CURRICULAR PRACTICAL TRAINING

Definition of Curricular Practical Training (CPT)

The U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) defines “curricular practical training” as employment which is an integral or important part of your curriculum, including:

...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.

According to the USCIS, the word "required" does not always limit this type of practical training to work experiences, which are required parts of the curriculum. This clarification is discussed below in more detail.

Job Eligibility Requirements

To be considered curricular practical training, the work must not only be related to your major field of study but also must be an integral or important part of your studies. Training which is required by your degree program always meets the requirements for curricular practical training, regardless of whether or not you receive academic credit for your work. Training which is not required by your degree program may meet the requirements for curricular practical training if you receive academic credit for the employment experience or if it is offered by sponsored employers through the Engineering co-op program or the Office of Career Development's INSCOPE program. In either case, it must be an important part of your studies. If you have a training opportunity, which involves employment, check with the Office of International Students and Scholars (OISS) to determine if it qualifies as curricular practical training.

Student Eligibility Requirements

Employment Which Is a Required Part of Your Degree Program. If (1) you are a graduate student, (2) you are maintaining lawful F-1 status, and (3) the proposed employment is a required part of your studies, you may apply for permission to engage in curricular practical training whenever your program requires your participation, even if it is immediately upon beginning your studies. Undergraduate students must have completed one academic year of full-time study in order to be eligible for curricular practical training.

Employment Which Is Not a Required Part of Your Degree Program. In order to be eligible to apply for permission to work in a job which is not a required part of your study program, you must (1) be in lawful F-1 status, (2) have been a full-time student for at least one academic year and (3) receive academic or COOP credit.

English Language Students. Students enrolled in English language training programs are not eligible for curricular practical training.

Please note that CPT taking place during the academic year may only take place in the greater New Orleans area.

Part-Time vs. Full-Time Curricular Practical Training

Part-Time Training. Employment for 20 hours or less per week while you are also enrolled for classes is considered "part-time" curricular practical training. In this case, the employment authorization on your Form I-20 will specify permission to engage in "part-time" training, and you must be careful to limit your work to no more than 20 hours per week. There is no limitation on the length of time you may participate in part-time curricular practical training but you must be enrolled full-time in school (unless it is summer vacation) during your training in order to maintain lawful F-1 status. Please note that employment of all types is limited to a total of 20 hours per week during the academic year. This includes assistantships, on-campus employment, curricular practical training, and optional practical training.

Full-Time Training. Employment for more than 20 hours per week is considered "full-time" curricular practical training. The employment authorization on your Form I-20 will, in this case, specify permission to participate in "full-time" training. There is no limitation upon the length of time you may participate in full-time curricular practical training, but if you participate for twelve months or more you will not be eligible for optional practical training (see next page). Full-time training will only be authorized for the summer vacation period.
Curricular Practical Training and Eligibility for Optional Practical Training

It is important to understand that if you participate in twelve months or more of "full-time" curricular training, you lose eligibility to apply for twelve months of optional practical training. Participation in "part-time" training does not affect your eligibility for optional practical training.

Application and Authorization Procedures

To apply for curricular practical training, you must submit the following documents to OISS:

1. An offer letter from the employer which specifies (a) the beginning and ending dates of the training experience; (b) whether the employment is full-time or part-time as defined above (the employer may use the sample letter below); (c) the address of the company that you will be working for.
2. Recommendation for Curricular Practical Training or INSCOPE Agreement Form; and
3. Evidence of registration for the appropriate class (COOP, independent study, internship, etc.). If your degree program requires an internship or practical experience, please consult with OISS staff regarding the course registration requirement;
4. Graduate students must also submit a memo from their major professor or advisor in support of this Curricular Practical Training opportunity.

OISS Staff will:

5. Verify your eligibility to apply for CPT;
6. Verify your enrollment in an appropriate course, if applicable; and
7. Authorize CPT employment on page 3 of your form I-20.

Extending Permission Work under Curricular Practical Training

In order to continue CPT work authorization, you must apply for an extension at least thirty (30) days prior to the end of your current authorization. Failure to do so may cause you to violate your immigration status.

A Note of Caution

While USCIS regulations provide a variety of opportunities for you to be employed during your time in F-1 status, working improperly or without authorization is a serious violation of your status. You should therefore consult with OISS staff before taking up any employment. It is your responsibility to comply with all immigration regulations that apply to F-1 students. OISS is responsible for advising and counseling you regarding your responsibilities. If you fail to meet your responsibilities, you may not be eligible for benefits normally granted to F-1 students.

Sample Employer Offer Letter on Official Company Stationery

Date

International Student Advisor
University of New Orleans
2000 Lakeshore Drive, ED 122
New Orleans, LA 70148

Dear Sir/Madam:

RE: Name of student

The above named student has been offered temporary employment as (job title - i.e. intern). Job duties include (briefly describe duties). (Name of student) is expected to work (# of hours) per week. This employment will begin on (date) and end on (date). Address of the location where the student will be working is (provide address).

Should additional information be required, please contact me at.....

Sincerely yours,
RECOMMENDATION FOR CURRICULAR PRACTICAL TRAINING

TO: Academic/Co-op/Career Advisor

FROM: Office of International Students & Scholars, 3-6021

RE: Curricular Practical Training Recommendation for an International Student in F-1 Status

You have received this form because an international student wishes to apply for temporary employment authorization for a position related to his/her field of study.

The U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) define “curricular practical training” as employment which is an integral or important part of the University’s curriculum, including,

...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 institution.

According to USCIS, the word “required” does not always limit this type of practical training to work experiences which are required parts of the curriculum. Therefore, students may by eligible to engage in practical training whether or not a practicum or internship is required for the degree. However, USCIS requires students to receive academic credit for internship or practical not required for the degree. Registration for “co-op” credit through UNO also satisfies this USCIS requirement. Thesis, dissertation and registration for '7040' does not qualify for CPT. In general, students must receive credit for each term they participate in curricular practical training. However, USCIS does not specify a minimum number of credits to be earned. Please note that students are limited to 20 hours of employment per week during the academic year. This includes the total hours from assistantships, on-campus employment, CPT, and Optional Practical Training. Academic year CPT may only be authorized in the greater New Orleans area.

You may complete this form if you will be supervising the curricular component of this training experience. To recommend a student for CPT, please complete the information below and return to the Office of International Students and Scholars, Bicentennial Education Center 122. Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to call OISS staff at 280-6021.

Curricular Practical Training Recommendation

Name of Student ________________________________

Student Number ____________________ Major __________________________ Degree __________________________

Name of employer and location of training experience: ________________________________

Graduation Date _______ / _______ / _______

Dates of training experience: from _____________ to _____________ Number of hours per week ________

Name and title of course for which student will be registered ________________________________

I hereby certify that this training experience is 1) related to the student’s major field of study and 2) is an integral and/or important part of this student’s studies.

Advisor’s name ________________________________ Department ________________________________