



Curricular Practical Training

F-1 Status

What is Curricular Practical Training?

Curricular Practical Training is temporary employment that the USCIS allows certain F-1 students to engage in so that they may gain practical experience in their field of study. Curricular Practical Training must be "an integral part of an established curriculum." The USCIS has defined curricular practical training 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."

Generally, the curricular practical training is taken for credit and is listed in the school's course catalog or as a regular course listed with the Registrar's Office with the available credits and the name of the faculty member teaching the course clearly indicated. There should be a description of the course with the course objectives clearly defined. Students enrolled in such a course may work out the detail of their specific projects within the established course objectives under the supervision of the instructor. If a degree program does not require such training as part of the degree program, you may still qualify for curricular practical training if you are enrolled for a "for credit" course and if the course/training is considered to be an integral part of your curriculum.

Am I Eligible for Curricular Practical Training?

- You are a full-time student with a valid F-1 visa.
- F-1 students who have completed one full academic year (both Fall and Spring) of full time study immediately prior to the semester that they request CPT work authorization. This requirement is waived for graduate students in a program that requires immediate internship participation.
- CPT occurs during the course of the student's program of study.
- The employment must be clearly related to your field of study and be commensurate with the degree level you are pursuing.
- All training must be an integral part of an established curriculum. Training needed for degree requirements such as internship or practicum, can be taken for credit or non-credit. Non-required training must be taken for credit
- You need a job offer to apply for CPT.

- CPT can only do part-time during the academic year and full-time during the break, like summer

Types of Employment

- **Multiple employers:** You may work for more than one employer, but all jobs must be related to your field.
- **Work for hire:** Commonly referred to as 1099 or Independent Contractor Employment; keep evidence of the duration of contract periods and the name and address of the contracting company.
- **Self-employed business owner:** You can start a business or be self-employed while on OPT. You should be able to prove that you have the proper business licenses and that it is related to your degree program.
- Employment through an agency or consulting firm is also allowed.
- **Unpaid Employment:** You may work as a volunteer or unpaid intern, where this practice does not violate any labor laws.

How to apply for CPT?

Step 1: Receive a job offer but don't accept it.

Do not accept your job before talking to your academic advisor and the director of ISS about your eligibility of CPT. Note: only part-time during the academic year and full-time during the break, like summer.

Step 2: Discuss your eligibility of CPT with your academic advisor.

You must work with your academic advisor and get approved from him/her in order to do the immigration process since CPT needs to be integral part of an established curriculum.

Step 3: Discuss your eligibility of CPT with the director of ISS.

After talking to your academic advisor, you should talk to the director of ISS to understand the immigration requirements and limitation.

Step 4: Make an appointment with ISS and prepare the following documents for CPT application before coming to ISS.

- **Academic Advisor Recommendation Form for CPT.** Fill out the form with your academic advisor. Find the Form on page 7-8.

- **Offer Letter from your employer.** See the required information below.

Step 5: During the appointment, we will:

- Issue you a new I-20 with your CPT employer information.

What need to include in my offer letter?

It's very important to provide the following information to get approved in the SEVIS system. An offer Letter needs to include the following information:

- Student's full name
- Student's job title and brief description
- Start and end date of the employment and work hours
- Employer's name, title, address, email, phone number and signature
- Company's name and logo

What should I do if I change the employer or need an extension?

Anything changed needs to report to ISS.

Changes on current CPT employment:

If you want to make changes on current CPT employment, includes employer information, job information, employment start date before start you job and end date, you can simply Let ISS know.

An extension to current CPT employment:

If you need to extend your current CPT employment, you need to apply for CPT again, which means you need a new offer letter and new advisor recommendation form.

Change to a new CPT employment:

If you change to a new CPT employment, you also need to apply for CPT again, which means you need a new offer letter and new advisor recommendation form.

CPT vs. Pre-Completion OPT vs. Post-Completion OPT

The following table is the main differences between three kinds of training. To know more details, please go to ISS website.

| | CPT | Pre-Completion OPT | Post-Completion OPT |
|----------------------------------|---|---|---|
| Work time? | Part-time or full-time Before Graduation | Part-time Before Graduation | Full-time After Graduation |
| Approval by? | Approved by ISS | Approved by ISS and USCIS (EAD card required), up to 90 days for approval | Approved by ISS and USCIS (EAD card required), up to 90 days for approval |
| Fee? | No | Yes, \$410 to USCIS | Yes, \$410 to USCIS |
| When to apply? | when you have a job and approved by ISS | 90 days prior to Pre- Completion OPT start date | 90 days prior to Graduation |
| Class registration? | Yes, enrolled as a full- time student | Yes, enrolled as a full- time student | No |
| Job offer before application? | Yes | No, but recommend to have one | No |
| Job Type Requirement? | Integral part of an established curriculum | Directly related to course of study | Directly related to course of study |
| Start date? | Once approved by ISS and meet the start date | Once approved by USCIS (Received EAD card) and meet the start date on the EAD card | Once approved by USCIS (Received EAD card) and meet the start date on the EAD card |
| Affect other Eligibility? | No if doing full-time CPT for less than 365 days or unlimited part-time CPT | Deducted days at half of the rate from Post- Completion OPT period | |
| STEM Major Extension? | NO, should apply for post-completion OPT first | No, should apply for post-completion OPT first | Yes, if meet qualifications |
| Limited Unemployment | No | No | Yes, up to 90 days |

Note: I-20 program end date cannot be extended for the purpose of approving CPT or pre-completion OPT. If a student is eligible to graduate/complete coursework, they should apply for post-completion OPT.

Frequently Asked Questions

What is Curricular Practical Training (CPT)?

CPT is employment that is an integral part of your major curriculum and allows you to participate in an internship, practicum or cooperative education program. CPT must be required or, if not required, you must receive course credit. CPT is employer specific and must be done before you graduate.

Do I have to be registered while on CPT?

You must maintain F-1 student status, which generally requires full-time registration. Most students are required to register as full-time students while on CPT. In some cases, graduate students may be considered as full-time students with fewer than 10 credits while on full-time CPT. This includes students registered for Engineering Co-op credits and student registered for thesis or dissertation credits along with their CPT-related credit.

Process to apply CPT?

Once you receive your offer letter from the company. Make an appointment with your advisor. Always your CPT should match your course subjects. Once verified by the advisor, ask him to fill the advisor form which is in our school website. Then make an appointment with your international student services and submit your offer letter and advisor signed form. Then they will approve the CPT. **UNLESS YOUR CPT IS APPROVED PLEASE DON'T GO FOR WORK. BECAUSE THERE WILL BE PROBLEMS FOR YOUR IMMIGRATION STATUS.**

Can I change employers or the number of hours I work ?

Since CPT is employer specific you must apply for a new CPT authorization before you work for the new employer. You can change within the limits of part-time or full-time. For example, you may change from 10 hours per week to 15 hours per week without a new authorization. However, if you change from part-time to full-time (or vice versa) you must request a new authorization.

Can I extend my CPT?

You are authorized for specific dates of employment on your I-20. You may not begin before the start date or continue after the end date. You must apply for an extension in sufficient time to allow your ISS adviser to issue a new CPT authorization before you can continue beyond the end date of your current CPT.

For CPT extensions: If the new requested end date is prior to the start of the next academic quarter, ask your academic advisor to email to request the extended CPT end date. Your academic adviser should copy you on the email request so you know ISS received the request. If the new requested end date overlaps with the next academic quarter, you must submit a new online CPT application.

Does CPT or Pre-completion OPT usage affect Post-Completion OPT eligibility?

You may use as much CPT as is required for your degree program. However, if you use a total of 12 months or more of full-time CPT, you are not eligible for Post-Completion OPT. Part-time CPT does not affect Post-Completion OPT in any way.

Pre-Completion OPT and Post-Completion OPT have limitation of total of 12 months. You may work Pre-Completion OPT but the days you work will be deducted at half of the rate from Post-Completion OPT that you can do after graduation. For example, if you do 2 months of Pre-Completion OPT, you can only do Post-Completion OPT for 11 months.

May I participate in CPT while I wait for my OPT to be authorized by USCIS?

No, CPT is only authorized while the student is registered in the course of study listed on I-20.

Do I need a Social Security number and pay the taxes?

Yes, you will need a Social Security number in order to receive payment from your employer. In general, as an F-1 student you will be exempt from Social Security (FICA) taxes for your first five years in the U.S. as long as you continue to declare nonresident status for tax purposes. Unless you qualify under a tax treaty between the U.S. and your home government, your earnings as an F-1 student will be subject to applicable federal, state and local taxes, and employers are required to withhold those taxes from your paychecks. For more information on taxes, consult the Internal Revenue Service.

Will I receive an Employment Authorization Document (EAD)?

No. The CPT authorization on page 2 of your I-20 is your proof of employment eligibility and together with your I-94 record may be used to complete the Employment Eligibility Verification Form I-9 required by your employer. If your employer has questions about documentation required for I-9 purposes, please refer them to U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services' "I-9 Central" page, including the section about international students with training authorization.

IMPORTANT NOTE: YOUR CPT AND PRE-COMPLETION OPT WORK SHOULD NOT BE THE REASON FOR YOUR COURSE EXTENSION.



ACADEMIC ADVISOR RECOMMENDATION FOR F-1 STUDENTS REQUESTING CURRICULAR PRACTICAL TRAINING

This form must be accompanied by a letter of offer from your proposed employer in the approved format. Please read all instructions and information contained in the ISS handout entitled 'Curricular Practical Training Under SEVIS' before completing this form.

Section I: To be completed by Student

Name (last, first, middle): _____
 Date of Birth (mm/dd/yyyy): _____ Country of Birth: _____ Citizenship: _____
 Student ID #: _____ Initial Date of Arrival: _____ Last Arrival: _____
 Degree Level (MS, MA, BA, BS/Ph.D, etc): _____ Major: _____
 College/School within Lewis: _____

Periods of previous Curricular Practical Training, if any, since you entered the USA. If none, state "none".

| Start and end date | Full time or Part time | Location |
|--------------------|------------------------|----------|
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |

Periods of previous Optional Practical Training, if any, since you entered the USA. If none, state "none".

| Start and end date | Full time or Part time | Location |
|--------------------|------------------------|----------|
| | | |
| | | |

How is the Curricular Practical Training you are seeking related to your program of study?

Signature of student: _____ Date: _____

Section II: This section must be completed by the Faculty/Instructor supervising the students' internship or by the University's Co-op Coordinator.

NOTE: The information below must be completed in order to provide input to the DSO so the ISS can ensure compliance with Federal regulations for Curricular Practical Training, as set forth by the U.S. Bureau of Citizenship

1. Employer Information

Name: _____ Address: _____
 Supervisor: _____
 Phone Number: _____

Dates of training (not more than 12 months at a time): From: _____ / _____ / _____ to: _____ / _____ / _____
(mm) (dd) (yyyy) (mm) (dd) (yyyy)

Circle one: Full-time / Part-Time (20 hours or less per week)

2. Student is Expected to complete degree program (including thesis or dissertation) by: _____ / _____ / _____
(mm) (dd) (yyyy)

3. The proposed employment is necessary to fulfil one of the following academic objectives:

a) A course offered by Lewis University for which the student will earn academic credit.

Course#: _____ Title: _____
 This course is (circle one): Mandatory/Elective for: _____ credits. Instructor: _____

- b) Does this student's degree program require an internship or practicum? _____ YES _____ NO
 Course#: _____ Title: _____
 This course is (circle one): Mandatory/Elective for: _____ credits. Instructor: _____
- c) A Lewis University (co-op) program or required non-credit internship/practicum.
 Course#: _____ Title: _____
 This course is (circle one): Mandatory/Elective for: _____ credits. Instructor: _____
- d) (Graduate students only) An off-campus placement arranged by Lewis University to pursue graduate thesis or dissertation research that cannot be accomplished on campus and is required to complete the student's degree program. Attached is a letter, which includes the following:
- Explanation of the research objectives of the off-campus placement as they relate to the student's thesis or dissertation and why they cannot be accomplished using Lewis University facilities
 - Name of the professor who will monitor the progress of the off-campus research.
 - Two signatures: Signature of Academic Advisor and co-signature of one of the following: Director of Graduate Programs, department Chair, or a Dean.
- e) If the proposed training is not required for graduation, describe how and why it is an integral and necessary part of the student's curriculum, as well as information about the appropriate related course in which he or she will be enrolled: (Please review the letter from the proposed employer before completing this section.) Description:
- _____
- _____
- _____
- Course#: _____ Title: _____
 This course is (circle one): Mandatory/Elective for: _____ credits. Instructor: _____

I certify that I have reviewed the offer or employment and the proposed employment meets one of the criteria described in Section II, Part 3 of this form. Based on the information I have provided, I recommend that the International Students Office authorize this student for employment under federal regulations for Curricular Practical Training

 Signature of Faculty Internship Advisor or Co-op Coordinator

 Date

 Print Name

 Title

 Department

 Extension

Return form to: Michael J. Fekete Director, International Student Services Office, Student Services Office, Student Union Building. FAX: 815/838-8092. Questions? Call:815/836-5549