

# Curricular Practical Training

## F-1 Employment Authorization

Curricular Practical Training (CPT) is temporary employment authorization directly related to an F-1 student's academic program. According to immigration regulations, curricular practical training must be "an integral part of an established curriculum." Curricular practical training is defined as "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."

### Curricular Practical Training Eligibility:

The student must be in valid F-1 status at the time of application. Graduate students whose programs require immediate participation in an internship/practical training may apply at any time. There are several types of curricular practical training:

1. The work must be necessary to fulfill course/class requirements. In other words, it must be required of all students taking the course, not just related to a course.
2. The course must be an "integral part of the established curriculum", (i.e., it must be required for the degree program or earning credit for the degree program). For graduate students receiving credit for thesis or dissertation, the work must be required to complete the thesis or dissertation.
3. *Cooperative Education* Under very limited circumstances, "curricular training is available as an option to students pursuing a particular course or curricular track within a larger educational objective." Specifically, if a cooperative agreement is arranged between the graduate school [PSR] and an organization [congregation] whose work is directly related to the student's degree program, and a Memorandum of Agreement specifying the requirements of such agreement is developed, "INS has recognized that "Curricular practical training offered through institutionally sponsored cooperative education...is usually optional and not-for-credit." <sup>1</sup> "Sponsored' would be ... defined as structured employment that is monitored by the school and obtained through the support of the educational institution."<sup>2</sup>

### Limits on use of CPT

There is no specified limit on either the number of times or the length of time a student may engage in either part-time or full-time curricular practical training. **However, F-1 students who engage in 12 months or more of full-time Curricular Practical Training will not be eligible for Optional Practical Training. The use of 12 months of full-time Curricular Practical Training only affects eligibility for Optional Practical Training at the same educational level.**

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<sup>1</sup> I.N.S. memorandum CO 214.2F-C, May 4, 1992

<sup>2</sup> NAFSA Adviser's Manual, 2003, p. 3-153.

## **When to apply for CPT**

International students should complete CPT paperwork as soon as they have secured a field education site during the spring semester of their first academic year. You must be authorized for CPT by the Coordinator for International Student Support [CISS] before beginning any employment. Working prior to obtaining authorization could result in a loss of your F-1 status.

## **How to apply for Curricular Practical Training**

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**+ring the following to the CISS:**

- . Passport, Form I-94, Form I-20 (original)
- . **CPT Recommendation Form** [[link to CPT form](#)] which contains:
  - a) verification signature from your Faculty Advisor; or Field Study Director, or Faculty of the Course to which the CPT relates.
  - b) A description of the program
  - c) Name and course number of the course for which you will be earning credit, name of the supervising professor and the semester in which the course credit will be earned
  - d) Name and address of the company/institution where you will be working
  - e) Beginning and ending dates of employment and the hours per week to be worked
    - Letter from the employer describing the work to be performed by the student including the beginning and ending dates of employment, salary, and the employer's address.

### **Information about Curricular Practical Training (CPT)**

- Purpose is to allow students to engage in internships and practicums if necessary for their academic program, or will earn credit toward their program.
- You must maintain your full-time student status to be eligible for CPT.
- You must have an offer of employment to apply for CPT because the authorization is employer specific. For Field Study this is arranged through the Field Study Director's Office.
- CPT is first recommended by the Faculty Advisor, but authorized by the CISS. If all documents are correct and complete, the CPT may be authorized on the date of application.
- The number of hours you are allowed to work while on CPT is determined by your internship/CPE or Field Study program requirements.
- Part-time: Employment not to exceed a total of 20 hours per week. The employment authorization that the CISS enters on page 3 of your I-20 will specify permission to engage in "part-time" training and you must be careful to limit the employment to 20 hours per week. You **MUST** be enrolled in a full- time course of study during the terms you are authorized for part-time curricular practical

training. The units you earn for curricular practical training will be counted in determining if you are enrolled full-time.

- The amount of time for which you are authorized for part-time curricular practical training is not deducted from the 12 months of Optional Practical Training that you may be eligible for upon completion of your academic program.
- You may use as much CPT authorization as is required for your degree program. However, if you accumulate 12 months or more of full-time CPT authorization, you are not eligible for Optional Practical Training (OPT) authorization. (EXAMPLE: If you have been authorized for a total of 11 months full-time CPT, you would still be eligible to apply for OPT.) We recommend not to use more than 11 months of full-time CPT to protect your OPT eligibility - the Immigration Service may interpret more than 11 months of full-time CPT as a year of full-time work experience and may not grant post-completion OPT. Part-time CPT does not affect OPT in any way.
- The Curricular Practical Training authorization on Page 3 of your I-20 is your proof to accept employment. Therefore, your I-20 and I-94 may be used to complete the Employment Eligibility Verification Form I-9 that all U.S. employers are required by law to complete within three days of the start of employment.
- If you change employers during your internship/CPE or field study program, you must apply for a new period of CPT authorization before you work for the new employer.
- You are authorized for specific dates of employment on your I-20. You may not begin before the start date or continue working after the end date. If you expect that you will need to work past your end date, you must have an extension of CPT authorized by the CISS before you can continue working past the CPT end date on your I-20.

**Coordinator for International Support  
Holbrook 219A**