

What is Curricular Practical Training?

Curricular Practical Training (CPT) is an employment option available to F-1 students where the practical training employment is considered to be an integral part of the curriculum or academic program. According to the immigration regulations, this employment may be an internship, cooperative education job, a practicum, or any other work experience that is either required for your degree (as defined in the course catalog) or for which academic credit is awarded.

What is the criteria for determining if I am eligible for Curricular Practical Training?

To be eligible for curricular practical training, you must have been in lawfully enrolled on a full-time basis for one full academic year, your employment must be an integral part of your degree program or requirement for a course (as defined above), and your job offer related to your major or field of study. You must have an offer of employment offering work that qualifies as curricular practical training.

OIE can authorize curricular practical training for you if it can be clearly documented that the proposed employment meets one of the three following conditions:

1. The training employment is required of all degree candidates in the program and is necessary for the awarding of the degree. Included in this category is employment in a required internship or practicum. Graduate students in their first year of study may be eligible for curricular practical training in this category. Undergraduates are not eligible in their first year of study.
2. The training employment will result in the awarding of academic credit, at least preponderantly, if not solely, on the basis of the training experience. Included in this category is employment for a course specifically designed to award academic credit for an employment experience. Also included in this category is employment that will result in the award of at least one course credit for an independent study. In both of these cases you must be registered for the course during the period that you are working under curricular practical training authorization.

Number of hours authorized:

- Part-time (20 hours/week or less)
- Full-time (Over 20 hours per week)

Length of time authorized:

Because of its unique relationship with the curriculum, there is no limit to the total (aggregate) time CPT may be authorized. However, CPT authorization is on a semester by semester basis.

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If I participate in Curricular Practical training, will I lose my opportunity for Optional Practical Training (OPT) after I graduate?

If you have been authorized (in total) one year or more of full-time Curricular Practical Training, you do not have any remaining OPT eligibility. Full-time CPT that has not met (or surpassed) the one year mark does not affect your eligibility for authorization of Optional Practical Training. Part-time CPT currently does not affect your OPT eligibility.

What will OIE do?

If the proposed activity meets the requirements for Curricular Practical Training and you are otherwise eligible, we note the work authorization on your I-20. We will also complete the school certification portion of the I-538 form and send it to the INS for their records.

How will my employer know I am authorized to work under Curricular Practical Training?

The I-20 (page 4) indicates the dates you are authorized to work for that employer. Within the first three days of beginning work you and your employer must complete a form entitled Employment Eligibility Verification (INS Form I-9). This form will be kept on file by your employer and must be updated each time you receive a renewal of your work permission. Your I-20 with curricular practical training employment page (Page 3) should meet the documentation requirement of the I-9.

Do I need a U.S. Social Security Number?

Yes, if you plan to work in the U.S. you will need a valid Social Security number. The OIE can provide with instructions on applying for a social security number.

Do I have to pay U.S. taxes on my salary?

In general F-1 students who have been in the U.S. for fewer than six years are exempt from social security taxes (also known as F.I.C.A. tax). You should be sure to bring this to the attention of your employer because many employers are not familiar with this provision of the tax laws. If you need more information about the F-1 social security tax exemption, please contact OIE. Students in F-1 status are subject to all other taxes that may apply, including federal, state and local.

To Apply

Submit the following documents to the Office of International Education

- Fully Complete CPT Application Form (attached)
- Current I-20
- If you are applying for “required” CPT, a copy of the departmental requirement showing that all degree candidates must complete the internship or practical training program
- Completed Academic Advisor/Co-op Program Director Form (included in this packet)
- Completed Employer Form (included in this packet) or employer’s offer letter which covers the same information requested on form
- Copy of Personal Data and Visa Pages of Passport

PRACTICAL TRAINING CHART FOR F-1 STUDENTS

<u>CURRICULAR PRACTICAL TRAINING</u>	<u>OPTIONAL PRACTICAL TRAINING</u>
AUTHORIZED BEFORE GRADUATION No cumulative maximum but use may affect eligibility for OPT (see below)	AUTHORIZED BEFORE GRADUATION CAN BE USED PRIOR TO OR AFTER GRADUATION 12 months allowed for each degree level
To be eligible for CPT, you must have been in lawfully enrolled on a full-time basis for one full academic year	To be eligible for OPT, you must be currently in lawful F-1 status and have been a full-time student for one full academic year (nine months-even if part of that time was in another non-immigrant status which does not prohibit full-time study).
Attain a job which is an integral part of an established curriculum for which academic credit is awarded (Example: alternate work/study, internship or cooperative education)	Includes training (1) during summer vacation if student plans to continue school in fall semester; (2) while school is in session if the training does not exceed 20 hours per week; (3) after completion of course requirements, but before completion of course of study, excluding thesis (graduate students); (4) after completion of the course of study.
Work authorization is for a specific employer	Allows work with any employer as long as job is directly related to field of study and commensurate to level of degree
No cumulative maximum but use may affect eligibility for OPT (see below)	12 months allowed for each higher degree level
CPT USED	OPT REMAINING
No CPT used →→	→→ One year of OPT allowed
20 hours or less (part-time) →→	→→ One year of OPT allowed
21 hours or more for one year →→	→→ No OPT allowed