamptonarts.net/ - The Center, housed in a colonial-style building, also serves as the headquarters for the Hampton Arts Commission, which produces and presents highly acclaimed Great Performers Series each year. Open year round. Tuesday – Friday 10:00 a.m. – 6:00 p.m.; Saturday – Sunday 1:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m. Closed Mondays and major holidays. Admission is free. Admission is charged for Great Performers Series Concerts.

Downtown Hampton Walking Tour – Brochures detailing a self-guided walking tour of Downtown Hampton are available from the Hampton Visitor Center, 710 Settlers Landing Rd. (1-800-800-2202 or 727-1102). This tour guides visitors along the City's waterfront and past several of Hampton's attractions and historical sites, including the Virginia Air and Space Center, the Hampton Carousel, St. John's Church, First United Methodist Church and Mill Pont Park. The tour begins at the visitor center and follows a circular route. Approximate time of tour is 30 minutes, without stops.

Fort Wool (727-1102) – Reached by Hampton Harbor Cruises. This artificial island in the middle of Hampton Roads Harbor is accessible either by private boat or via the Hampton Harbor Tour Ship, which sails April – October. This fort was completed by Robert E. Lee before the Civil War, was where President Lincoln watched federal troops retake Norfolk. Abandoned by the army in 1967, Fort Wool's remaining fortifications include cannon casemates dating back to the Civil War and placements for disappearing guns from World War I. Partially constructed under the direction of Lt. Robert E. Lee, the fort offers a spectacular view of the Chesapeake Bay and Hampton Roads Harbor at the mouth of Hampton Roads, one mile south of Fort Monroe. See Hampton Harbor Tours for dates, times and fees. For pleasure boaters, the island is open year-round; no admission. Pleasure boaters must vacate the dock during those times when the City's harbor boat tour is at the island. Call 1-800-800-2202 or 727-1102 for approximate times when the dock will be closed to pleasure boaters.

Hampton History Museum (727-1610) www.hampton.va.us/history_museum/ – 120 Old Hampton Lane. The purpose of the newly completed museum is "to increase the awareness and understanding of the history of Hampton by maintaining an educational and research center for the collection, exhibition, interpretation, preservation and promotion of the vast historic resources of the city. Colorful galleries help visitors to relive 400 years of American history, starting with the Native Americans and their relationship with the natural environment and continuing to the history of the oldest continuously occupied English-speaking community in North America from the 17th to the 21st century. Visit with the museum staff, some of whom proudly point out their own family heirlooms in the collection.

Hampton University Museum (727-5308) <http://museum.hamptonu.edu/> – Located in the Huntington Memorial Building, on the grounds of the Hampton University campus. As you pass through the doors you enter the oldest African American museum in the United States and one of the oldest museums in Virginia. With over 9,000 objects including traditional art from Africa, Native America, Asia and Oceania, African American fine arts, and objects relating to the history of the University; there is something for everyone. The Museum offers an array of educational initiatives including permanent and changing exhibitions, lecturers, symposia, internships and guest lectureships, art workshops, school partnerships, and the publication of the International Review of African American Art (IRAAA), the only periodical publication devoted primarily to African American art. The museum's store carries a unique array of handcrafted works of art, jewelry, children's books and games, art books, note cards, postcards, art prints and other interesting items. Open year round. Monday – Friday 8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.; Saturday Noon – 4 p.m.; closed on Sunday major holidays. Free admission.

University Health Services

The Student Health Services Center

[Http://www.hamptonu.edu/studentservices/health/](http://www.hamptonu.edu/studentservices/health/) has a professional staff composed of a full-time medical director, part-time physicians, nurses, a laboratory technician, a consulting dentist and consulting specialists. It provides the following services for students:

Annual physical examination is required of all freshmen and must be submitted before entering the University. All first year students must submit an updated immunization record, including evidence of immunizations against diphtheria, measles, rubella, tetanus, mumps, PPD and polio. Failure to submit the physical examination form may result in suspension or dismissal from the University. Prior to registration, each first year or transfer student is required to submit a medical examination form completed by a physician of the student's choice. The medical examination form is provided by the Health Services and is sent to all students applying for admission to the University for the first time. These forms are screened, and students are requested to report to the Health Services upon arrival at the University. In cases where it is deemed necessary to safeguard the health of the University community, the Health Services may require additional physical examinations. However, this rule will not apply to those who voluntarily withdraw from the University.

The Health Center is open Monday – Friday from 8:00 A.M. to 5:00 P.M., during the academic year and summer sessions. Health services fee and student insurance limitations vary, so be sure you know under what conditions you will be expected to pay for services. All students at Hampton University must have insurance.

Emergency Care: For those living off-campus, dial 911 for emergencies. On-campus students **must** contact the University Police through the residence hall director or staff.

See the Health Center website <http://www.hamptonu.edu/studentservices/health/> for further information about services.

Students are urged to carry adequate health insurance to protect against the possibility of serious illness or injury, requiring hospitalization or expensive mediations and/or treatment. The University offers a supplementary student insurance plan designed to cover some of the items that are not included within the health fee, as well as to supplement any other health or accidental insurance that the student may have. All students who do NOT wish to enroll in the group hospital insurance program with the university must so indicate on the cards (waiver cards) provided to them via mail or at the time of registration. Otherwise, students will be automatically enrolled under this plan and the appropriate charge will be added to their accounts. Full information regarding costs, benefits, etc., may be obtained from the Business Office shortly before or during registration periods or upon request. Students should also check to see if they are covered by an individual or family policy.

Medical Insurance for Accident and Emergency Medical Care

Medical Insurance is a necessity. There is no national health program in the U.S. All medical costs must be paid for the individual or by private health care insurance. Most Americans enroll in private insurance plans to help pay for their hospital and emergency medical costs. Since medical care is extremely expensive, it is vital that all internationals and their families subscribe to such insurance plans. ***Full-time students are required by the University to enroll in an insurance plan***; many options are available. All exchange visitors and dependents are required by law to have insurance coverage.

In an insurance program, you pay a set amount of money called a “premium.” In case of an accident or prolonged illness, the insurance company “covers” (pays for) a large percentage of the cost. This relieves the insurance holder of an overwhelming financial burden. You should be aware that ***medical insurance never covers ALL of the costs***. Usually, insurance policies cover emergency care, accidental injuries and prolonged illness; but they ***DO NOT pay for*** routine medical care, eye and dental services. When choosing a plan, be sure to find out exactly what the insurance does and does not cover. ***Ask questions!***

Insurance companies issue an identification card to all members of their insurance plans. Carry this card with you at all times. If you are taken to the hospital or go to see a doctor, this card is proof that you are “covered” by an insurance company. For more information and enrollment forms call or visit Student Health Services.

Insurance options: All students at Hampton University are required to buy insurance. Researchers, faculty and dependents must have insurance coverage as well. Student Council sponsors a low cost insurance plan that is available to all students and their families. Many other private plans are specifically designed for internationals or visitors.

Medical Terminology

Allergist – One who treats patients with a severe sensitivity to the environment (i.e. dust, pollen, germs); a physician specialist or M.D.

Chiropractor – Treats pains by manipulating body joints, especially the spine (Not a medical doctor).

Dermatologist – Physician (medically licensed doctor or M.D.) who treats skin diseases.

Family Physician – Medical doctor who treats all family members (adults and children) for general illnesses.

Internist – Medical Doctor who treats illnesses of adult patients.

Nurse-Midwife – Person who assists a childbirth (licensed by the state).

Neurologist – Treats conditions of the nervous system (but does not perform operations); M.D.

Nurse – Provides a variety of health services and health education.

Obstetrician/Gynecologist – Medical doctor who treats pregnant women, reproductive systems of women, reproductive systems of women in general.

Orthopedist – Medical Doctor who treats the skeletal system (casts broken bones, etc.).

Otolaryngologist – Medical Doctor who specializes in the ear, nose and throat areas.

Pediatrician – Medical Doctor who treats children from birth to teenage years.

Physician – A medically licensed doctor; M.D.

Psychiatrist – Treats mental/emotional problems; medically licensed M.D.

Psychologist – Treats mental problems; holds an academic, not a medical degree.

Urologist – Treats the urinary tracts of men and women and the male reproductive system; M.D.

Dentist – One who treats the teeth; holds doctor of dentistry.

Dental Hygienist – Dentist's assistant; cleans teeth.

Oral Surgeon – Surgeon who operates on the teeth and gums.

Orthodontist – Treats poorly-shaped teeth and mouth structure.

Ophthalmologist – Treats eye diseases and injuries. Examines the eye and prescribes glasses; M.D. Specializes in eye problems.

Optometrist – Examines the eye and prescribes glasses.

Personal Safety

Take Safety Precautions - Hampton University is an attractive and pleasant environment. The campus police have increased the security systems and s a f e t y procedures on the campus. However, it is important to remember that despite these precautions, the university campus is still relatively open to the public. Non-university people can enter the grounds, university buildings and apartment areas. Members of the university are susceptible to the same crime problems that residents of any city encounter. In spite of the pleasant atmosphere, the opportunity for crime does exist, and students and scholars should be aware of this possibility, although they need not live in fear. Those who choose to live off campus should take the same safety precautions that they would in any large city after-dark. If you follow normal safety procedures, avoid areas where trouble could occur, and keep your belongings secure, you will minimize your chances of being the victim of a crime.

Safety at Home - Lock all doors at all times. It is a good precaution to keep the inside door securely locked. Never open a door until you know who is there. Do not admit a salesperson, repairman, or delivery person unless they are expected. Ask to see a service person's identification card. If you lock yourself out of an apartment or room by mistake, a building superintendent can reopen the door for you.

Safety Away from Home - Take note of the blue emergency telephones located throughout the university grounds. They are directly connected with Hampton University Police. After dark please do not walk alone. Walk on lighted pathways and streets, on the side of a sidewalk and avoid isolated areas. Do not leave valued belongings unattended in classrooms or study areas (if you do forget an item in a classroom, check in the desk at the front of the room or with the University Police Office. Keep checking, since an item might be turned in some time after it is found).

University Police - Police officers are on duty 24 hours a day to provide protection and assistance in emergencies. They offer safety seminars throughout the year and distribute crime prevention booklets.

Churches and Religious Activities

The Hampton Roads community offers churches, synagogues, temples, meditation groups, and Islamic centers that serve members of almost every one of the world's religions, including Catholic and Protestant churches of almost every denomination. If you have difficulty locating an institution to serve your spiritual needs, please contact the Office of the University Chaplain at 727-5340. The HU International Office also has a list of religious centers in the greater Hampton Roads area, not only in Hampton, but also in Newport News, Williamsburg, Norfolk and other area cities.

Student Associations

There are over 100 student organizations on campus that may help you to orient yourself, meet other students and gain a better understanding of American culture, while sharing your own culture with others. The Office of Student Activities/Student Union has the responsibility to coordinate co-curricular activities for students. You will find descriptions of these organizations in your official Student Handbook, *Living and Learning at Hampton University*.

Student organizations are placed within the following categories: Religious, International Students, Pre-Alumni Association, Women's Senate, Men's Association, Organization of Graduate Students, Honor Societies, Fraternities, Sororities, Departmental Clubs and Organizations, Class Related Organizations and Social Clubs. Pay particular attention to those closely related to your major and honor societies for which you may become eligible by maintaining outstanding grades.

For more information, contact the Student Activities Office. Your individual department, academic advisor, and student leaders serve as resources for information that you may find helpful.

Adjusting to a New Culture

Cross Cultural Adjustment – Even though each person will have a different reaction and may find that one stage of the adjustment process will last longer or will be more pronounced than the others, experts have found common patterns in the adjustment process of people who enter a new culture. You may facilitate your adjustment by understanding the following stages and recognizing that they are normal reactions to your new situation.

Stage One – You have first entered a culture and everything about it is new and exciting. You are enjoying discovering the differences between the host culture and the culture that you consider your own.

Stage Two – After a period of time, you begin to feel uncomfortable in your new environment. The excitement has lessened. The differences are a source of irritation and you may miss certain aspects of your home culture. You may feel isolated, depressed or uncomfortable and may experience physical illness, as your body adjusts to change. You will find it stressful to have so many new things to adjust to and may become irritated by difficulties.

Stage Three – At this point, you may be making broad generalizations about the host culture. You may feel that your culture is superior. You also may want to withdraw or surround yourself with people who share your cultural experiences. This may be comforting to you and relieve the stress of the many adjustments you have to make in adapting to university life.

Stage Four – As your understanding grows, you will begin to see both the positive and the negative sides to the host society. You may gain insight into your own culture. You will begin to feel more comfortable in your new environment in spite of momentary irritations and misunderstandings. You will have friends from your own and from other cultures.

Stage Five – Eventually, you will be able to interact with ease within the new environment. You may find it increasingly easy and enjoyable to move between cultures, appreciating many things about both your host culture and your home culture.

Suggestions to ease adjustment – Plan from the outset to develop multicultural understanding and cultural competence by:

- Spending time with American friends so that you are able to see beyond stereotypes. Spending time with people from a similar background may also be very important to you. They may be able to give you advice on how they were able to adjust to live in the US.
- Talking with your community or student host. Discuss your reactions to American society in depth.
- Keeping a journal of your daily moods and thoughts. This may help you understand your reactions to the new environment as you are writing, as well as, when you reread the journal at a later point.
- Establishing a time when you can ask questions about American idioms and cultural idiosyncrasies. Seize your opportunity to learn more about American speech and culture. You can also share information about your culture with others.
- Giving yourself extra time to rest as you adjust to the change in your new environment.

A Few Thoughts about Life in the United States

As an international person in the United States you may notice certain patterns in American culture. We would like to encourage you to use the information below as a starting point as you begin to learn more about life in the United States.

American Cultural Values

Robert Kohls, formerly of Meridian House International in Washington, D.C., developed a list of American cultural values. Please remember that the list includes generalizations and will not apply to all Americans. In fact, Americans pride themselves on being unique and may not acknowledge that they share basic cultural traits with other members of US society.

The list may help you to understand the behavior of many Americans. In general, the values that are listed below carry very positive connotations within society.

Individualism – The individual is highly valued and their needs are, in general, more important than those of the group.

Self-Reliance – The belief that each individual should care for him/herself. If you need help, you should ask for it.

Punctuality – Following schedules and being on time is very important in the US “Wasting time” has negative connotations.

Directness – When speaking with an American, even if you are giving unpleasant news, it is important to speak honestly and directly. Americans appreciate having people make eye contact with them when speaking to them.

Informality – Informality is appropriate in many situations and is not seen as disrespectful or rude in many cases.

Change – Change indicates development, progress and growth, all of which are highly valued by Americans. Traditions are important at Hampton University, yet progress and change are expected of students and faculty.

Equality – All people should have equal opportunities regardless of race, gender or religion.

Future – Americans spend a great deal of time thinking about and planning for the future. The past and present are often devalued in comparison.

This is a simplified description of very complex cultural traits. You can explore each one of these cultural values in depth during your time in the United States. You may want to talk with the HU International Office, with faculty in Modern Foreign Languages or other faculty who have international experience, or with friends as you examine your own experiences in relation to the list above.

Once again, welcome! Please enjoy your new "Home by the Sea!"

The Hampton University
International Office Team