

CPT Policies and Procedures

Definition of CPT

Curricular Practical Training (CPT) is defined by the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) 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” and which is “an integral part of an established curriculum” (8 C.F.R 214.2(f)(10)(i)). CPT is available only prior to the completion of the student’s degree program and may not delay completion of the academic program.

Requirements for CPT

A student in an undergraduate or graduate program who has completed 1 academic year (2 semesters) in full-time F-1 status may apply for CPT. English language training (ESL) students are ineligible for CPT.

- **Undergraduate Students** – undergraduate students must declare an academic major (typically in the second year) before applying for CPT.
- **Graduate Students** – a student in a graduate program who has already completed a full year in F-1 status may be considered eligible for part-time CPT during the first semester of the program. (A student in a graduate program for which practical training is required from the outset is eligible for CPT during the first semester.)

CPT may be designated as an internship or a non-internship experience according to the policies set forth by the student’s academic program. If CPT is classified as an internship it must also meet all institutional requirements for internship eligibility, which may mean the student must wait longer than 1 academic year before taking part in CPT. All CPT must be taken for credit and must appear on the student’s academic schedule, whether or not it is taken as an internship. Undergraduates must receive Major credit for any CPT experience.

Throughout CPT, the student **MUST** be enrolled on a full-time basis.

- **Undergraduate Students** – for undergraduate students, a full course load constitutes 12 or more credit hours per semester.
- **Graduate Students** – for graduate students, a full course load constitutes 8 or more credit hours per semester. The only exception to this is during the Summer term; although full-time

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enrollment is not required, CPT must still be taken for course credit and appear on the student's schedule.

CPT may be paid or unpaid. A student must have an offer from a specific employer before CPT can be authorized. CPT may be part time or full time, depending on the requirements of the student's academic program. Part-time CPT is 20 hours or fewer per week.

- **Undergraduate Students** – undergraduate students are eligible only for part-time CPT during the academic year (i.e., the Fall and/or Spring semester(s)). Full-time CPT may be authorized for an undergraduate student during the Summer Term; the student must not be in the final semester and must show proof of enrollment for the following (i.e., Fall) semester. Undergraduates are limited to 2 semesters of CPT (including Summer), unless additional semesters are required by the student's academic program.
- **Graduate Students** – unless required by the program, full-time CPT will not be authorized for graduate students during the first semester. Use of full-time CPT for 12 months or more eliminates eligibility for Optical Practical Training (OPT).

CPT will be authorized only for the specific employer, location and duration (i.e., start- and end dates) indicated on the CPT Authorization Form, approved by the P/DSO and recorded on the student's Form I-20. Changing employers during CPT without prior authorization by the International Office is NOT ALLOWED. (A student wanting to do more than one CPT in a given semester must complete a separate CPT Authorization Form for each experience.)

CPT Application Process

The process of applying for CPT is the same for undergraduate and graduate students. To apply for CPT the student must meet with her Academic Advisor or School Dean to determine if the off-campus training experience will be taken as an internship or as a non-internship course. The student must submit to the P/DSO a completed CPT Authorization Form and other required documents, which are detailed in the CPT application. Any CPT taken as an internship must also be vetted and approved by the Career Development and Internships Office. (Please consult Renee Tucker Martinez in CDIO for instructions on the internship application process.) The student must be registered for CPT and CPT must appear on the student's academic schedule. The student may begin CPT only after Curricular Practical Training has been authorized in SEVIS and a new Form I-20 issued to the student.

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Students interested in volunteering off campus must consult the P/DSO to determine whether or not the experience qualifies as CPT. Any off-campus work experience that is not properly documented as CPT may impact a student's future prospects for employment benefits or Change of Status petitions.

In any and all instances of CPT, it is the academic curriculum and not the desire for employment that should determine the usefulness and purpose of CPT. USCIS expressly prohibits the authorization of CPT for the purpose of facilitating employment.

Eligibility for CPT will be determined by the P/DSO on a case-by-case basis at the time of application. The P/DSO reserves the right to make exceptions or changes to the above policy, given particular student circumstances and/or in accordance with amendments to federal law or its interpretation.

The P/DSO is obligated to report illegal employment. If a P/DSO has constructive knowledge that a student is engaging in off-campus work that is not properly documented, the P/DSO will terminate the student's SEVIS record for "Unauthorized Employment."

Persons to Contact and Forms:

CPT - [Curricular Practical Training \(CPT\) Information and Authorization Form](#)

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Internship - [Internship Program Application](#)

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