



CPT INFORMATION SHEET

Curricular Practical Training (CPT)

Common forms of CPT

- Clinical rotations, practicums, and internships required for nursing and healthcare programs.
- A paid or unpaid internship
- Cooperative education experiences
- Certain on-campus training experiences that are considered part of an established curriculum and require CPT authorization

What is CPT?

Curricular Practical Training (CPT) is a work authorization for F-1 students to engage in an approved off-campus training – paid or unpaid. The training must be directly related to their field of study and an integral part of the school's established curriculum at a Student and Exchange Visitor Program (SEVP)-certified institution.

Key Features of CPT

- Must be directly related to the student's academic program.
- Must have completed one full academic year and be lawfully enrolled full-time at an SEVP-certified school.
- Can be part-time (≤ 20 hours/week) or full-time (> 20 hours/week).
- Requires academic credit or formal recognition as part of the curriculum.
- Must be approved by the university's Designated School Official (DSO) before starting.
- 12 months or more of full-time CPT eliminates eligibility for Optional Practical Training (OPT).

Institutions Authorized to Provide CPT

Only SEVP-certified US institutions that offer CPT as part of an academic program can authorize CPT for F-1 students. These institutions must:

- Offer academic programs that require practical training (internships, clinical rotations, cooperative education, etc.).
- Have CPT explicitly stated in the course curriculum as a required or integral part of the degree.
- Employ a Designated School Official (DSO) to approve and update CPT requests in SEVIS (Student and Exchange Visitor Information System).

CPT APPLICATION PROCESS

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Step 1: Meet with an academic adviser

- Confirm that practical training is an integral part of the curriculum. It must be listed in school's course catalog
- Review of CPT eligibility and participate requirements
- Identify course enrollment details (course number, number of credits and faculty sponsor)
- Determine learning objectives and employer details, including:
 - Internship employer
 - Employment start and end dates
 - Number of hours of work per week

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Step 2: Register for internship course

- Most students will need to register for CPT credit to receive CPT authorization.

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Step 3: Submit CPT request to Designated School Official (DSO)

Provide a job offer letter on company/organization letterhead to include:

- Location of employment

- Job title and responsibilities
- Start and end dates
- Number of hours of work per week
- Supervisor name and contact information

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Step 4: Receive CPT I-20

- The DSO will review student's records and documentation for the CPT.
- If approved according to immigration regulations, they will request for the CPT work authorization.
- Students must not begin employment until they have received the updated I-20 with CPT work authorization.

Important consideration for CPT & F-1 Visa Compliance

- CPT requires concurrent full-time coursework (except during summer terms).
- Full-time CPT (12 months or more) makes students ineligible for OPT.
 - To maintain OPT eligibility, students should limit full-time CPT to less than 12 months.
- CPT cannot be used solely for employment purposes—it must be an integral, academic requirement.

References

For comprehensive information on Curricular Practical Training (CPT) for F-1 students, please refer to the following official resources:

- USCIS Policy Manual: Practical Training
- Study in the States: F-1 Curricular Practical Training (CPT)
- ICE: Practical Training

