

Curricular Practical Training

The US Citizenship and Immigration Service (USCIS) defines Curricular Practical Training (CPT) as employment that is **an integral part of a student's curriculum**. The regulations define CPT as "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."

A student must receive academic credit for the employment. The employment must also be related to the student's major. Earning academic credit for the curricular practical training requires that a student register for cooperative or internship credit or a course that requires the employment. The description of the course utilized for CPT authorization **must clearly indicate that employment is a required component of the course**. A student's failure to enroll for and complete the course violates the Curricular Practical Training regulations and will jeopardize a student's legal F-1 status.

Eligibility & Conditions

- All students must have completed **one academic year** of **full-time** academic studies in the United States. An exception to this rule allows graduate students to participate in CPT at the beginning of their program ***if it is a requirement of the degree***.
- Part-time (up to 20 hours per week) or full-time (over 20 hours) employment may be authorized **depending on eligibility**.
- Students on CPT are still required to maintain a full course of study (12 hours for undergraduates, 9 hours for graduates w/o assistantship, 6 hours for graduates with assistantship) unless they are in their final semester of their program
- All F-1 students are eligible for part-time CPT based on course credit if they have satisfied the **one academic year** of **full-time** requirement.
- Full-time authorization may be requested during the semester only if the employment is part of an internship required for graduation or if the employment is part of a Cooperative Education agreement in the student's department *or* if the student will be receiving full course load credit for their training authorization. This means if receiving internship credit, an undergraduate student must be enrolled in 12 internship credits during the semester.
- Full-time CPT can also be requested during the summer vacation period. Students authorized for part-time CPT during the academic semester must continue to maintain a full-course of study in F-1 status during the period of employment.
- Students may engage in CPT only for the specific employer, location and period approved and recorded by their International Student Advisor on their I-20 form. Students must have an offer of employment from an employer offering work that qualifies as Curricular Practical Training. The offer will be reviewed by the International Student Advisor prior to the authorization of CPT.
- Students who engage in full-time CPT for twelve months or more **become ineligible for *Optional Practical Training***.

The International Center provides the authorization for Curricular Practical Training. Students may not pursue Curricular Practical Training after completing their program of study. Graduate students are ineligible for Curricular Practical Training after completion of the thesis or equivalent or after the oral defense.

Authorization

At the University of North Dakota, the Office of International Programs may authorize curricular practical training for part-time and full-time employment. The authorization is placed on the student's I-20 form and indicates the dates of authorization, the employer name and the employer location.

A student cannot begin employment until the International Center has processed the authorization. You will be out of status if you begin to work before CPT is authorized or continue to work after that authorization expires.

Immigration regulations mandate that Curricular Practical Training authorization cannot delay the student's completion of studies. If a student has been authorized full-time CPT during the academic year, s/he may not be eligible for a program extension if unable to finish all degree requirements by the completion date noted on their I-20 form. Students who have received a program extension are (in most cases) not eligible for full-time Curricular Practical Training. **Students who have received twelve months or more of full-time CPT are not eligible for Optional Practical Training.** Part-time Curricular Practical Training does not affect eligibility for Optional Practical Training.

Application Procedure

In order to apply for CPT, **you need a job offer.** You will also need to provide:

Either:

a) Official verification that such employment is required of all students in your department in order to graduate (e.g. a copy of a UND Academic Catalog entry or a letter from the chair of your department)

or

b) Evidence of registration for co-op education credits from your academic department. This requires completing paperwork at Career Services (McCannel Hall, Rm 280, 777-3904)

or

c) Evidence of registration for internship credits in your department

AND

A job offer letter from your specific employer:

The employer's letter must:

- Be on letterhead containing your employer's name and address
- Specify your job title and contain a job description
- Specify the start and end dates of your employment, and the number of hours per week you will work.

CPT will not be authorized unless all required paperwork is submitted. This could delay the start of your employment. You must schedule an appointment with the International Student Advisor to apply.

International Center
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