



## **CURRICULAR PRACTICAL TRAINING (CPT) EMPLOYMENT AUTHORIZATION FOR F-1 STUDENTS SEEKING INTERNSHIP/WORK EXPERIENCE RELATED TO STUDIES**

### **CURRICULAR PRACTICAL TRAINING (CPT) OVERVIEW**

CPT is meant to be work that is a part of the curriculum, which contributes to the completion of the degree program. CPT employment/training must be either an *integral* (e.g. *highly recommended*) or *required* part of the student's program of study; it cannot be authorized simply because the work is related to the major field of study.

U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services regulations define Curricular Practical Training as:

- (1) work which is an integral part of the established curriculum;
- (2) alternate work/study;
- (3) internship;
- (4) practicum;
- (5) cooperative education; or
- (6) required internship or practicum offered through cooperative agreements with the school. (NOTE: CPT is not necessarily limited to work experiences which are required for program completion.)

Both **paid** and **unpaid** employment requires prior authorization from International Student & Scholar Services. Unpaid work is considered to be employment by USCIS, since for immigration purposes, the definition of employment includes any service performed for personal benefit, such as wages, academic credit, data collection essential to program completion, etc.

Students **may not volunteer** for a position for which someone is normally paid.

**English Language Institute (ELI)** and **Non-Degree Students** are not eligible for Curricular Practical Training.

### **EMPLOYMENT REQUIRED FOR PROGRAM COMPLETION (REQUIRED TRAINING)**

#### **Employment/Training Eligibility Requirements**

Work required by the program of study always meets USCIS requirements for CPT. Before beginning employment, **paid or unpaid**, the student must obtain written authorization for CPT on page three of his/her I-20. CPT is job-specific—employment is limited to the employer, location, and dates listed on page 3 of the I-20. Employment is authorized for only one semester/term at a time (maximum ending date: day before classes start for the following semester/term). The same procedure used to apply for CPT initially must be followed to extend CPT authorization.

**Student Eligibility Requirements** - Students applying for CPT for required training must meet the following criteria:

- (1) maintaining lawful F-1 status;
- (2) in a degree-seeking program (non-degree students and ELI students are not eligible for CPT);
- (3) maintained lawful full-time enrollment for at least one full academic year (Exception: Graduate students are eligible for CPT whenever the program *requires*, even if it is immediately after beginning the program of studies. In order for the training/practicum/internship to be considered “required”, it must be applied to all students in the same degree program);
- (4) “in good academic standing,” (GPA of at least 2.0, undergraduate/3.0, graduate);
- (5) offer of training/employment that is a requirement of the program of studies;
- (6) must enroll in academic credit for the employment experience.

## **EMPLOYMENT NOT REQUIRED FOR PROGRAM COMPLETION (INTEGRAL OR ALTERNATIVE TRAINING)**

### **Employment/Training Eligibility Requirements**

Training which is not required by the program of study in order to complete the degree *may* meet the requirements if (a) the student receives academic credit for the training or (b) the training will contribute directly to the completion of the thesis or dissertation. Training obtained through UA's Cooperative Education Office usually meets USCIS requirements for CPT.

**Eligibility Requirements** - Students applying for CPT for Integral or Alternative training must meet the following criteria:

- (1) maintaining lawful F-1 status;
- (2) in a degree-seeking program (non-degree students and ELI students are not eligible for CPT);
- (3) maintained lawful full-time enrollment for at least one full academic year;
- (4) "in good academic standing," (GPA of at least 2.0, undergraduate/3.0, graduate);
- (5) must have an offer of training/employment that meets the integral/alternative training requirements;
- (6) must have the academic adviser's recommendation for participation;
- (7) must enroll in academic credit for the employment experience.

## **EMPLOYMENT REQUIRED FOR COMPLETION OF THESIS/DISSERTATION/PROJECT**

### **Employment/Training Eligibility Requirements**

The employment/training must contribute directly to the thesis, dissertation, or project for students who have completed all required coursework.

**Eligibility Requirements** - Students applying for Integral/Alternative CPT training must meet the following criteria:

- (1) maintaining lawful F-1 status;
- (2) in a degree-seeking program (non-degree students and ELI students are not eligible for CPT);
- (3) maintained lawful full-time enrollment for at least one full academic year;
- (4) "in good academic standing," (GPA of at least 2.0, undergraduate/3.0, graduate);
- (5) must have an offer of training/employment tied to thesis/dissertation/project research;
- (6) must have the academic adviser's recommendation for participation;
- (7) must enroll in academic credit or research credits for the employment experience.

## **FULL-TIME VS PART-TIME CPT**

### **Full-Time Training**

Employment for 21 hours or more per week is considered "full-time" CPT. The employment authorization provided by ISSS on page two of the I-20 will specify permission to engage in full-time training. Undergraduate students may engage in full-time training during the summer and breaks only; during the fall and spring academic semesters, undergraduate students must be enrolled full time and are limited to 20 hours of work per week. Graduate students in full-time training are not required to enroll for credits other than those specified in the CPT recommendation memo provided by the academic advisor or UA Co-Operative Education office—full-time CPT is also considered to be full-time enrollment for graduate students. There is no limitation upon number of months that the student may participate in full-time CPT; however, if a student participates in 12 or more months (more than 364 days) of full-time CPT, the student is no longer eligible for Optional Practical Training (OPT). Graduate students who have completed all coursework and are in thesis/dissertation phase can only get full-time CPT approval if the employment is required for the dissertation/thesis/project research that is part of the degree program per the academic advisor's recommendation.

### **Part-Time Training**

Employment for 20 hours or less per week is considered "part-time" CPT. The authorization provided by ISSS will specify permission to engage in "part-time" training. During part-time CPT that is authorized in fall or spring semesters, the student is required to enroll full-time, meaning that in addition to the CPT credits, the student must enroll in additional credits that together will equal full-time enrollment. To maintain lawful F-1 status, the student must be careful to **limit work to no more than 20 hours per week** and to also **maintain full-time enrollment** in school during part-time CPT employment. There is no limitation on the number of months the student may engage in part-time CPT. Part-time CPT does not affect future eligibility for Optional Practical Training (OPT).

## LIMITATIONS ON PART-TIME/FULL-TIME CPT AND ON-CAMPUS WORK

- (1) CPT in the fall or spring semester is limited to Part-time CPT (20 hours per week or less) while student is still engaged in coursework. On-campus and off-campus work combined cannot exceed 20 hours per week in the fall or spring semesters. CPT done in the summer may be done either full-time or part-time.
- (2) Full-time CPT (more than 20 hours per week) during the fall or spring semesters is allowed in the following scenarios:
  - a. when a graduate student has completed all course work and is in his/her dissertation or thesis phase as a graduate student and is conducting training related to the thesis/dissertation; or
  - b. when a student is in a full-time Co-Op Placement; or
  - c. when a student is in a program of study which requires field placement as part of the academic program requirement and stated in the catalog (e.g. Social Work).
- (3) CPT allowing a combination of on-campus and off-campus work exceeding 20 hours per week while the student is engaged in coursework can be granted in the following scenario:
  - a. when a student is in a program of study which requires field placement as part of the academic program requirement and stated in the catalog (e.g. Social Work); or
  - b. when a graduate music student holding a .5 FTE Graduate Assistantship engages in music performances as part of the academics of their program.

## STUDENTS WHO HAVE PREVIOUSLY VIOLATED F-1 STATUS

A student in valid F-1 status for one full academic year before the violation of F-1 status occurred has met the one academic year requirement and is eligible for CPT upon reinstatement to valid F-1 status.

A student in F-1 status less than one academic year when the status violation occurred has not met the one year requirement. Time towards this requirement will resume when reinstatement is granted.

**NOTE:** A “new” period of F-1 status begins when a student exits the U.S. and returns with an “initial attendance” I-20. The student is again in valid F-1 status, but previous enrollment will not apply to accrual of the one year requirement.

## CPT SEMINAR – PROVIDED ONLINE

International Student & Scholar Services (ISSS) has launched online CPT course to replace in-person seminars that were previously held within ISSS office. International students are required to take this online training to have general understanding on regulations about on-campus and CPT work authorization. The online training also covers ISSS’s policies regarding CPT, as well as procedures for applying for employment authorization.

## CPT APPLICATION PROCEDURES

### Documents Required for Application

Student must obtain written authorization for Curricular Practical Training from ISSS **prior** to beginning employment in a paid or unpaid:

- (1) internship or practicum which is required for the completion of a degree;
- (2) alternative/integral employment/training which is **not** required for program completion, but is indeed an **integral** part of the degree program;
- (3) employment/training directly related to the student’s thesis, dissertation, or project.

### Submit the Following Documents to International Student & Scholar Services:

1. **F-1 Curricular Practical Training (CPT) Application (pages 5 & 6 of this packet)**, completed by the student.
2. **Academic Department’s Recommendation** from student’s academic adviser, dean, department chair, or the professor who will be supervising the training experience (**found on page 7 of this packet**).
3. **Job-offer letter** on official letterhead/stationery from the prospective employer (**sample on page 9**). This letter must come from the agency that will be issuing the student’s paycheck and must include **all** of the following information:
  - a. **Location.** Complete address of all locations where employment/training will take place. Do not submit Post Office Box only; a physical address of locations of employment/training is required.
  - b. **Position.** Position/title that will be held by the student.

- c. **Part/Full-Time.** Letter should indicate whether the position is part-time or full-time. Part-time: 20 hours/less per week. Full-time: more than 20 hours per week.
- d. **Duties.** Brief description of student's expected duties and responsibilities.
- e. **Period of Employment/Training.** Both beginning and ending dates are required. Employer may specify that the ending date is for the purpose of CPT authorization only. Authorization is issued for only one academic term at a time.

\***Academic term.** Authorization dates may not overlap actual term dates. Authorization may end as late as the day before class begins for the following term. For example, if ISSS is authorizing CPT participation for the fall semester, and spring classes begin January 5, authorization for a fall semester internship may be authorized to end as late as January 4.

- 4. **Recent unofficial Transcript of Grades** (issued to student) may be obtained through student's MyBama account or from the office of Academic Records, 206 Student Services Building. A fee for this service will be charged by the Records office.

**SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONS FOR COOPERATIVE EDUCATION CERTIFICATION**

UA's Cooperative Education Office must receive a *Certification of Eligibility for Coop Interviews* completed by a ISSS staff member before the student will be allowed to apply for jobs. If offered employment, the student must then obtain written authorization for Curricular Practical Training from ISSS **prior** to beginning employment. The following documents are required when applying for CPT under the Cooperative Education Office:

- 1. **F-1 Curricular Practical Training (CPT) Application (pages 5 & 6 of this packet)**, completed by the student.
- 2. **Cooperative Education's Memorandum** confirming the job offer, course number, and number of enrollment hours (found on page 7 of this packet).
- 3. **Job-offer letter** on official letterhead/stationery from the prospective employer (**sample on page 9**). This letter must come from the agency that will be issuing the student's paycheck. The offer must include **all** of the following information:
  - a. **Location.** Complete address of all physical locations where employment/training will take place. Do not submit addresses to a Post Office box.
  - b. **Position.** Position/title that will be held by student.
  - c. **Part/Full-Time.** Letter should indicate whether the position is part-time or full-time. Part-time: 20 hours/less per week. Full-time: more than 20 hours per week.
  - d. **Duties.** Brief description of student's expected duties/responsibilities.
  - e. **Period of Employment/Training.** Both beginning and ending dates are required. Employer may specify that the ending date is for the purpose of CPT authorization only.
- 4. **Recent unofficial Transcript of Grades** (issued to student) may be obtained through My Bama or from office of Academic Records, 206 Student Services Building (a fee will be charged by Records).

**AUTHORIZATION PROCEDURES**

Advisors in the office of International Student & Scholar Services are authorized by federal regulations to grant the actual written work permission on page three of USCIS Form I-20. Thus, if a student is eligible for work authorization and submits all the required documentation to an ISSS advisor, the student may receive written work authorization within a matter of days.

**DO NOT WORK WITHOUT PERMISSION**

Working, for pay or not, without proper authorization or not following the guidelines of the CPT authorization is a serious violation of a student's nonimmigrant status. Therefore, a student should consult with ISSS before taking any sort of employment or off-campus training. It is the student's responsibility as an F-1 to comply with all immigration regulations which apply to the terms and conditions of the F-1 status. Upon failing to comply with USCIS rules for the F-1 status, a student is no longer eligible for the benefits normally granted to F-1 students, including on- or off-campus employment authorization.

**FURTHER INFORMATION**

Additional information on CPT and F-1 employment is available from ISSS on our website: <http://international.ua.edu/iss/currentstudents/student-employment/#cpt>. Please contact ISSS at (205) 348-5402 if you have questions or concerns.



**Capstone International Center**  
International Student & Scholar Services

105 B.B. Comer Hall | Box 870254 | Tuscaloosa, AL 35487-0254 | TEL: 205-348-5402  
[INTERNATIONAL@UA.EDU](mailto:INTERNATIONAL@UA.EDU) | [HTTP://INTERNATIONAL.UA.EDU/ISSS/](http://INTERNATIONAL.UA.EDU/ISSS/)

**F-1 Curricular  
Practical Training  
(CPT) Application**

**BIOGRAPHIC INFORMATION**

Full Name (as in passport): \_\_\_\_\_  
 Family/ Last Name (Surname)                      Given Name (First)                      Middle Name (if any)

Date of Birth (month/ day/ year): \_\_\_\_\_ Gender :  male     female  
 (mmm/dd/yyyy - i.e. March 27, 1975)

UA Campus-Wide ID (CWID) Number: \_\_\_\_\_ SEVIS I-20# N \_\_\_\_\_

**CONTACT INFORMATION**

Current Mailing Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_ E-Mail Address: \_\_\_\_\_

**ACADEMIC PROGRAM (MAJOR AND EXPECTED GRADUATION DATE)**

**Degree Level:**  Bachelor's     Master's     Doctoral  
 ► Academic Major(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Expected Graduation Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
 (mmm/dd/yyyy - i.e. Dec. 15, 2013)

**PRACTICAL TRAINING DATA**

<b>Type of Curricular Practical Training You Are Seeking:</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Initial CPT <input type="checkbox"/> CPT Extension		<b>Weekly Duration of Requested Training</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Part-Time (20 Hours/Wk or less) <input type="checkbox"/> Full-Time (More than 20 Hours/Wk)	
Requested Work Start-Date:		Requested Work End-Date:	Are you working on-campus now? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No _____ Hours/Wk
Have you participated in CPT before?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	If yes, please indicate periods of previous CPT participation:	1. <input type="checkbox"/> Full-time / <input type="checkbox"/> Part-time from _____ to _____ 2. <input type="checkbox"/> Full-time / <input type="checkbox"/> Part-time from _____ to _____ 3. <input type="checkbox"/> Full-time / <input type="checkbox"/> Part-time from _____ to _____

**EMPLOYER DATA**

Employer Name & Address:			
Supervisor's Name:		Supervisor's Phone:	
Supervisor's Email:		Your Job Title:	

**DOCUMENT AND REQUIREMENT CHECKLIST**

<b>REQUIRED CPT DOCUMENTS</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Academic Adviser's Recommendation/ Cooperative Education Memo <input type="checkbox"/> Unofficial Transcripts <input type="checkbox"/> Job Offer Letter	<b>INTERNATIONAL STUDENT &amp; SCHOLAR SERVICES NOTES FOR ISSS USE ONLY</b>		
	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 academic year in status <input type="checkbox"/> Maintained full-time enrollment <input type="checkbox"/> Signed Student Responsibility Checklist		
	<b>Advisor's Initials</b>	<b>Date Received</b>	<b>Date Completed</b>
			<b>ISSM Updated</b>

## STUDENT RESPONSIBILITY AGREEMENT

*While on Curricular Practical Training you must continue to abide by the rules and regulations governing your visa status. Please carefully read the statements below and place a check mark in the box next to each statement that applies to the type of practical training application that you are applying for. Sign at the bottom of the page. Your check marks and signature indicate your understanding and agreement to abide by the statements made.*

## CURRICULAR PRACTICAL TRAINING RESPONSIBILITY CHECKLIST

I understand that I am eligible to work **only during the dates authorized by International Student & Scholar Services** as indicated on page 2 of my I-20 form and must show my original I-20 authorized for CPT to my employer before beginning employment.

I understand that I am eligible to work **only for the employer** indicated on page 2 of my I-20 form.

I understand that if I wish to extend my curricular practical training, **I must submit the following to ISSS, prior to the expiration of the current CPT employment authorization period indicated on my I-20 form:**

- (1) a new Curricular Practical Training Application,
- (2) an updated letter of employment,
- (3) an updated recommendation letter from my Academic Adviser/Cooperative Education, and
- (4) register the CPT experience for credit.

If I do not do so, I must stop working on the date indicated on my I-20 form (page 2). Failure to do so may result in illegal employment in the US.

I understand that participation in Curricular Practical Training is not a valid reason for delaying graduation and that extension of my I-20 and F-1 status may not be possible if my participation in CPT causes a delay in my studies.

I understand that my passport must be valid at the time of curricular practical training authorization and it is my responsibility to maintain passport validity throughout the duration of my program.

I understand that I am required by current immigration regulations to report the following to International Student & Scholar Services within 10 days of any change of: legal name; residential or mailing address; employer name; employer address; and/or loss of employment.

**I certify that the above information is correct and complete, and that I shall notify ISSS of any change in my personal information.**

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_





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**Academic Adviser/  
Cooperative Education  
Recommendation for  
CPT Participation**

**TO BE COMPLETED BY ACADEMIC ADVISER & CHAIR  
OR COOPERATIVE EDUCATION OFFICE ADVISER FOR COOP PROGRAMS**

Name of Student: \_\_\_\_\_

CWID Number: \_\_\_\_\_ Level of Study: \_\_\_\_\_

Major Field(s) of Study: \_\_\_\_\_

UA Academic Department: \_\_\_\_\_

Adviser's Name and Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Adviser's Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

**INSTRUCTIONS TO ACADEMIC/COOP ADVISER:** Please complete the following approval and sign at the bottom.

This is to confirm that the above named student is a full-time student in the Department of \_\_\_\_\_  
expecting to complete a  Bachelor's;  Master's;  Doctoral degree by \_\_\_\_\_.

**The above named student wishes to engage in a/an:**

- internship,
- practicum,
- field experience,
- professional practice,
- work related to dissertation/thesis/project research,
- cooperative education (coop) program.

**Participation in this experience is considered to be:**

- integral (i.e. highly recommended but not required) to the degree program,
- required for the degree (i.e. the requirement applies to all students in the degree program),
- required for dissertation/thesis/project research that is part of the degree program.

**I have discussed the student's plan to participate in this training and believe it to be a useful and integral academic experience.**

**Below are the details about the training:**

Student's Title/Position: \_\_\_\_\_

Employer's name: \_\_\_\_\_

Employer's exact street address: \_\_\_\_\_

Exact beginning date of experience: \_\_\_\_\_ Exact end date of experience: \_\_\_\_\_

Number of hours/week student will work: \_\_\_\_\_

**COURSE DETAILS**

Course number & name: \_\_\_\_\_

Course objective: \_\_\_\_\_

Number of credits to be received: \_\_\_\_\_

Supervising faculty member: \_\_\_\_\_

Semester of registration (course must be in same session of CPT experience): \_\_\_\_\_

I recommend that the student participate in this experience.

Adviser's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Chair's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_



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**Cooperative  
Education (Coop) –  
ISSS Verification of  
Eligibility for CPT**

**NOTE: THIS IS ONLY USED FOR COOP APPLICANTS**

Before participating in Coop interviews, an international student must receive verification of his/her eligibility to apply for Curricular Practical Training (CPT). The student must meet with an International Student & Scholar Services Advisor in order to complete this Verification.

UA’s Cooperative Education Office must receive a *Certification of Eligibility for Coop Interviews* completed by an ISSS staff member before the student will be allowed to apply for jobs.

Once offered employment through Coop, the student must then obtain written authorization for Curricular Practical Training from ISSS **prior** to beginning employment. It is the student’s responsibility to ensure that he/she works only during the CPT period indicated on the I-20. It is also the student’s responsibility to apply to ISSS on time for any additional/ continuation of CPT employment/training authorization.

**PART 1: To Be Completed By Student**

I have read the Curricular Practical Training Application Packet. I understand and affirm the following:

- This form verifies my eligibility to apply for Curricular Practical Training, but it does not authorize employment/training;
- Before I begin employment/training, I must obtain CPT authorization from International Student & Scholar Services, which will be indicated on the 3<sup>rd</sup> page of my I-20;
- It is my responsibility to ensure that my written employment authorization is valid at all times while I am employed through programs of the Cooperative Education Office.

Student’s Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Student’s CWID Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Student’s Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**PART 2: To Be Completed by International Student & Scholar Services Advisor**

Name of Student: \_\_\_\_\_ CWID Number: \_\_\_\_\_

This is to confirm that the above named student is:

- Currently eligible to apply for Curricular Practical Training
- May be eligible to apply for CPT beginning: \_\_\_\_\_.

ISSS Advisor’s Name: \_\_\_\_\_

ISSS Advisor’s Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

PLEASE NOTE: This signature is valid for one semester only. If the student does not take a Coop position within the current term or wishes to take another Coop position during a subsequent term, he/she must have this form revalidated before participating in any other Coop interviews. **THIS FORM DOES NOT AUTHORIZE EMPLOYMENT.**



## TEMPLATE FOR JOB-OFFER LETTER

**[PLEASE PRINT ON COMPANY LETTERHEAD]**

INTERNATIONAL STUDENT'S NAME  
INTERNATIONAL STUDENT'S ADDRESS

DATE

Dear INTERNATIONAL STUDENT'S NAME:

I am pleased to invite you to participate in an internship with the COMPANY NAME.

Under the terms of our agreement to host you during your internship, you will be required to work from START DATE (e.g. SEPTEMBER 1, 2012) until END DATE (e.g. DECEMBER 31, 2012). Your position will require you to work a minimum of NUMBER OF HOURS per week at a rate of pay of \$X PER HOUR (OR WILL BE UNPAID).

During your time with us, your supervisor will be SUPERVISOR'S NAME AND TITLE.

Your position with COMPANY NAME will be POSITION TITLE. You will work at our location at PHYSICAL STREET ADDRESS (NOT P.O. BOX). Your primary duties will be to LIST DUTIES.

We look forward to your arrival. Please feel free to contact me if you have any further questions.

Sincerely,

SUPERVISOR/OWNER

NOTE: All offer letters should include the following details: physical location of work, position, number of hours to be worked per week, begin and end date of work, and duties.