Understanding Curricular Practical Training (CPT) Workshop

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Disclaimer

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Your F-1 status allows you to engage in on-campus academic activities.

However, if an activity, training, employment, or other opportunity is taking place off-campus a student needs to consult ISSS first to make sure it’s okay.

Why? Because if you engaged in an off-campus training opportunity without authorization, and were later found to have needed authorization, this can have serious consequences including loss of status and/or ineligibility for future benefits in the U.S.
Off-campus practical training authorization is needed for paid internships off campus, but it **may still be needed even if:**

- The opportunity is **not paid** (it is “volunteer” or “unpaid”)
- The training/opportunity is **related to a course** you’re taking (RSSW, UUNI, departmental courses, etc...)
- The opportunity will be conducted **remotely**
- You learned about the opportunity through a UAlbany contact (professor, Handshake, etc...)
- The opportunity is not “employment,” but does involve training/experience/other opportunities **in your field of study**

Any of the above scenarios may require CPT authorization. The key to protecting your status is that if the opportunity takes place **off-campus** check with ISSS about it before engaging in any training.

**ISSS is the only office on-campus trained in advising students on these issues**, so other departments may not know that you have these considerations as part of your status. It’s your responsibility to contact ISSS.
CPT can be complicated. CPT applications are always evaluated on a CASE-BY-CASE basis. This presentation gives a general overview, but the specific details of your case may differ.
F-1 Student Work Authorization

1. **On-Campus**
   - F-1 students who are in status are eligible for on-campus employment up to 20 hours per week (cumulatively) during the semester. Over the annual breaks (winter, spring and summer) most UAlbany students are eligible to work up to 25 hours per week (University policy).

2. **Off-Campus: Curricular Practical Training**
   - Used while still an enrolled student (must be registered for courses)
   - May be authorized as full-time (20+ hours/week) or part time (less than 20 hours/week)

3. **Off-Campus: Optional Practical Training**
   - Most often used “post-completion” (after graduation)

F-1 students cannot begin any training/work off-campus without work authorization. Do not begin any training/work off-campus, paid or unpaid, without written authorization. If you have questions or doubts, please consult the ISSS office first. Working without authorization is a violation of your F-1 status. Only an ISSS official can approve and sign an I-20 to authorize CPT.
What is CPT (Curricular Practical Training)?

Definition (from federal regulation 8 CFR 214.2(f)(10)(i))

- A F-1 student may be authorized by the DSO [ISSS advisor] to participate in a curricular practical training program that is an integral part of an established curriculum. Curricular practical training is defined to be alternative work/study, internship, cooperative education, or any other type of required internship or practicum that is offered by sponsoring employers through cooperative agreements with the school.

- Students who have received one year or more of full time curricular practical training are ineligible for post-completion academic training.

- Students must be enrolled full-time for one academic year prior to becoming eligible for CPT. Exceptions to the one academic year requirement may be provided to students enrolled in graduate studies that require immediate participation in curricular practical training.

- A request for authorization for curricular practical training must be made to the DSO (ISSS advisor). A student may only begin curricular practical training after receiving his or her Form I-20 with the DSO endorsement for CPT.
What that Definition Means

Before any off-campus practical training begins the student MUST obtain authorization from ISSS in the form of a CPT authorization on the student's I-20. Authorization may never be backdated and working without authorization is considered a serious violation of status by DHS (Department of Homeland Security).

CPT is required for both paid and unpaid academic related practicums, internships and field placements (or other related experience) with an off-campus employer.

CPT training must be “an integral part of an established curriculum” and must be “directly related to the student’s major area of study,” as determined and supported by the student’s academic department.
What that Definition Means

- CPT can only be authorized at the same time a student is enrolled in a credit-bearing, internship dedicated course approved by the academic department unless it is a non-credit experience required for all students in the degree program to graduate (as defined in the program curriculum's graduate bulletin) and/or research directly related to a graduate student’s thesis/dissertation (if the student is also enrolled in thesis/dissertation credit).

- CPT will be approved for no more than the official length of the term, one term at a time. A new application will need to be submitted for additional terms or additional days which fall outside the University academic calendar. For more information, see the term specific policies.
Eligibility Requirements

- The student must have been enrolled full-time for one full academic year (a Fall and Spring semester) immediately prior to the employment/internship.
- The student must be in active F-1 status and continuing to make progress towards a degree. F-1 CPT may only be authorized if the student is still actively pursuing a degree; CPT cannot be authorized after all degree program requirements are met.
- The student must have an official letter offering an internship placement or other qualifying practical training employment from an employer or organization.
Eligibility Requirements

- The student must be **recommended** to participate in CPT by the student's academic advisor, department chair, and any other required officials.
- The internship or other qualifying practical training employment must be **directly related to the student’s major**.
- The student must **enroll** for the appropriate internship, independent/directed study or dissertation/thesis credit during the term which they are requesting CPT. This advanced registration is required before CPT may be authorized for a term.
Eligibility Requirements

- The student must obtain authorization from the Designated School Official at International Student and Scholar Services on page 2 of the SEVIS I-20 prior to starting training/employment.

- Students who already hold an on-campus position must request an Additional Service Authorization from The Graduate School.

- CPT authorization is temporary and limited. Students are only authorized to work for the specific employer, dates, and hours per week (part-time or full-time) listed on page 2 of the student's I-20.
When starting your internship search, look for positions/opportunities which will fall within the requirements for CPT, detailed in the following slides.
Internship Requirements for CPT

- The position must **directly relate** to your degree program (i.e. “curricular,” related to your studies and major)
- You must have an official offer letter **before** applying for CPT
- The offer letter must include the following before ISSS can process your request for CPT:
  - Specific beginning and end date of the practical training opportunity (remember, CPT is only authorized one term at a time, and the dates of the practical training should fall within the term specific policies).
  - The hours per week
  - The specific duties and responsibilities (these must directly relate to the student's major)
  - The employer's signature
Registration/Academic Requirements for CPT

- You must have completed two semesters full-time before the CPT training will begin.
- You must be recommended to participate in CPT by your academic advisor and department chair.
- You must be registered for a course which requires an internship as part of the curriculum; or engaged in a required, non-credit placement/field work placement as defined in the Graduate Bulletin (see next slide).
- You must be registered in this course at the time the training will take place (i.e. for the term during which the employment will occur).
- CPT will only be authorized on a semester-by-semester basis. If your internship lasts longer than the semester, you will need to apply for an extension to your CPT for the next semester.
Types of Courses for CPT Credit

➢ An internship, or other program related course, for at least 1 credit which is used towards completion of your academic program (degree)

➢ A required, non-credit practicum or field work placement. This course must be required for all students in your program. It cannot be optional.

➢ Master’s/Doctorate students: research opportunities directly related to thesis or dissertation. Must be registered for the appropriate course credit (such as 899, other dissertation courses, or a thesis course).
Summer Term

- Summer is considered an academic term for CPT application purposes.
- Therefore, students engaged in summer internships must enroll in the corresponding credit/course over the summer.
- Exceptions to the summer term internship-course enrollment requirement for CPT authorization are limited. These limited exceptions can be reviewed in greater detail on our website.
CPT Between Terms & Wintersession CPT

International students with approved CPT for fall, spring, or summer term may qualify for an extension of CPT, including permission for full-time employment, between terms (defined here as the time frame between the official end of one term and the official beginning of another term).

During these between term periods in most cases eligible international students do not need to enroll for additional academic credit, but they must demonstrate advanced registration for the upcoming term as evidence of their continuing student status.
Part-time v. Full-time CPT

- **Part-time CPT** is defined as **20 or less hours** per week of employment.
- **Full-time CPT** is defined as **more than 20 hours** per week of employment.
- Full-time CPT is only authorized **under certain conditions**, such as during the break/vacation terms (summer and winter); in a student’s final semester if they’re enrolled in 9 or less credits; and/or in the case of graduate students who are done with coursework and in their thesis/dissertation stage.
- Use of full-time CPT for more than one year (12 months) eliminates eligibility for Optional Practical Training (OPT). Students should consider this when planning out future CPT usage. Use of part-time CPT does not generally affect eligibility for OPT.
Ready to Apply for CPT?

- Review the CPT Application Checklist to ensure you meet all requirements, including having a completed and signed academic advisor’s authorization from (see step 3).

- Once you have all required materials (employer letter; academic advisor’s recommendation form; and registration in the course listed on the academic advisor’s recommendation form) submit the EForm to ISSS for final review and processing.

- Processing takes up to 5-7 business days after a complete request is received, so plan ahead.

- If the CPT position is paid and you don’t yet have a Social Security Number please apply for a SSN Status Letter as well.
After Applying for CPT

- If your CPT is approved you will get a new I-20. Page 2 will state your employer’s name, the dates you’re authorized for training, and whether it is part-time of full-time. You can only start training/work after getting this I-20 and reaching the start date listed on the I-20.

- This is your proof of training/work authorization. You are only authorized for what is listed on the I-20.

- Share this with your employer. If it is a paid position you will need this I-20 to complete an I-9.

- Keep this I-20 for your records forever. You may be asked to present it in the future as proof of prior training/work authorization.
Application Timeline for CPT

No later than approximately 3-6 months before you want to start off-campus training

Student reviews CPT requirements and focuses their internship search around those requirements

Student searches for internships that will start after they complete at least 2 semesters full-time, directly relate to their major, and will meet all other requirements for CPT authorization

While engaged in the internship search the student talks with their academic advisor about possible internship credit options for their academic program

No later than approximately 2-4 weeks before you want to start off-campus training

Student secures job offer with all required details (dates of employment, hours per week, and duties and responsibilities)

Student shares job offer with academic advisor and asks academic advisor to complete his/her portion of the Academic Advisor Recommendation Form (for CPT).

Graduate Students working on campus get permission from The Graduate School to hold additional employment using the Academic Advisor Recommendation Form

Student registers in course recommended by student’s academic advisor. This course must be taken during the same term the student is requesting the CPT to take place (unless the student has a qualifying exception).

No later than approximately 1-2 weeks before you want to start off-campus training

Student submits CPT Request EForm to ISSS for final review

If all eligibility requirements are met, ISSS will authorize the student for CPT and issue a new I-20.

Student shares I-20 with employer/supervisor and also applies for a SSN if the position is paid (and the student does not yet have a SSN).
Other Employment Situations

UNLEASH GREATNESS
MOUs (Memorandum of Understanding)

❯ Disclaimer: This is intended as a *general* introduction. If you think your employment falls under a MOU you should consult ISSS before beginning employment. MOUs are complicated and every agreement is different.

  ❯ Your employer/faculty may not be familiar with immigration requirements. Check with ISSS advisors before beginning employment.

❯ A few New York State agencies or other approved organizations have a MOU with the University or a department of the university. A MOU is a co-operative agreement. While your work location may be off-campus, the MOU may consider you as a “student worker” or “student assistant” employed by the University.
MOUs (Memorandum of Understanding)

- If you are a student assistant working under a MOU, it might be “on-campus employment.” Students need to follow all on-campus employment regulations. The student may work on-campus up to 20 hours per week on-campus during a regular semester. If the position requires more than 20 hours, you may need a different type of work authorization, if eligible.

- If you’re not completing your I-9 at the University at Albany Human Resources office and/or not being paid through UAlbany HR, please speak to ISSS about work authorization before beginning any work.
Is the job site “off-campus?”

No, it is on-campus

No CPT needed, you can work on-campus up to 20 hours per week

Yes

Does the employer have an MOU with the University?

Yes

Consult the sponsoring department, employer and ISSS. May be considered “on-campus,” allowing you to work up to 20 hours/week

Maybe/I don’t know

Stop, talk to ISSS

No

You will require CPT work authorization, if eligible
Internship with an International Organization

Full-time F-1 students who are accepted for an internship with a recognized international organization may apply for an EAD card through USCIS for Internship with an International Organization.

To qualify, you must:

- Have a written certification from the international organization that you are being offered employment for within the scope of the organization
- Apply for a new I-20 with ISSS recommending you for the international organization internship
- Submit all materials, including an I-765 and filing fee to USCIS

The average processing time for an I-765 with USCIS is 3 months, and you cannot begin work with the authorization until you have received an approved EAD card.

If you qualify, you would not need to use CPT. If interested, please speak to an ISSS advisor about how to apply.
Examples of Qualifying International Organizations

- Asian Development Bank
- Commission for Environmental Cooperation
- Commission for Labor Cooperation
- Commission for the Study of Alternatives to the Panama Canal
- Customs Cooperation Council
- European Bank for Reconstruction and Development
- Great Lakes Fishery Commission
- Hong Kong Economic and Trade Offices
- Inter-American Defense Board
- Inter-American Development Bank
- International Atomic Energy Agency
- International Joint Commission - the United States and Canada
- International Maritime Organization (formerly the Intergovernmental Maritime Consultative Organization)
- International Monetary Fund
- Pan American Health Organization (including Pan American Sanitary Bureau)
- South Pacific Commission
- United International Bureau for the Protection of Intellectual Property (BIPRI)
- United Nations
- United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization
- United Nations Industrial Development Organization
- Universal Postal Union
- World Health Organization
- World Intellectual Property Organization
- World Meteorological Organization
- World Tourism Organization
- World Trade Organization

See ISSS for a full list
REMINDER

CPT/off-campus opportunities can be complicated. CPT applications are always evaluated on a CASE-BY-CASE basis. This presentation gives a general overview, but the specific details of your case may differ.
Questions? Comments? Concerns?

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