

CURRICULAR PRACTICAL TRAINING

Definition of Curricular Practical Training (CPT)

Department of Homeland Security (DHS) regulations define "curricular practical training" (CPT) as employment which is an integral or important part of the established curriculum for *all* students in the degree program, 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. [8 CFR 214.2(f)(10)(i)]

Job Eligibility Requirements

To be considered CPT, the work must be related to the major field of study as well as an integral or important part of the degree program. Training which is required by the degree program always meets the requirements for CPT, regardless of whether or not academic credit is received for the work. Training which is not required by the degree program may meet the requirements for CPT if either academic credit is awarded for the employment experience or if it is offered by sponsored employers as a Co-op experience through the Office of Career Services. In either case, it must be an important part of the degree. Students with a training opportunity which involves employment should check with the Office of International Students and Scholars (OISS) to determine if it qualifies as CPT.

CPT cannot be used to delay graduation or to quickly authorize employment that should have been authorized by USCIS (United States Citizenship and Immigration Services). Work that is directly related to the student's major but has no curricular component must be authorized as Optional Practical Training (OPT).

Student Eligibility Requirements

Employment Which Is a Required Part of the Degree Program. Graduate students maintaining lawful F-1 status who are in good academic standing, and with proposed employment that is required for all students in the degree program (as documented in the UNO Catalog), may apply for permission to engage in CPT whenever the program requires, even if it is immediately upon commencement of studies. Undergraduate students must have completed one academic year of full-time study in order to be eligible for CPT.

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 the program of study, students must be in lawful F-1 status, have been a full-time student for at least one academic year, be in good academic standing, and receive academic or Co-op credit for CPT.

Research Required for Thesis or Dissertation, Final Project or Equivalent

Graduate students that must collect data that will significantly contribute to their thesis, dissertation, final project or equivalent may participate in CPT after completion of all course requirements only with an explanation or endorsement from their Graduate Coordinator and the Graduate School. This may not be authorized in the final semester.

Part-Time vs. Full-Time Curricular Practical Training

Part-Time Training. Part-time CPT is employment of 20 hours per week or less and this limitation will be indicated on the I-20 employment authorization. Working more than 20 hours per week is a violation of F-1 status. During the academic semester, students are limited to part-time CPT and must be enrolled as a full-time student. For this reason, it is recommended that CPT should be located within a commutable distance of New Orleans. Employment of all types, including assistantships, on-campus employment, CPT, and OPT, is limited to a total of 20 hours per week while classes are in session, including in the final semester when fewer credits (or no classwork) are required for completion of studies.

Full-Time Training. Employment for more than 20 hours per week is considered "full-time" CPT and this will be indicated on the I-20 employment authorization. Unless full-time CPT is specifically required for all students in a particular program of study (as documented in the UNO Catalog), full-time training will only be authorized for the summer vacation period.

Curricular Practical Training and Eligibility for Optional Practical Training

Under DHS regulations, students participating in twelve months or more of "full-time" CPT, lose eligibility to apply for twelve months of OPT. Participation in "part-time" CPT does not affect eligibility for OPT.

Application and Authorization Procedures

To apply for CPT, students must submit the following documents to OISS at least two weeks in advance:

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 where training will take place.
2. Recommendation for Curricular Practical Training Form or Career Services Curricular Practical Training Agreement Form; and
3. Evidence of registration for the appropriate class (Co-op, independent study, internship, etc.). If the degree program requires an internship or practical experience, please consult with OISS staff regarding the course registration requirement;
4. Graduate students that must collect data that will significantly contribute to their thesis, dissertation, final project or equivalent may participate in CPT after completion of all course requirements only with an explanation or endorsement from their Graduate Coordinator and the Graduate School. This may not be authorized in the final semester.

OISS Staff will:

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

Extending Permission to 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 DHS regulations provide a variety of opportunities for students to be employed while in F-1 status, working improperly or without authorization is a serious violation of immigration status. **CPT must be authorized on the I-20 prior to the employment start date.** Students should therefore consult with OISS staff **before** taking up any employment. It is an individual student's responsibility to comply with all F-1 immigration regulations. OISS is responsible for advising and counseling students regarding these responsibilities. Students who fail to meet their responsibilities may not be eligible for benefits normally granted to F-1 students.

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Sample Employer Offer Letter on Official Company Stationery

Date

International Student Advisor
University of New Orleans
2000 Lakeshore Drive, IC 125
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
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 Department of Homeland Security (DHS) defines "curricular practical training" (CPT) as employment which is an integral or important part of the University's established curriculum for all students in the degree program (as documented in the UNO Catalog), 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 DHS, 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 be eligible to engage in CPT whether or not a practicum or internship is required for the degree. However, *DHS requires students to receive academic credit* for internship or training not required for the degree. Participation in "Co-op" through UNO Career Services also satisfies this DHS requirement. Thesis, dissertation and registration for '7040' *does not* qualify for CPT. In general, students must receive credit for each term they participate in CPT. However, DHS 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. Students are also required to pursue a full course of study each semester during the academic year. For this reason it is recommended that CPT should be located within a commutable distance of New Orleans.

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, International Center 125. Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to call OISS staff at 280-6021 or email at oiss@uno.edu.

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 _____