
Curricular Practical Training

International Student Services Office of Admissions and Records

Curricular Practical Training (CPT) is temporary work authorization granted to an F-1 student to complete an internship that is an academic component of a student's degree. CPT authorization must be granted by a Designated School Official (DSO) prior to commencement of employment or the student will be in violation of their immigration status.

Eligibility Requirements

- Student must be in valid F-1 status.
- Student must have been lawfully enrolled on a full-time basis for at least one academic year.
- Student must be enrolled in a practicum or internship course.
- Internship course must be an "integral part" of the student's course of study, as certified by the academic advisor.
- CPT authorization is employer-specific; therefore, the student must have evidence of a job offer (as outlined below).

Application Procedures

Step 1

Read the CPT information sheet thoroughly and discuss any questions with a DSO.

Step 2

Meet with your academic advisor to discuss how the internship is a requirement for your field of study and enroll in the required internship course (you must be enrolled prior to CPT authorization). Your academic advisor must provide you with a letter, on departmental letterhead, recommending that you receive CPT authorization. The letter must include the following information (see sample):

- Student's department and major
- Internship coursework in which the student will be enrolled
- Whether the internship is required or elective
- Recommended internship start and end dates
- Coursework description and objectives
- Statement of understanding that the student must maintain full-time status and good academic standing

Step 3

Obtain an official letter of employment offer, on company letterhead, specifying the following information:

- Physical address of the company (location at which student will be working)
- Company contact person
- E-mail address and phone number for contact person
- Exact dates of employment
- Number of work hours per week
- Whether the position is paid or unpaid
- Job or project description

Step 4

Bring the following documents to the Office of Admissions and Records, 121 LIB, to have the CPT authorization completed:

- Current original Form I-20, Passport (must be valid at least 6 months in the future), Visa, Form I-94
- Letter of CPT recommendation from your academic advisor
- Letter of employment offer

Step 5

A DSO will complete the CPT authorization and prepare a new I-20. Your new I-20 will have the employment authorization listed on page 3 and will serve as evidence that you have properly obtained authorization for off-campus employment. You may not begin employment until you receive this authorization or you will be considered out-of-status.

Information about Curricular Practical Training

- ✓ The purpose is to allow students to engage in internships, practicum or co-operative education programs that are required for, or will earn credit toward, the student's academic program.
- ✓ Students must maintain and complete minimum enrollment requirements during the period of their CPT authorization. US immigration law does not permit a student to enroll in and complete less than a full course load during a required semester (Fall or Spring) due to full-time CPT.
- ✓ Part-time CPT authorization is 20 hours per week. Full-time authorization is more than 20 hours per week.
- ✓ You may use as much CPT as is required for your degree program. However, if you receive 12 months or more of full-time CPT, you will become ineligible for Optional Practical Training (OPT). Part-time CPT will not affect your eligibility for OPT.
- ✓ CPT must be authorized by a DSO each semester and the dates of the internship must fall within the dates of the term enrolled.
- ✓ CPT may be authorized only before the completion of the academic objective.
- ✓ CPT authorization is date-specific. Beginning employment prior to the authorization date or continuing employment after the end date of the authorization will be considered unauthorized off-campus employment and the student will therefore be considered out-of-status.
- ✓ CPT will only be authorized for the dates specified by the letter of employment offer and recommended by the academic advisor. These dates should match.
- ✓ The CPT authorization on page 3 of your I-20 is evidence of your eligibility to accept employment. Therefore, your I-20 and I-94 may be used to complete the Employment Eligibility Verification Form I-9 that all U.S. employers are required to complete.
- ✓ CPT is employer specific. If you change employers during your internship program, you must apply for a new period of CPT authorization before you begin work for the new employer.

Suggested format for advisor letter

To Whom It May Concern:

_____ is a student in the department of _____, majoring in _____ at the OU Health Sciences Center. Practical experience in this field is an important part of this student's education, as it will enhance knowledge the student acquires in the classroom. This internship is a required and established part of the degree program <or> is not required, but academic credit will be given toward the degree program. For this reason, I recommend that he/she obtain curricular practical training from (date) to (date).

I understand that the student must be concurrently enrolled in a course which relates to the practical experience. The course he/she will be enrolled in is _____. The course description and objectives are _____.

I understand that the student must be in lawful F-1 status and must be in good academic standing. It is the student's responsibility to understand the rules and regulations associated with this benefit and to comply with these rules.

For more information

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