International Student & Scholar Services

Curricular Practical Training Seminar

http://international.ua.edu/isss/currentstudents/student-employment/#cpt
Curricular Practical Training (CPT)

WHAT IS CPT? Temporary employment (e.g., internship) that is an integral part of an established curriculum.

- Only available prior to degree completion
- Directly related to major field of study (Program of Study section on new I-20)
  - Cannot be in a minor field of study
  - Cannot be in a previous field of study if different than your current major field of study
- Employer specific (must have job offer letter)
- Must be authorized by ISSS with a new I-20
- Not intended for general, ongoing work authorization
- Even unpaid internships require CPT authorization
Requirements

- Complete 1 academic year (Fall and Spring semesters) in F-1 status
  - Exception may be made for graduate students in programs that require an internship the first year of study

- Job offer in major field of study

- Departmental approval (recommendation form on page 7 of CPT Packet)

- Maintain full-time student status for the duration of the CPT (if in Fall or Spring Semesters)

- Continue to make normal degree progress

- NOTE: You may not begin CPT until new I-20 authorizing CPT is issued by ISSS
CPT Impact on I-20 Program Extensions

The duration of an I-20 should provide sufficient time to complete the academic degree for which it was issued.

- Participation in CPT should not delay one’s program completion.

- A student’s desire to continue working on CPT, under immigration regulations, cannot be the basis of an I-20 extension.
Types of CPT

- **Required for the Degree**
  - Internship required for everyone in degree program in order to complete degree.

- **Integral to the Curriculum**
  - Internship is not a required part of the program’s curriculum, but the internship is considered integral to the academic experience.

- **Dissertation/Thesis Research**
  - Off-campus work/training is necessary to complete research necessary for a dissertation/thesis.
  - Must register for dissertation/thesis hours or a department-specific dissertation/thesis credit and file a [Less-Than-Full-Time Recommendation](#).
CPT: Full-Time vs. Part-Time Work Authorization

- **Part-Time:** 20 hours or less per week
  - Part-Time CPT has no impact on eligibility for OPT.

- **Full-Time:** Allows you to work more than 20 hours per week
  - More than 364 days of full-time CPT makes you ineligible for OPT at this degree level.
  - ISSS recommends limiting full-time CPT to 11 months

- On-campus employment and CPT together cannot exceed 20 hours of work a week during Fall and Spring semesters. This includes assistantships. An exception is made for graduate students who have completed coursework and are in research hours.
Duration of CPT

- CPT is authorized by semester
  - Participation in CPT may begin as early as the day after the previous semester ends, but CPT must end before the first day of the following semester (e.g. CPT can include the break between semesters, but cannot go into another semester)

- CPT may be extended if recommended by academic department and authorized by ISSS
  - Submit a new CPT request for each semester and each employer, including summer session(s).

- You may participate in CPT as much as your program will allow & department will authorize.
  - A student will be ineligible for OPT if he/she participates in greater than 364 days of full time CPT.
CPT can begin as early as day after Fall semester ends. (e.g. Dec. 16, 2017)
CPT must end no later than the day before the start of Summer classes. (e.g. May 28, 2018)

CPT can begin as early as day after Spring semester ends. (e.g. May 6, 2018)
CPT must end no later than the day before the start of Fall classes. (e.g. August 21, 2018)

CPT can begin as early as day after summer sessions end. (e.g. August 5, 2018)
CPT must end no later than the day before the start of Spring classes. (e.g. January 8, 2019)
CPT Application Process

Make an appointment for CPT Processing

- contact ISSS at international@ua.edu or 205-348-5402
- Book appointment online

You MUST bring the following for CPT Appointment:

- CPT Application Form (pages 5 & 6 of CPT Packet). Please type responses directly into the fillable form.
CPT Application Process (continued)

You MUST bring (continued):

- Recommendation from Your Academic Department (page 7 of CPT Packet)
- Proof of registration of your course credit(s)
You MUST bring (continued):

- Photocopy of official job offer letter (template on page 9 of CPT Packet)
- Original of all of your I-20s since entering the U.S. (no copies are needed, but originals will be reviewed)
- Original passport, visa, and I-94 (no copies are needed, but originals will be reviewed)
Enrollment

Full-time enrollment or equivalent is required for CPT in Fall and Spring Semester (for CPT during summer break, enrollment can be for less than full-time, but must be at least 1 credit hour).

Undergraduate Students:
- Full-time enrollment is 12 credit hours during Fall and Spring Semesters; or
- If it is your last semester and fewer than 12 credits are required to graduate, file a Less-Than-Full-Time Recommendation with ISSS.

Graduate Students:
- Full-time enrollment is 9 credits (6 credit hours for those on a .5 FTE assistantship); or
- If you are in dissertation or thesis hours or it is your last semester and less than 9 credits are required to graduate, file a Less-Than-Full-Time Recommendation with ISSS.
I-9, Social Security, and Taxes

- **I-9**: All employees in the U.S. must complete Employment Eligibility Verification I-9 Forms with their employers within 3 days of starting employment.

- **Social Security**: Employment in the U.S. requires a Social Security Number (SSN). If you do not have an SSN, you must have your job offer letter processed by ISSS and apply for a SSN.

- **Taxes**:
  - **Social Security and Medicare Taxes**: Typically, non-resident F-1 students with authorized CPT or OPT are exempt from Social Security (F.I.C.A) and Medicare taxes as long as you continue to declare non-resident status for tax purposes.

  **Federal, State, and Local Taxes**: Federal, state, and local taxes will be withheld from your paycheck by employers unless you qualify for a tax treaty exemption.

(More information also available at the [IRS website](https://www.irs.gov))
Questions? Concerns? Queries? Doubts?