

F-1 Student Curricular Practical Training

What is Curricular Practical Training (CPT)?

Curricular Practical Training (CPT) authorizes F-1 students to engage in a paid or unpaid internship, practicum, or cooperative education program if it is a required or integral part of their major¹. This opportunity allows the student to gain practical experience in his/her field of study. When authorized for CPT, the student will be eligible to work in a specific internship or practicum for a specific period of time. However, CPT is not a means of gaining off campus employment eligibility. Approval must be granted in writing by the Office of International Education & Development (OIED) *before* any employment begins.

Who is Eligible for CPT?

- Undergraduate F-1 students who are maintaining status in a WOU degree program and have been enrolled full-time for one academic year (9 consecutive months, or 3 terms).
- Graduate students who maintain F-1 status may begin CPT at the start of their program.

What is required to get CPT authorization?

- Students may apply for CPT if an activity is a required part of an established WOU degree program or an integral part of the curriculum for which they will receive academic credit.
- An Academic Advisor or Department Head must verify that the activity is a requirement for the degree program or to receive academic credit.
- CPT authorization must be based on the student's major or secondary major as reflected on their current I-20. CPT may not be authorized based on a student's minor.

What are the requirements while using CPT?

- Students may not begin any CPT activity until they have received written approval and an updated I-20 with the CPT authorization from an international student advisor.
- CPT authorization is limited to the specified employer and specified dates of activity.
- CPT authorization cannot exceed the period of one year per application and cannot extend beyond the students program end date as stated on their I-20.
- CPT authorization may be part-time or full-time depending on eligibility requirements.

When can students apply for CPT?

Students are eligible to apply up to 90 days before the end of their first year of study (9 months or 3 terms of study). The CPT activity cannot begin until the first academic year is complete.

More information on CPT activity

- There is no limit on the number of times or length of time a student may engage in part-time or full-time CPT. You can have multiple and concurrent CPT employers.
- Students who have applied for OPT for their current degree are not eligible to apply for CPT.

¹ Regulations 8 CFR 214.2(f)(10)

- CPT can be part-time (under 20 hours a week) or full-time (over 20 hours). However, use of full-time CPT for more than 12 months eliminates eligibility for Optional Practical Training (OPT). Use of part-time CPT does not affect eligibility for OPT.
- To be approved for CPT you must be enrolled in a course which requires an internship. Your registration status will be checked when you submit the CPT request.
- Students must continue to take a full course of study and maintain F-1 status to continue employment. However, if the student will enroll in less than full time courses, a Reduced Course Load form must be completely filled out and approved beforehand.
- Graduate students who would like to do CPT after all degree coursework has been completed (e.g. during the writing of the final projects, thesis or dissertation), will only be approved if the internship is needed to write the final project, thesis or dissertation, as stated by the Academic Advisor.

How do I Apply for CPT?

Submit the following to OIED and allow at least 2 business days for processing. More time may be needed for confirmation or clarification:

- A letter written by the employer or organization that is offering the job or internship – the letter must be on company letterhead containing the employer's name and address – the letter must specify the following information:
 - your job title and description of the work you will do
 - the start and end dates of the work
 - the number of hours per week you will work
 - whether the work is paid or unpaid (do not include wage or salary amount)
 - the employer or supervisor's signature.

**** The letter must contain this information – authorization will not be given until all required information is received in the form of a single letter.***

- Fill out the CPT Application form and get the necessary signatures from your Academic Advisor or Department Head.
- Register online for the class that requires the internship and print the registration page.
- Make an appointment with an international student advisor.
- Bring all of the above documents to the meeting including passport, I-94 card, and the most recently issued I-20.
- After turning in your documents, allow 2 days for processing. You may be contacted by the international student advisor for additional information.

You must wait until approval before beginning the internship. If you are eligible for CPT, an International Student Advisor will endorse your I-20 form for CPT authorization. You will want to show this endorsement to your employer to prove that you are authorized for that particular internship. An additional letter may be needed to apply to the Social Security Office for a social security number.