



Curricular Practical Training (CPT)

An international student guide to academic internship, clinical and practice experiences

OVERVIEW

Curricular Practical Training (CPT) is a type of off-campus employment authorization that enables international students in F-1 visa status to take part in a paid or unpaid academic internship or practice experience integral to their curriculum. The U.S. Citizenship & Immigration Services (USCIS) defines "employment" as any type of service for which a benefit, including academic credit, is received. Therefore, both paid and unpaid internships require CPT authorization.

All students are encouraged to meet with the international student advisor in the Office of Academic Affairs or attend a CPT information session for advisement prior to submitting a CPT application.

ELIGIBILITY

- The internship or practice experience must achieve a specific academic objective and must satisfy one of the following criteria:
 - Optional - internships or practice experiences not required by the student's degree program may meet the requirements for CPT if the student will be earning course credit toward his or her program and the experience is deemed an integral part of the program of study.
 - Required - internships or practice experiences required for all students pursuing a specific degree program qualify for CPT, regardless of whether or not it is credit-bearing.
- Student must be in valid F-1 status for one academic year (fall and spring semesters) to be eligible for CPT. Graduate students whose programs require immediate experiential learning are exempt from this one year requirement.

REQUIREMENTS

- The type of employment (internship/practice experience) must be directly related to the student's course and level of study.
- A job offer for the internship/practice experience is required before a student can apply for CPT authorization.
- Employment may be part-time (20 hours or less per week) or full-time (more than 20 hours per week), and either paid or unpaid.
Notes and restrictions:
 - a. Part-time CPT is a total of 20 hours per week or less. If a student is working for multiple employers, the total number of hours worked per week cannot exceed a total of 20 hrs/week to qualify as part-time.
 - b. A student is ineligible for Optional Practical Training, an additional 12 month employment benefit, if he or she engages in 12+ months of full-time CPT during the current course of study.
 - c. Part-time CPT does not affect eligibility for Optional Practical Training.
 - d. Students are advised to use caution when balancing academic and employment demands.
- Employment must be authorized and a new I-20 issued before the student may begin work.
- Employment start/end dates must fall within the published semester academic calendar unless otherwise required by the academic program.
- Registration for corresponding internship or practice experience course(s) is required prior to CPT authorization.
- Authorized CPT is employer-specific. If the student needs to change employers, or if multiple placements are required, a new CPT authorization form with employer information and I-20 will be required before the student may begin employment at a new location.

APPROVAL PROCESS

- Students must complete and submit the CPT application form, including employment information from the employer and authorization from the academic advisor. If the practice site/experience is assigned by the department (ex. pharmacy, nursing), the employer and advisor sections of the application are not required, but students must still complete/submit the CPT application with the student information section completed.
- Students must be registered for the corresponding internship course (as applicable) before CPT can be authorized.

CPT

HOW TO APPLY

1. Complete the CPT Application Form to include all required information from the employer and advisor. Employer and advisor authorizations are not required if the placement is assigned through your academic department (ex. pharmacy, nursing), but the student information on the form must still be submitted.
2. Register for the corresponding internship or practice experience coursework, as applicable.
3. Submit application materials to The Office of Academic Affairs at least 7 days prior to the anticipated start date of the internship or practice experience.
 - Students may not begin employment until their application has been approved and they have received a new I-20 with CPT authorization.

Students will be contacted via their Fisher email account once their CPT application has been approved and their I-20 authorizing participation in the requested internship or practice experience has been issued. Students must pick-up this new I-20 prior to their first date of employment as proof of employment authorization.

IMPORTANT NOTES

- Working improperly or without prior authorization is a serious violation of F-1 student status and is grounds for immediate termination of a student's SEVIS record.
- CPT authorizations are employer-specific. Students must notify Academic Affairs immediately if there are any changes in the terms, location or duration of the approved internship/practice experience and may be required to submit a new CPT application.
- It is the responsibility of the student to comply with all USCIS F-1 student regulations, maintain legal status and complete the academic requirements of the internship/practice experience.

FAQS

Q: When should I apply for CPT?

A: Completed CPT Application materials should be submitted to Academic Affairs at least 7 days prior to the requested start date of employment.

Q: When can I begin work?

A: Students may begin working only after obtaining CPT authorization and a new CPT I-20 from the international student advisor. The CPT I-20 will list the approved dates and location of employment. Working outside of these dates or for a different employer is considered unauthorized employment, a serious violation of visa status.

Q: Can I begin work as a volunteer before my application is approved?

A: No. Under no circumstances can you begin working, paid or unpaid, before obtaining CPT authorization.

Q: Do I have to work for the same employer during the entire period of my CPT?

A: Changing employers while on CPT requires a separate CPT application and authorization. It is possible to have multiple employers simultaneously, but separate authorization is required for each employer before beginning employment.

Q: I will be participating in a required, unpaid CPT work experience through my program this semester for 8 hrs/week. Can I also apply for an optional paid CPT internship this semester if my program offers one?

A: Yes. Students may work for multiple employers during the same semester (separate CPT applications/authorizations required). However, for the experience to count as part-time CPT (which doesn't affect OPT eligibility), the total number of hours worked per week cannot exceed 20 hrs/week. Therefore, the student would be permitted to work a maximum of 12 hrs/wk at the optional internship to qualify for part-time CPT. Pharmacy students should be particularly cautious with this limit as their program requires several months of full-time CPT experience.

Q: How long can I work on CPT?

A: It depends. CPT authorizations are good for one semester at a time. There is no upper limit on part-time CPT, but any student who uses 12+ months of full-time CPT loses his or her Optional Practical Training benefits. Pharmacy students should be particularly cautious with this limit as their program requires several months of full-time CPT experience.