CURRICULAR PRACTICAL TRAINING INSTRUCTIONS

Cooperative Education Credit Process

1. Find a job or internship — Career Center is an available and helpful resource!

2. If you are a Hotel Restaurant Administration (HRA) major, skip to number 6.

3. If you are not a HRA major, complete the following documents, which can be found on the Career Center website.
   - Initial Work Report
   - Learning Plan

3. Set an appointment with the CO-OP advisor in your academic department.
   (Note, your CO-OP advisor may be your department head, academic advisor, or another departmental faculty.)

4. Discuss Initial Work Report and Learning Plan with your CO-OP advisor and obtain advisor’s endorsement.

5. Return to Career Center with the completed forms authorized by your CO-OP advisor.

6. Register for the CO-OP class as agreed upon with your CO-OP advisor.

7. Complete the F-1 Student Practical Training Information form in this packet.

8. Call 836-6618 to make an appointment with Jan Swann to review and endorse your documents.
   (If Jan Swann is unavailable prior to your work start date, you may schedule the appointment with Lisa Gibson.)

9. Please bring the following items to your appointment:
   - Completed F-1 Student Practical Training Information Form
   - Proof of registration for CO-OP education credit

Visit http://careercenter.missourestate.edu/Students/Internship/CoopChecklist.htm for more information and to download forms.
CURRICULAR PRACTICAL TRAINING
FOR
STUDENTS IN F-1 STATUS

PURPOSE
This handout is designed for students in F-1 status. It will provide you with information on a type of employment opportunity which the U.S. Citizenship & Immigration Services (USCIS) calls “curricular practical training.”

DEFINITION OF CURRICULAR PRACTICAL TRAINING
The USCIS defines “curricular practical training” as employment which is an integral or important part of your curriculum, including:

...alternate work/study, internship, cooperative education, or any other type of required internship or practicum, which is offered by sponsoring employers through cooperative agreements with the school.

According to the USCIS, the word “required” does not always limit this type of practical training only to work experiences which are required parts of the curriculum. This clarification is discussed below in more detail.

JOB ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS
To be considered curricular practical training, the work must not only be related to your major field of study but also must be an integral or important part of your studies. Training which is required by your degree program always meets the requirements for curricular practical training, regardless of whether or not you receive academic credit for your work. Training which is not required by your degree program may meet the requirements for curricular practical training if you receive academic credit for the employment experience or if it is offered by sponsored employers through a co-op program at your school. In either case, it must be an important part of your studies. If you have a training opportunity which involves employment, check with your international student advisor to determine if it qualifies as curricular practical training.

STUDENT ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS
Employment which IS a required part of your degree program. If (1) you are a graduate student, (2) you are maintaining lawful F-1 status, and (3) the proposed employment is a required part of your studies, you may apply for permission to engage in curricular practical training whenever your program requires your participation, even if it is immediately upon beginning your studies. Undergraduate students must have completed nine months of full-time study and currently be maintaining student status to be eligible for any form of curricular practical training.

Employment which IS NOT a required part of your degree program. Additionally, the academic advisor must verify that the job duties are related to the student’s major area of study, the student must enroll for academic credit, and the ISSO must authorize the CPT in SEVIS.

English Language Students. Students enrolled in English language training programs are not eligible for curricular practical training.

PART-TIME vs. FULL-TIME CURRICULAR PRACTICAL TRAINING
Part-time training. Employment for 20 or fewer hours per week while you are also enrolled for classes is considered “part-time” curricular practical training. In this case, the employment authorization on page 3 of your FORM I-20 should specify permission to engage in “part-time” training, and you must be careful to limit your work to no more than 20 hours per week. There is no limitation on the length of time you may participate in part-time curricular practical training, but you must be enrolled in school during your training in order to maintain lawful F-1 status.
PART-TIME vs. FULL-TIME CURRICULAR PRACTICAL TRAINING (continued)

Full-time training. Employment for more than 20 hours per week is considered “full-time” curricular practical training and the employment authorization on your FORM I-20 should, in this case, specify permission to participate in “full-time” training. While in full-time CPT, you may enroll in only the CPT credit in order to maintain lawful F-1 status. There is no limitation upon the length of time you may participate in full-time curricular practical training, but if you participate for twelve months or more, you will not be eligible for optional practical training (see next paragraph).

CURRICULAR PRACTICAL TRAINING AND ELIGIBILITY FOR OPTIONAL PRACTICAL TRAINING

It is important for you to understand that if you participate in twelve months or more of “full-time” curricular training, you lose eligibility to apply for twelve months of optional practical training after you complete your studies. Participation in “part-time” training programs does not affect your eligibility for post-completion practical training.

APPLICATION AND AUTHORIZATION PROCEDURES

You should consult with Jan Swann in the International Student Services Office (or Lisa Gibson if Jan Swann is not available) so that they may evaluate your situation and the proposed employment opportunity to make certain that both you and the job meet the eligibility requirements. If all eligibility requirements are met, you will complete the Form I-765. Your international student advisor will then authorize either part-time or full-time curricular practical training in SEVIS, and print a new I-20. You must be careful not to continue employment beyond the date authorized on your I-20 unless you apply for and are granted an extension of your permission to work.

EMPLOYMENT ELIGIBILITY VERIFICATION

When you begin work, you and your employer must complete a form entitled “Employment Eligibility Verification” (USCIS Form I-9), which the employer retains. The I-9 must be updated each time you receive a renewal of your work permission.

SOCIAL SECURITY AND OTHER TAXES

In general, F-1 students who have been in the U.S. less than five years are exempt from Social Security (F.I.C.A.) taxes. Your earnings are subject to applicable federal, state and local taxes. Students must file an income tax return on or before April 15 each year, which will determine if any of the withheld taxes can be refunded.

A NOTE OF CAUTION

While USCIS regulations provide a variety of opportunities for employment during your time in F-1 status, working improperly or without authorization is a serious violation of your status. You should therefore consult with your international student advisor before taking up any off-campus employment. It is your responsibility to comply with all immigration regulations which apply to F-1 students. The Director and Assistant Director of International Student Services are responsible for advising and counseling you regarding your responsibilities. If you fail to comply with your responsibilities, you may not be eligible for benefits normally granted to F-1 students.

FURTHER INFORMATION

Additional information on F-1 employment is available from the International Student Services Office. The Director and Assistant Director in the ISSO are pleased to offer information, counseling and assistance on all federal regulations related to maintaining your student status.
Assisting International Students with Internships

The Missouri State University Career Center and International Student Services Offices internship policy was created to assist international students (F-1 or J-1) and academic departments in dealing with part-time and full-time internships related to the student's academic program.

Acronyms used below include (for F-1's unless otherwise noted):

- **SEVIS** – Student Exchange Visitor Information System: The U. S. government database used to track F-1 and J-1 students.
- **DSO** – INS authorized designated school official (in the ISS Office);
- **Form I-20** – the form issued by the school authorizing the student to apply for a F-1 student visa and enroll in a specific INS-authorized school in the U. S.
- **CPT** – Curricular Practical Training;
- **OPT** – Optional Practical Training;
- **H-1b** – Full-time work authorization related to the bachelor's degree (or higher) holder's area of study; three years with a possible three-year extension, applied for by a specific employer for an individual to work in a specific position for which the employer has tried but cannot find a qualified U. S. citizen or LPR;
- **LPR** – Legal Permanent Resident (Residency). Can be applied for by the employer on behalf of the employee related to permanent employment;
- **IAP-66** – The form issued by the school authorizing the student to apply for a J-1 Exchange Visitor visa (student category) and enroll in a specific U. S. State Department authorized school in the U. S.
- **RO** – The School’s Responsible Officer (J-1’s);
- **AT** – Academic Training (similar to practical training but for J-1's), 18 months total. Any AT (part-time or full-time) completed before graduation counts off the 18-month total AT time allowed following graduation. J-1 students may participate only in part-time AT before completion of the academic program.

**Internship Policy**

1. F-1 students must have been in status in the U. S. for a minimum of 9 months prior to being authorized for CPT.

2. If internship credit is **optional** (not required of every student who completes the academic program), the F-1 or J-1 student must enroll for course credit for the internship before they can request authorization by the designated school official (DSO) in the ISS Office. The off-campus internship position must be related to the academic major. If internship completion is **required of every student who completes the academic program**, the student is not required to enroll for internship credit but still must have the off-campus internship position authorized by the ISS Office.

3. International Student Services requires the student to present both the departmental forms and the Career Center forms*, showing the number of credit hours and the beginning and ending dates of employment and signed by the appropriate faculty and Career Center staff, before authorizing the CPT period by entering the information in SEVIS, issuing and endorsing a new Form I-20. *For some majors the entire process is completed in the department. In those cases, the Career Center is not required to be involved.

4. Credit must be enrolled for at the beginning of the internship. By USCIS regulations, summer is an optional enrollment period unless it is the student's first or last semester. F-1 and J-1 students may not skip a fall or spring semester and maintain immigration status. Therefore, the student cannot use summer credit to continue an internship through the fall semester. If credit is required, the F-1 or J-1 student must work in the internship position and enroll in spring credit related to that position before Career Center and the ISS office can authorize the CPT (internship) for both spring and summer (dates endorsed on page 4 of the student’s Form I-20).

5. If the internship period is for summer and fall (and does not include the previous spring), the student must enroll for both summer and fall credit.

6. The credit can be as little as one hour for any fall, spring, spring and summer, or summer enrollment period.

7. Students should be warned not to accept an off-campus internship position without having it authorized. Doing so will cause them to fall from immigration status and jeopardize future benefits such as OPT, H-1b, or legal permanent residency.
Using Curricular Practical Training and Optional Practical Training to Benefit the International Student’s Career Path

If the student’s academic program allows for up to six internship credit hours, it is to the international student’s advantage to split the credit into the largest number of enrollment periods that will help the student. If they have sufficient time left before graduation, they may keep the same position until graduation by enrolling each semester. If the student needs the credit, and has fewer than six enrollment periods remaining, they may enroll for a larger number of hours (3 + 3 to finish in two enrollment periods). If the student needs the work (experience) more than the credit, they may enroll for only one hour if approved by the academic department.

Undergraduate internship courses in many departments can be taken for one, two, or three credit hours. Some graduate programs allow these credit hour choices. For graduate programs limiting internship courses to three hours of credit per enrollment period, the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Service (USCIS) requirement can be satisfied by enrolling in an independent study or other suitable course which allows the one, two, or three credit hour choices, as long as the course is listed in the catalog.

Please note that by USCIS regulation an F-1 or J-1 student will be considered full-time and maintaining status when enrolled for only a full-time internship (at least one credit hour) in fall or spring. The student must keep close track of the months of full-time internship authorized. If an F-1 student completes 12 or more months of full-time “curricular practical training, CPT” (internship authorization), the student will be ineligible for the one year of “optional practical training, OPT” allowed by immigration regulations following completion of the program of study. Part-time internships are limited to 20 hours per week during the fall and spring semesters, and the student must enroll in enough additional credit hours to carry a full course load. The USCIS places no limit on the number of months an F-1 student can participate in part-time CPT. The only limitation is the number of credit hours in which the student is allowed to enroll by the academic department.

By planning part-time and full-time CPT carefully, an F-1 student can be recruited as an intern by an employer who wishes to offer the year of OPT following completion of study during which time they may apply for the H-1b work authorization. The H-1b status is offered only to individuals who have completed at least a bachelor’s degree in the field required by the position. Although some individuals complete the H-1b period (three years with a possible three-year extension) and return to school or their home countries, the H-1b can also be a route to legal permanent residency (LPR) based on permanent employment.

For further assistance, please contact:

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Career Center
Missouri State University
Carrington Hall 309
Phone: 417-836-5636
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Academic Advisor Recommendation for Curricular Practical Training (CPT)

--To Be Completed By Student--

Student Name ___________________________ Student ID Number ___________________________

Name of employer ___________________________ Major ___________________________

Address of employer ___________________________ Supervisor ___________________________

Number of hours per week _______ to _______ Dates of employment _______ Title of position _______

Describe position duties

Curricular Practical Training (CPT) is an employment authorization that allows students, as a benefit of their F-1 immigration status, to work off-campus in a job that is related to their program of study. The requirements for CPT are:
• The work must be related to the student's field of study
• The work must be "integral" to the program of study (either for credit or required of every student who completes the same program of study)
• If not required of every student completing the same program of study, the F-1 student must be given credit and a grade.
• The credit course or "required" statement must be listed in the University’s catalog.

--To Be Completed by Academic Advisor--

Number of credits remaining to graduate _______ Anticipated program completion date _______ If graduate student, thesis defense date _______

if graduate student, date of comprehensive exam _______ Course number and title _______

As Academic Advisor, my signature below indicates that upon my information and belief, the proposed employment is for the purpose of practical training in the student’s major area of study.

Signature of Academic Advisor ___________________________ Typed/Printed Name of Advisor ___________________________

Department ___________________________ Date ___________________________

Please send completed form to ISS, Carrington Hall 302 or give to the student to submit with CPT application.
CURRICULAR PRACTICAL TRAINING NOTES FOR EMPLOYERS

College and university students in F-1 student Immigration status are allowed by federal law to be employed off-campus in a position related to their major field of study. This category of off-campus employment is called curricular practical training. The training position must be for credit or required of every student who graduates in the same major field of study. The student processes the CPT application in consultation with the academic advisor in the major department, the Office of Career Services, and the International Student Advisor of the school where the student is enrolled. (Jan Swann and Lisa Reed are the International Student Advisors for SMSU.)

When the documentation is in place, the International Student Adviser notifies the United States Citizenship and Immigration Service (USCIS) of the training site and dates by entering the information in the Student Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS) and printing a new I-20 form for the student. Students may engage in curricular practical training only after they have received Form I-20 showing such eligibility, and only for the specific employer, location, and period indicated on the form [8 CFR 214.2(f)(10)(I)(c)].

The student verifies this employment authorization to the employer by presenting the following:

a. Current form I-20 with ending date beyond ending date of employment (item 5, page 2 of I-20).

b. Page 3 of above Form I-20 showing curricular practical training at the job site from (date) to (date).

c. Copies of identification and expiration date pages of the student’s foreign passport (must be valid at time of employment).

d. Copy of Form I-94 (white card usually stapled in passport) showing F-1 status and D/S (duration of status) ending date. D/S means that the student is in status as long as the student’s passport is valid, the student is making normal progress toward completion of a (full) course of study [8 CFR 214.2(f)(5)(l)], and is obeying all laws governing F-1 status.

If questions arise, please contact: Jan Swann, Director of International Student Services
e-mail: JanSwann@missouristate.edu

or

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