



Curricular Practical Training (CPT) Frequently Asked Questions

What is CPT?

Curricular Practical Training (CPT) is an off-campus employment option available to international students on F-1 visa status. According to immigration regulations, the employment may be an internship, cooperative education job, a practicum, or any other work experience that is an integral part of an established curriculum, or for which academic credit is awarded.

What are the CPT eligibility criteria?

1. Completed one academic year enrolled full-time (two semesters) as an F-1 student.
2. Employment/position must be an integral part of the degree program or part of a specific course of study.
3. Have an employment offer for work experience that has been approved by academics, can be paid or un-paid, for credit or field experience only.
4. Enrolled full-time during the semester(s) that CPT is being considered for (except summer or final semester)

What is considered part-time CPT employment?

Employment for 20 hours or less per week is considered part-time curricular practical training. The employment authorization will be noted on the second page of the I-20 and will specify maximum hours authorized to work.

What is considered full-time CPT employment?

Employment for more than 20 hours per week is considered full-time. The employment authorization will be noted on the second page of the I-20 with "Full-Time." You may apply for multiple CPT employment authorization as long as eligibility criteria are met. However, participating in 12 months or more of full-time cumulative curricular practical training disqualifies the applicant for post-completion OPT.

What affect does CPT have on Optional Practical Training (OPT)?

Engaging in 12 or more cumulative months of full-time CPT employment during an academic level will disqualify the applicant from applying for post-completion OPT.

CPT and On-Campus work:

An F1 student working on campus may participate in CPT. However, the student's total work hours for each type of work may not exceed 20 hours while school is in session. Students may work full time during those periods when school is not in session or during summer semester. If you are authorized for full-time CPT and work 21 hours or more per week, you should not have any additional on-campus employment, while school is in session.

**Unpaid work or volunteering:**

Traditional volunteer work (e.g. at a soup-kitchen, homeless shelter) does not require CPT approval. However an internship, even if it is unpaid, requires CPT authorization.

According to the U.S. Department of Labor, volunteering refers to hours of service performed for an organization for “civic, charitable, or humanitarian reasons, without promise, expectation, or receipt of compensation for services rendered.”

Steps to Apply for Curricular Practical Training (CPT):

1. Meet with Academic Advisor/DSO to determine eligibility for Internship or employment directly related to field of study.
2. From Employer
 - a. Official offer letter, including position, hours of employment, start/end dates and job/position description.
 - b. Signed Employer Decision Form, for credit-bearing internship only
3. Complete CPT form
4. Submit above documents to Academic Advisor/DSO to obtain proper approvals
5. Once approved, your SEVIS record will be updated and a new I-20 will be issued reflecting the CPT authorization on page 2.

Reminders:

- Upon CPT approval, apply for a Social Security Card, unless you already have one
- Report any change in employment to your DSO within 10 days of the change
- End employment by the CPT expiration date noted on the second page of the I-20
- If needed, apply for CPT employment authorization extension – granted only by the PDSO
- Employment beyond CPT expiration date on the I-20 is a violation of immigration law and cause for termination of status.

For questions please contact your Academic Advisor/DSO or email international@davenport.edu.