

• **CURRICULAR PRACTICAL TRAINING** •

Curricular Practical Training is the U.S. Federal permission for F-1 students to take a class requiring off-campus practical experience and receive pay while enrolled in that class.

Only your International Students Advisor in the Center for International Programs and Services has the authority to give that permission by endorsing your I-20 per United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) regulations.

• Students are not legal to work until they receive approval documents from the Center for International Programs and Services. Do not work before receiving approval from CIPS. Any amount of time spent working without approval is considered a violation of United States Code of Federal Regulations and is a violation of F-1 visa status. [8CFR 214.2 (f)(10)]

To get your approval documents, you must bring:

- An internship letter from the company showing that it is directly related to your course of study (this internship should match your current course of study, and should not be based on previous degrees.)
- approval from your professor stating that s/he is supervising your internship class. Professors can write their own letter or use the attached blank one.
- Form I-538 with part "A" completed by you. (see attached form)
- The company letter must offer an internship or practicum with a specific end date. Letters offering regular employment or open-ended job offers are not acceptable.

We also need your e-mail address: _____

And regular mail address: _____

• The United States Department of Homeland Security Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) views each semester separately, so you must apply to your International Students Office every semester that you pursue off-campus work experience while enrolled.

• Curricular Practical Training can only happen as part of a credit-bearing class. Our office must report the specific course number and semester to the Federal Government to show that a grade will be earned and that the work experience is an integral part of the curriculum.

CPT APPLICATIONS ARE NORMALLY PROCESSED WITHIN 3 BUSINESS DAYS. PLEASE PLAN ACCORDINGLY.

Please see the following pages for Frequently Asked Questions about CPT.

• CURRICULAR PRACTICAL TRAINING •

Frequently Asked Questions about CPT

Q. How long can this CPT approval last?

A. CPT can only happen as part of a class. Therefore, the work permission ends the day your professor turns in the final grade. Your work permission begins on the date specified on the new approval documents our office will prepare for you, usually the starting date recommended by your professor. We can not back date these documents.

- The USCIS views each semester separately, so you must apply to your International Students Office every semester that you take an off-campus internship.

Q. Are students allowed to repeat internship classes to continue CPT?

A. If your department and CIPS both approve, U.S. Federal regulations allow students to take repeated semesters of CPT. Excessive repeats could jeopardize your OPT.

Q. I heard that using CPT will eliminate my OPT. Is that True?

A. Part-time Curricular Practical Training does not affect your OPT time after graduation. Full Time CPT (used in summers and between semesters) may affect your OPT time if you use more than 12 months total.

Q. How is my academic department involved with CPT?

A. Your department must show how this off-campus work experience is an integral part of your curriculum. They must have a professor or academic advisor monitor your work, and they must show a course number and a grade for your work.

•Also, your department may have special rules for internships, including the method and rate of pay, the number of hours credit you will earn, and rules about how many times you are allowed to repeat your internship. Students must check with their departments about these rules.

• If you will be enrolled as a part time student while you are taking CPT, or if you will be issued paychecks written by the University of Memphis, you MUST provide additional documentation showing why this exceptional case is being presented.

- REMEMBER THAT PART TIME ATTENDANCE/ FULL TIME CPT IS ALLOWED ONLY IN VERY LIMITED SITUATIONS •

Q. I'm through with all my classes and degree requirements, so I'll just take one more semester of only CPT. Is that allowed?

A. NO! Students may not remain in school for employment purposes. If you have met your requirements for completion, then you are not eligible for CPT. CPT can only be pursued while a degree remains in progress.

Q. What if I don't want to enroll in an internship class?

A. CPT is NOT for the purpose of facilitating employment. Curricular Practical Training is an allowance for school-supervised internships that result in a grade.

Curricular Practical Training is ONLY for students who are enrolled in credit-bearing classes that require off-campus work experience for the grade.

• CURRICULAR PRACTICAL TRAINING •

Frequently asked Questions, part 2

Q. I'm in a course of study with no internship classes available. Can I have CPT?

A. Some academic departments have similar classes, such as Music Performance classes for music majors, Nursing practicum for nursing majors, Educational Co-op classes for Engineering majors, and required Student Teaching hours for Education majors. Even if your academic department does not have a class called "internship", there may be some other appropriate class for gaining relevant off-campus work experience.

Q. I'm waiting for an H-visa. My company really wants me to start work right away.

Will CIPS just sign for some CPT until the H visa comes in?

A. Remember that CPT can only happen as part of a class. You must prove that a professor is assigning a grade for this work, and that it is an integral part of your curriculum.

If this internship is not a legitimate part of a degree-seeking course of study, it will NOT be approved. CPT is NOT for the purpose of facilitating employment.

Q. I want it all. What about CPT and a Graduate Assistantship in the same semester?

A. This may be possible if the combined total of hours worked per week is within the USCIS limits. These limits are: 20 hours per week in regular semesters, when the student is enrolled full time. Because GA's require full time enrollment, the limit will be 20 hours, for all employment during that regular semester. For example, a student registered for full time class hours may use 10 hours of GA and 10 hours of CPT per week, or 15 and 5, and so on.

Q. May I work full time on CPT?

A. Full Time CPT is only allowed during one of these three situations:

1. During summer terms, Full time CPT may be possible for F-1 students.
 2. If the internship is a mandatory requirement of every student in a specific major, Full Time CPT may be possible for F-1 students. Only a very few majors on campus have this requirement.
 3. On the rare occasion that a student is pursuing thesis, dissertation, or project only, and are also part time enrolled, Full Time CPT may be allowed. Not all final-semester students qualify.
-

Q. What else should F-1 students know about CPT?

- Your employer will need to make a photocopy of your new I-20 with the CIPS endorsement for CPT, so that they have proof that it is legal to pay you.
- The USCIS views every semester separately; you must make a new application for each semester that you intend to work off campus for academic credit.
- You may not start work until after your application has received final approval from the Center for International Programs and Services. Any amount of time working without permission constitutes a violation of F-1 Status under current U.S. Federal Regulations.
- CPT must always be part of a credit bearing class. Off-campus work permission for International Students on the F-1 visa is extremely restricted and subject to U.S. Code of Federal Regulations.

CPT for Professors, Internship Coordinators, and Academic Advisors

Q.

What is CPT?

A. **C**urricular **P**ractical **T**raining is the U.S. Government's permission for international students on F-1 visas to work for off-campus companies and institutions, if that employment is determined to be an "integral part of an established curriculum." [8CFR 214.2(f)(10)(i)]

Q. If I tell the student that an internship is a good idea to help him/her with their studies, isn't that enough? Isn't that permission satisfactory for the government?

A. The United States Department of Homeland Security has charged a few Designated School Officials with the duty of reviewing and approving CPT on each campus. Any F-1 visa holding student who works off campus without that DSO permission is risking their own deportation and ban from the U.S., and also risking government penalties against their employer as well. Currently, Clar Nunis, in the International Students Office is the Designated School Official handling all CPT applications for the University.

csnunis@memphis.edu ex.-2055 Old Brister Basement, room 102)

Q. Oh great! More bureaucracy! More paperwork! So what do I have to do to get my students' internships approved?

A. The International Students Office on campus has worked very hard to make CPT approvals as speedy and as painless as possible. Either use the form below, or send the same data to us as an email. **Usually, a professor, academic advisor, or internship coordinator merely has to certify a few simple items about the internship, and the student and the International Students Office do the rest.**

Essential information needed from the professor, academic advisor, or internship coordinator:

1. What are the **dates of the proposed internship**? The U.S. Government views each semester separately, so an internship that spans two semesters would need two sets of forms. Since the CPT approval is tied directly to course of study for the student, the approval ends the day the professor turns in the grade.

The professor or academic advisor will supervise From _____ to _____

2. What **course** is the student taking that requires this off campus work? Course number and semester, please.

Course number: _____ Semester: _____

3. Where will the student be pursuing this internship? The **name and city of the company** is all that's needed. Companies additionally supply a short letter describing the internship, but the student is the one who should arrange for that.
4. For professors, internship coordinators and academic advisors, that's it! The CPT approval ends the day that the professor turns in the grade for the class. **ALSO, the internship site, the professor, and the student should all expect the same beginning date and ending date.** Repeat semesters can often be approved, depending on the students' visa status and other relevant details.

Signature of professor or academic coordinator who will be supervising the student's internship, practicum, co-op, or other off-campus activity for grade _____

Printed name of professor or academic advisor _____

Professor's or academic advisor's e-mail address _____

Name of student subject to the approval _____

As in all government regulatory matters, additional restrictions, limits, and benefits may apply.
Students **MUST** communicate with Clar Nunis in the International Students Office for advising before turning in their forms.
Students pursuing internships between semesters, in their final semester, or during thesis/dissertation/project phase have additional concerns and limitations.