Curricular Practical Training (CPT)

Office of International Services
8CFR214.2(f) (10)(i)

“…an integral part of an established curriculum. [CPT] is defined to be alternative work/study, internship, cooperative education, or any other type of required internship or practicum that is offered by sponsoring employers through cooperative agreements with the school. … Students who have received one year or more of full time [CPT] are ineligible for post-completion academic training. A student may begin [CPT] only after receiving …. the DSO endorsement.”
What is CPT?

An off-campus employment option for F-1 students where the employment is a part of the program of study.
So it’s just a job?

It is training that is:
- academic in nature;
- directly related to the field of study;
- integral part of a degree program; &
- appropriate for the education level.
Unpaid Experiences

CPT authorization is required for any training experience or internship paid or unpaid that fits the US Department of Labor’s definition of employment.
Given the difficulty and ambiguity of the [US] DOL six-factor test, the safest rule for international students should be that, if a student is providing a beneficial service to an employer, whether paid or unpaid, the student should obtain proper authorization to work.

- National Association of Colleges and Employers, December 2015; Legal Issues: International Students and Unpaid Internships
What is the purpose?

To provide practical experience that compliments classroom learning.
Who is Eligible for CPT?

F-1 student in a degree program with a valid passport & active I-20 who has been enrolled full-time for at least one academic year (30 weeks) in a degree seeking program.
More Eligibility Details

- Time spent in English Language or non-degree does not count.
- The two semesters must total 30 weeks. Therefore, summer semester does not count.
Other Details about CPT

The training should occur between the regular start & end dates of the semester.

It is limited to the time required by the program of study as defined by the curriculum design.

The training may be full or part time.
Enrollment During Full-time CPT

- If full-time CPT will last **12 weeks or more** during Fall or Spring Semester, you can enroll for the required CPT-related course only. No additional registration is required.
- If full-time CPT lasts **less than 12 weeks** of a Fall or Spring Semester, you are required to be enrolled in a full-time course load* (including the CPT course).
- During summer, you can enroll for the CPT-related course only.
Enrollment During Part-time CPT

- Students authorized for part-time CPT during a Fall or Spring Semester must be enrolled in full-time course load* (including the CPT course) no matter the duration of the CPT experience.

- During summer, students can enroll for the CPT-related course only. No additional registration is required.
*Full-time Enrollment*

Full-time enrollment requirements are as follows:

- Undergraduate: 12 credit hours of which only 3 credits can be online
- Graduate: 9 credit hours of which only 3 credits can be online
- Reduced Course Load (RCL), authorized by OIS, counts as full-time enrollment
Limits to CPT

- 12 months of full-time CPT at any educational level eliminates eligibility for OPT at that same educational level.

- Academic departments may have set restrictions based on the major curriculum.
CPT at USF

Four types that are part of the established curriculum.
CPT Type 1

The practical training/work experience is a REQUIREMENT for all students to obtain the degree as stated in the official university catalog.
CPT Type 1

Must follow specifics of degree requirement.

If a course is required, you must be registered for the course during the CPT authorization.

Examples-

supervised field work,
clinical practicum,
internship
REQUIRED as part of an elective course as listed in the official course description.

The course was specifically designed to award academic credit for employment experience.
Examples include

- Practicum
- Internship Course

General independent study & directed research may NOT be used for this type of CPT.
The practical training/work experience is ESSENTIAL for thesis (Masters) or dissertation (Doctoral).
After completion of all coursework

Must be enrolled in thesis (6971) or dissertation hours (7980) during CPT.

Experience must be cited in thesis or dissertation.
CPT Type 4

Experience facilitated by USF Career Services
CPT Type 4

- Complete the USF Career Services Authorization eform in iStart.
- Be approved by USF Career Services following all of their established rules and procedures.
- Obtain the USF Career Services Assignment Confirmation Form.
What if experience doesn’t fit?

You might consider using some of your OPT before graduating.
Using OPT instead

- Most students save their OPT for after graduation so they can have 12 full months.

- OPT can be used while enrolled, after graduation, or a combination of the two.
  - If while enrolled, OPT can be part-time Fall/Spring OR full-time in Summer.

- You must apply to USCIS and pay a fee.
CPT vs OPT

CPT
- Part of the curriculum
- Occurs while enrolled in program.
- Approved by DSO by updating I-20.
- No application fee.
- Work authorization is on the I-20.

OPT
- Limited to 12 months of full time (unless STEM)
- Application fee - $410
- Approved by USCIS (takes 2-4 months).
- Work authorization is an EAD card.
What’s NEXT?
Register for the CPT related course, if applicable.

Prepare the following to upload to the E-Form:

- Proof of fit (see next 4 slides for examples)
- Letter from employer on letterhead with:
  - employer’s full name
  - Location/Address of employment
  - description of CPT employment including responsibilities and learning objectives
  - start & end dates of employment
  - number of hours per week you will be employed
  - name of supervisor who will monitor your CPT
Proof it Fits the Type

CPT Type 1 – required to graduate

Official catalog page listing the mandatory requirement for the internship/work experience for all students in the program.

Enrollment in course if required
Proof it Fits the Type

- CPT Type 2 – part of elective course
  - Copy of official course listing from USF schedule of courses or dept website with description of work requirement
  - Proof of enrollment in course
Proof it Fits the Type

- CPT Type 3 – thesis or dissertation
- Department verification on form.
- Proof of enrollment in thesis/dissertation hours for the semester in which you will engage in Practical Training.
Proof it Fits the Type

CPT Type 4 – USF Career Services

Career Services approval via the assignment form.
How do I apply?

- Complete CPT E-Form through iStart. Once approved by your academic advisor, your CPT E-Form will be reviewed by our office. If approved, you will be notified to pick up your new I-20.

- Complete E-Form at least 15 working days before your employment start date.
When can I begin working?

- After you received your updated I-20.
- On or after the CPT start date listed on your new I-20.
- Employment dates are normally limited to the start and end dates of a semester.
Proof of Work Eligibility

Your new I-20 with the CPT Authorization is your proof of work eligibility.

Show this to your employer’s HR office.

You can now take the online quiz contained in the CPT eform group.