
CURRICULAR PRACTICAL TRAINING (CPT) Off-Campus Employment Authorization for F-1 Students

Definition:

Curricular Practical Training (CPT) is an authorization for off-campus employment allowing an F-1 student to participate in an internship, practicum or research project in the field of study.

Depending on a student's eligibility and academic needs, employment can be either part-time or full-time. Employment authorization is granted by International Services, in consultation with the student's academic department. **Written authorization for employment based on Curricular Practical Training must be received prior to beginning employment. Working without employment authorization is a violation of visa status and results in a student losing legal status in the United States.**

ONE WEEK PROCESSING TIME IS REQUIRED.

Who is eligible?

- Students enrolled in an internship, practicum or research course for academic credit. The course must be offered in the department of the student's major field of study. The employment must be required for the course and must be taken for academic credit. Students who have completed all degree requirements are no longer eligible to request CPT and should instead apply for work authorization under Optional Practical Training (OPT).

If the course is an Independent Study or Directed Research course, the academic credit for the course must count toward and not exceed the degree requirements.

or

- Students collecting and generating data for a thesis or dissertation. Enrollment in 3 credit hours of Thesis or Dissertation Preparation is required. The request must be accompanied by a letter from the student's thesis/dissertation director explaining how the research is an integral part of the student's proposal, what the period of research is expected to be, and what the expected completion date of the thesis/dissertation will be. In addition, a letter from the prospective employer authorizing the student to use the data generated in the thesis or dissertation must be included.

Additional considerations:

- Employment authorization for CPT must not delay the student's expected completion of studies date.
- Full-time CPT is only allowed if the internship is **required** for the program of study. (*exception: students may be able to use full-time CPT with Reduced Course Load request for the last semester.)
- Part-time CPT is allowed when students register for outstanding electives in their program of study.
- Students who have approved full-time CPT are no longer eligible for on-campus employment.
- Students who have approved part-time CPT are eligible for on-campus employment if the Graduate Director acknowledges and supports the student's employment in both positions.

Staying in Status:

- Student must be maintaining full-time student status on the F-1 visa.
- **F-1 visa status must have been maintained for at least one academic year (except for a required graduate program practicum) prior to requesting authorization.**
- Employment must be directly related to the field of study. Independent Study and Directed Research courses which exceed degree requirements may not be approved for CPT.
- Students must continue to maintain F-1 status while on Curricular Practical Training.
- **Students with part-time CPT authorization must continue to maintain full-time enrollment while on Curricular Practical Training.**
 - *Undergraduate full-time enrollment:* minimum of 12 hours
 - *Graduate full-time enrollment:* minimum of 9 hours
- Employment must not occur after completion of studies or delay completion of studies.
- Employment based on enrollment in thesis, research, or independent study credit requires a minimum of three (3) credit hours of enrollment.

CPT APPLICATION CHECKLIST

Undergraduate students

- Recommendation form completed and signed by the course instructor (attached).
- Letter from the employer indicating name of employer, address where you will be working, job duties, and beginning and ending dates of employment.
- Degree Audit/Program of Study

Graduate students

- Recommendation form completed and signed by the course instructor (attached).
- Degree Audit/Program of Study
- Letter from the employer indicating name of employer, address where you will be working, job duties, and beginning and ending dates of employment.
- If CPT is for thesis or dissertation credit, the request **MUST** be accompanied by a letter from the student's thesis director explaining how the research is an integral part of the student's proposal, the expected period of research, and the expected thesis or dissertation completion date.
- If CPT is for thesis or dissertation credit, the offer letter from the employer should include a statement authorizing the use of the data generated in the thesis or dissertation.