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CURRICULAR PRACTICAL TRAINING FOR F-1 STUDENTS FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

The most recent U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Service (USCIS) regulations governing Curricular Practical Training (CPT) took effect on January 1, 2003. These regulations apply to all students in F-1 status—those who were in the United States on or before January 1, 2003 and those who entered after that date.

Q. **When do I need authorization for CPT?**

- A. You must have authorization from ISSC *before you begin a paid or unpaid internship or any other form of CPT*. As an F-1 student, your employment cannot begin until you receive your SEVIS I-20 with the CPT endorsement.

Please Note: Any internship, paid or unpaid, must be authorized before you begin the placement!

Beginning CPT without proper authorization is a violation of immigration regulations and will have serious consequences.

Q. **What is CPT—Curricular Practical Training?**

- A. Curricular Practical Training (CPT) is employment that is an integral part of an established curriculum. CPT is defined to be alterative work/study, internship, or cooperative education arranged with the approval of your program, or any type of required internship or practicum that is offered by sponsoring employers through cooperative agreements. CPT may take place during the academic year and/or in the summer and **MUST** be undertaken prior to the completion of a course of study. Because USCIS uses a broad definition of employment—any activity for which a student receives a benefit, monetary or otherwise—even unpaid internships require CPT authorization.

Q. **When is CPT required and when is it recommended?**

- A. CPT may be required or recommended. This is decided by the stated requirements of an academic degree. **CPT is required** when it is a required part of the curriculum; it should be mentioned in the section of the College catalog, which describes the department's requirements and course offerings. All students in that degree program are required to complete an internship or practicum.

CPT is recommended when it is beneficial for the student to engage in the employment experience but the experience is not necessary for the completion of the degree. A student authorized for recommended CPT is required by current immigration regulations to register for a minimum of 1 college credit, which reflects the CPT placement; the academic department for each semester of the CPT placement, including summer semester, must grant this credit.

Q. Who is eligible to do CPT?

A. Students in F-1 status must have been lawfully enrolled in school on a full-time basis for at least one full academic year before becoming eligible for practical training. CPT must be undertaken prior to the completion of a course of study. In addition you must meet your program's requirements for eligibility to enroll in an internship course:

- An Undergraduate student must be eligible to receive academic credit for an internship. Check with your Academic Department. For Zicklin students, you must be admitted to the Zicklin School of Business.
- Graduate MBA and MS students in the Zicklin School of Business must complete a semester with full course of study to be eligible for CPT.

Q. How much CPT can I do and still be eligible for Optional Practical Training (OPT)?

A. A Student that accrues more than 365 days of Full-Time CPT, becomes ineligible for Optional Practical Training (OPT). A student is then essentially forfeiting his/her OPT.

Please Note: The "365-Day Rule" ONLY applies to Full-Time CPT. You can accrue Part-time CPT without affecting your eligibility for Optional Practical Training (OPT).

Q. How many hours can I work per week?

A. Undergraduate Students can work up to 20 hours per week during the Fall & Spring Semesters, and Full-Time during the annual break. **(IMPORTANT: PLEASE READ THE NEXT FAQ!)**

Graduate Students can work Part-Time (Up to 20 hours per week) or Full-Time during both the Fall & Spring Semesters, and during the annual break. **(IMPORTANT: PLEASE READ THE NEXT FAQ!)**

Q. Can I work on-campus and do CPT?

A. If you are authorized to work on-campus and also choose to engage in Practical Training (CPT or Pre-OPT), per ICE regulations the total number of hours for the Practical training and on-campus employment can NOT exceed twenty hours while school is in session. You may work full-time during periods when school is not in session or during your annual break.

http://www.ice.gov/sevis/employment/faq_f_on1.htm#_1_13

Q. What must my GPA be to?

A. Graduate students must have at least a 3.0 GPA. For Undergraduate students there is no policy other than maintaining good academic standing.

Q. Is there a fee for CPT?

A. There is **no fee** to apply for CPT. Processing is done in the ISSC office. **Once you have submitted all the required documents, it takes 5 business days to complete the processing of the new SEVIS I-20.**

Q. What paperwork is required?

A. The following **three items** are needed to process an application for CPT:

1. Undergraduate Students Only: Completed Faculty Advisors Recommendation Form for CPT (Form is attached)

Graduate Students Only: Completed Academic Advisor's Recommendation Form (Zicklin Students: Obtain the internship contract from the Graduate Career Management Center (GCMC). Students pursuing graduate

programs other than Zicklin, please contact your respective Career Services Department).

2. Offer letter from employer on their official company letterhead:

- The starting and ending dates of the placement
- Number of hours per week
- A brief description of duties to be performed

3. Proof that you have registered and have paid for the internship course.

Once the CPT application is complete, the International Student Service Center will update the SEVIS record and print a copy of the student's SEVIS I-20, authorizing *CPT with that employer only*. The SEVIS I-20 will be given to the student. **You must have been issued the SEVIS I-20 before commencing employment.**

Q. If I get a new position, or I need to work for an additional period of time, do I need to do a new CPT application?

A. A new application will be required if there is a change of employers or if the employment is to be continued beyond the current ending date. An updated offer letter and an Academic Advisor's form is required.

TO BE COMPLETED BY ACADEMIC ADVISOR ON BEHALF OF STUDENT

Please complete only one of the two boxes below:

_____ **This is to confirm that the student's proposed employment is a training program that is a required part of the established curriculum in this department** (e.g. student must participate in the training program in order to graduate). The training will be _____ part-time (20 hours per week or less) or _____ full-time (more than 20 hours per week). The student is expected to complete his/her studies on _____.

The training dates are from _____ to _____ (month/day/year).

_____ **This is to confirm that the student's proposed employment is a training program for which the student receives academic credit.** This training is an integral, but not required, part of the established curriculum in this department (e.g. department offers internship or practicum courses). *Note: if the student is a graduate student and will apply for thesis/research credits, the training must be incorporated into the student's thesis or dissertation.*

Course Number _____ Course Title _____ No. of Credits _____

Employer's Name and Address: _____

The training will be _____ part-time (20 hours per week or less) or _____ full time (more than 20 hours per week).

The student is expected to complete his/her studies on _____. The training dates are from _____ to _____ (month/day/year).

Advisor's Name: _____ Signature: _____
(Please Print)

Department: _____ Telephone: _____ Date: _____

PLEASE RETURN THIS FORM TO THE INTERNATIONAL STUDENT SERVICE CENTER