

Overview of Curricular Practical Training (CPT)

Curricular Practical Training (CPT) is a program that allows international students in F-1 status to gain practical work experience related to their field of study before completing their academic program. This opportunity can take the form of internships, co-op programs, practicums, or similar situations. For CPT to be approved, *the practical training must be an **integral and required** component of the student's established curriculum as determined by the academic department and consistent with applicable federal regulations and university policies.*

CPT is typically authorized on a semester basis, with the start and end dates aligned with the academic calendar. In some rare cases, and only if required by the academic department, CPT may be approved for a longer duration, but it cannot exceed a total of 12 months. The training may be categorized as either full-time, which is over 20 hours per week, or part-time, which is 20 hours per week or less.

Students who complete 12 months of full-time CPT are not eligible for Optional Practical Training (OPT) at that degree level. However, engaging in part-time CPT or completing less than 12 months of full-time CPT does not affect a student's eligibility for OPT.

CPT cannot be used to postpone graduation or to quickly authorize employment that should have been approved by the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS). If a student wishes to work in a position directly related to their major but the work does not have a curricular component, they must apply for Optional Practical Training instead of CPT.

Academic Credit Requirement for CPT

To be eligible for Curricular Practical Training (CPT), students must enroll in the appropriate internship or cooperative course as specified in the university catalog and designated for their academic program. The course must carry the number of credit hours required by the program. If the CPT credit during the Fall or Spring semester will result in enrollment below full-time status, students are required to submit a Reduced Course Load Form along with their CPT application.

The period of CPT must align with the dates of the academic term in which it is authorized. Students who participate in CPT during the Fall or Spring semester must maintain a full course of study as defined by their program. It is mandatory to enroll in the specific course that corresponds to the CPT approval. Both the enrollment in the course and completion of the authorized employment within the designated period are necessary to remain in compliance with immigration regulations.

Students who have completed all coursework, except for their thesis, dissertation, final project, or an equivalent requirement, may only engage in CPT if the training is necessary for collecting data that will make a significant contribution to the thesis, dissertation, final project, or its equivalent. In such cases, the graduate program adviser must provide a clear explanation and endorsement of the CPT, confirming its essential role in fulfilling the final degree requirement.

Eligibility

Students are eligible for Curricular Practical Training after they have completed one academic year in valid F-1 status.

Authorization

CPT requires authorization from an international student advisor at the CIE. You cannot start work until page 3 of your I-20 is updated and training must end by the authorized date. Obtain CPT approval at least two weeks before the semester starts and consult your academic advisor and CIE staff in advance to ensure your application is reviewed.

How to Apply

1. Schedule an initial interview with your Academic Advisor and a CIE Staff member to discuss your interest in CPT.
2. Complete Section A of the Curricular Practical Training Academic Advisor Recommendation Form (reverse side of this handout).
3. Request that your academic advisor complete Section B.
4. Obtain an Offer Letter, on company letterhead, outlining the duties of the practical training, your title, and start/end dates.
5. Submit the completed Curricular Practical Training Academic Advisor Recommendation Form, official offer letter, and any additional required documents to CIE. A CIE advisor will verify your F-1 status and confirm that employment meets the curricular requirements. If the CIE advisor approves the CPT, a new I-20 will be issued and you will be notified.
Note: Typical processing time is 2-3 business days.
6. Employment may begin only after the CIE advisor has approved the CPT by creating your new I-20 authorizing employment. The I-20 is the official document authorizing Curricular Practical Training employment.

Section A: To be completed by student:		
1. Last Name: _____		2. First Name: _____
3. Dawg Tag #: _____	4. Email: _____	5. SEVIS ID #: _____
Section B: Recommendation to be completed by ACADEMIC ADVISER or GRADUATE PROGRAM COORDINATOR		
6. Level of Education: ☐ Bachelor, ☐ Master, ☐ Doctorate, ☐ Other. If other, _____		
7. Major area of study: _____		8. Expected graduation date: _____
9. Company name: _____		10. Employer address: _____
11. CPT start date: _____	12. CPT end date: _____	13. Training hours per week: _____
14. Academic credit will be awarded as follows: Course #: _____; Course name: _____ Number of credit hours _____ in the ☐ Fall, ☐ Spring, ☐ Summer semester 20_____ NOTE: Failure to enroll in the required internship course, practicum, cooperative education course, thesis/dissertation credit, or other approved academic enrollment supporting the CPT authorization may result in cancellation of CPT.		
15. Basis for CPT Recommendation: ☐ Practical training is required for all students enrolled in this curriculum and is a required component for successful completion of the degree program. ☐ Practical training is required for all students enrolled in this curriculum track, concentration, certificate, clinical sequence, practicum sequence, or other officially approved academic pathway documented by the academic department and university catalog. ☐ Graduate Thesis/Dissertation Research Exception – The student has completed all required coursework and requires this practical training to obtain data, conduct research, access facilities, or perform activities necessary for completion of an approved thesis, dissertation, or equivalent research requirement. For this selection, attach the following: Thesis/dissertation proposal Advisor endorsement letter Explanation of why the training is necessary for degree completion		
16. Academic Advisor Certification I certify that: ☐ The practical training is directly related to the student's major field of study. ☐ The practical training constitutes an integral component of the student's curriculum. ☐ The practical training is required for successful completion of the curriculum or approved graduate research activity identified above. ☐ The student's academic progress will be substantially advanced through participation in the practical training. ☐ I have reviewed the training description and confirm it corresponds to established learning objectives. Advisor Signature _____ Graduate Coordinator or Department Chair _____ Date _____ Date _____ (for thesis/dissertation CPT only)		
17. Cooperative Training Agreement ☐ Existing institutional agreement on file OR ☐ CPT Cooperative Training Agreement attached Agreement date: _____ Employer representative: _____		



18. Final Semester Certification

If the student is in the final semester:

- ☐ CPT is necessary for completion of a required curricular component.
- ☐ CPT is necessary for completion of an approved thesis/dissertation research activity.
- ☐ Student is not expected to complete degree requirements before the CPT end date.

Advisor Initials: _____

19. CPT Supporting Documentation Checklist

REQUIRED:

- ☐ Employer Offer Letter
- ☐ Academic Advisor Recommendation
- ☐ Proof of Enrollment in Required Course (if applicable)
- ☐ CPT Cooperative Training Agreement

Additional for Research-Based CPT:

- ☐ Thesis or Dissertation Approval
- ☐ Research Justification Letter
- ☐ Faculty Endorsement