



• CURRICULAR PRACTICAL TRAINING •

Center for International Education & Services

110 PanHellenic Building

Prepared 01/16/2017

Curricular Practical Training (CPT) 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 International Student Services Unit at the Center for International Education & 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 CIES. 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)]

Section I - Mandatory items:

1. Proof that you have completed two semesters in F-1 status immediately prior to this CPT application, or proof that you are enrolled in a program of study with mandatory internship requirements for all students within the first two semesters of the program.
2. An internship letter from the company showing that the planned off-campus experience is directly related to your current course of study. This internship should match your current course of study, and should not be based on previous degrees. Similarly, CPT can not be connected to a degree program to which the student is not yet fully and officially admitted.
3. Approval from your professor stating that s/he is supervising your internship class, the course number, and the dates that your professor will monitor that class. Please see the attached form for Professors/Academic Coordinators.
4. The company letter must offer an internship or practicum with a specific end date to match the end date of your professor's grading period. Letters offering regular employment or open-ended job offers are not acceptable.
5. The student has provided sufficient documentation regarding the Full Time or Part Time status of their CPT. (**see Section II**)

- 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 or as a mandatory part of the degree program for all students in that program. 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, or we must demonstrate that all students in that program of study must pursue practical experience off campus as a mandatory part of their program of study.

CPT APPLICATIONS ARE NORMALLY PROCESSED WITHIN 4 BUSINESS DAYS. PLEASE PLAN ACCORDINGLY.



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Section II - Full Time and Part Time

F-1 visa holding students are normally allowed a maximum of 20 hours week employment during all regular semesters. This 20 hours per week is the total amount allowed, to include both on and off-campus activities. Students receiving a University of Memphis paycheck can mix 10 hours on campus and 10 hours of CPT (when eligible), or 5 and 15, 12 and 8, etc. The total is 20.

Exceptions to this policy are available for Summer Term, the break between semesters, Spring Break, Fall Break, and Thanksgiving Break.

Students who have completed all course work and have only dissertation, thesis, or enrollment in final project may be eligible for additional hours of CPT during Spring/Fall semesters, if there are no enrollment issues with a G.A. or Fellowship. Please visit the International Students Office for more information.

For full time CPT, students must show one of the following conditions:

- a. The full time CPT is for Summer term, to be followed by enrollment in Fall term.
- b. The full time CPT is for Summer term, to be followed by graduation, only when CPT is taken while the degree is actively in progress. Students may not remain enrolled for CPT purposes if all degree requirements have been met. CPT can only be taken while the degree is in progress, as an integral part of the curriculum.
- c. The full time CPT is during Spring or Fall semester, but only as a mandatory part of degree requirements for all students in the major. Proof from your department specifying that **all students in that program** are required to take full time internships during Spring/Fall terms will be required.
- d. The full time CPT is during dissertation, thesis, or final project with all other coursework previously completed, and barring any enrollment issues from a G.A. or Fellowship. Please see the International Students Office for more details.
- e. For students who do not have thesis, dissertation or final project enrollment after completion of classwork: The full time CPT is during Spring or Fall semester when that term is the final semester of class enrollment, while the student is completing academic requirements for the degree. Students may not remain enrolled for CPT purposes if all degree requirements have been met. CPT can only be taken while the degree is in progress, as an integral part of the curriculum. Please note that any student who does not graduate when taking this option will be immediately out of status at the end of the semester, and ineligible for any further practical training.

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



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Frequently Asked Questions about CPT

Q. How long can this CPT approval last?

A. CPT is directly connected to academic content of your program of study. 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.

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

A. If your department and CIES 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.

•Please note: 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.

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.

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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 CIES 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. How soon may I begin my CPT?

A. All F-1 students must complete two semesters of enrollment inside the U.S. before receiving practical training. Students who have a mandatory internship may be eligible to waive this requirement, but please note – the internship must be officially mandatory in the first academic year for all students in that major. No other exceptions are available, please plan your documentation accordingly.

Q. May I work full time on CPT?

Please see Section II of this handout – Full Time and Part Time

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 CIES 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.





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Professors/Academic Coordinators ::::::::::: Curricular Practical Training

Curricular Practical Training is the U.S. Government permission for International Students on the F-1 visa to take off-campus employment experience for class credit, and to receive pay during that class. The International Students Office will only issue this legal work permission after verifying that the student's off-campus employment is part of a graded class monitored by their academic dept.

Please certify that the student listed below will be enrolled in a credit-bearing course that pertains to their proposed off campus employment and that this course is:

- monitored by the instructor who is awarding a grade for the work experience
- a course offered within the student's declared program of study
- academically appropriate and not primarily for the purpose of facilitating employment.

Please also inform the student of all departmental requirements and limitations in regard to internships (practicum, clinical hours, performance, educational co-op, etc.), including specifics of University payment and enrollment regulations, if applicable.

student's name _____ (id#) _____

instructors' name _____

instructors' e-mail or dept. phone #: _____

course number and semester of enrollment: _____

Beginning date of the paid off campus experience: month: _____ day: _____ year: _____

Ending Date (**date grading is completed**): month: _____ day: _____ year: _____

_____ Full Time (more than 20 hours per week) or _____ Part Time (20 hours per week max.)

Signature of instructor: _____ Date _____