

The US Department of Homeland Security regulations state that Curricular Practical Training (CPT) must be "an integral part of an established curriculum." They define curricular practical training 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." Thus, CPT for F-1 students is intended to provide work experience in situations where the work serves as an integral part of a student's academic program, prior to completion of that program.

Eligibility

The student must have been lawfully enrolled on a full-time basis for one academic year before being eligible for CPT. An exception exists for graduate students whose programs require *immediate* participation in an internship, a practicum, or other employment. It is available only while the student is in valid F-1 status and before the completion of his/her program. Students in English language programs are not eligible for CPT. If the student had a gap in study or a status violation, the one academic year waiting period may need to be recalculated once the student has again obtained valid F-1 status.

Criteria

International Student and Scholar Services (ISSS) can authorize CPT if it can be clearly documented that the proposed employment meets one of the two conditions below.

- **The training employment is required of all degree candidates in the program and is necessary for the awarding of the degree.** Included in this category is employment in a required internship or practicum. There are only a few academic programs at Penn which require a period of off-campus employment for all degree candidates. This requirement must be formally documented in school publications.
- **The training employment will result in the awarding of academic credit.** Included in this category is employment for a course specifically designed to award academic credit for an employment experience. This may include graduate students in dissertation/thesis status where the training opportunity is an integral component of the student's dissertation/thesis. In both of these cases, you must register and complete the CPT-related course during the period that you are working under CPT authorization, even in the summer.

If CPT is for your last semester, you must have at least one other remaining degree-required course for which to register, in addition to the CPT course unless the CPT course is the degree-required course.

Part-Time vs. Full-Time CPT

Part-Time Training

During the school year while classes are in session, students can engage in CPT on a part-time basis, limited to no more than 20 hours per week. If eligible, there is no limitation on the length of time you may participate in part-time curricular practical training, but you must be maintaining lawful F-1 status.

Full-Time Training

A student can engage in full-time CPT during official University breaks and vacation. A student can also engage in full-time CPT during his/her dissertation or thesis stage. Note that CPT authorization ends when the student defends dissertation or finishes thesis. A student during his/her last semester may be authorized for full-time CPT if the student has been authorized for Reduced Course Load by ISSS. Full-time CPT allows the student to work more than 20 hours per week. There is no limitation upon the length of time you may participate in full-time CPT. However, **if you participate in 12 months or more of full-time curricular practical training, you will not be eligible for post-completion optional practical training (OPT).**

Application and Documentation Requirements

If you are unsure about your eligibility for CPT, you should first meet with an ISSS advisor (if possible, please bring any of the documents listed below to the initial consultation). If applicable, you should register for the CPT course prior to seeing an ISSS advisor. To apply for CPT, you must meet with an ISSS advisor and bring the following documents with you:

- Copy of your official offer letter on company letterhead that is signed by the prospective employer. A photocopy is acceptable. The letter should include the employer's name, address and dates of employment.
- A CPT Recommendation Form completed by your academic advisor.
- Proof of registration for CPT course if you are earning academic credit for the training. Note: you must be registered for CPT course in the same semester during which the work will be done. (i.e. You must be registered for CPT course in the summer if you will be working in the summer.)
- Copies of your current immigration documents: passport (biographical data, photo, & expiration date pages), front and back of I-94 card, and I-20(s)

Additional Requirements

- SEAS graduate students only – contact the SEAS Office of Academic Programs for more information
- Wharton MBA students participating in MGMT 891:900 (only in summer) – contact the MBA office for more information

Authorization Procedures

If you are eligible and have the documentation required for CPT, an ISSS advisor will authorize CPT by issuing a new I-20. Processing time is 3 business days. You may engage in CPT employment only after you have received the I-20 with your CPT authorization from ISSS. **This work authorization is valid only for the specific employer, location, time period and on a part-time or full-time basis as approved and recorded by an ISSS advisor** as evidenced on your I-20 issued for CPT. You may not continue employment beyond the date authorized unless you apply and are granted an extension of your permission to work from ISSS. To do so would be a violation of your nonimmigrant student status, and such violation would jeopardize your ability to remain in the US.

Social Security Number

If you do not have a Social Security Number (your 9-digit Penn ID number is not a valid Social Security Number), you should apply for a Social Security Number based on the CPT authorization. For more information, please visit <http://www.upenn.edu/oip/iss/forms/ssn-f1.pdf>.

Taxes

In general, F-1 students who have been in the US for no more than five different calendar years are exempt from social security taxes. You should be sure to bring this to the attention of your employer because many employers are not familiar with this provision of the tax laws. Students in F-1 status are subject to all other taxes that may apply, including federal, state and local. For more information, please consult with a tax professional and/or Publication 519 of the Internal Revenue Service (<http://www.irs.gov/>).

Failure to Comply with Regulations

It is your responsibility to comply with all immigration regulations which apply to F-1 students, including employment regulations. Working without the proper authorization is a serious violation of your nonimmigrant status in the US. If you fail to comply with your responsibilities, you may not be eligible for benefits normally granted to F-1 students and may jeopardize your stay in the US. Prior to accepting any employment in the US, we advise you to consult with ISSS.



Curricular Practical Training Recommendation & Request Form

NOTE: Bring this form and required supporting documentation to meet with an ISSS advisor.

A: Recommendation to Be Completed by Academic Advisor (Not by Student)

Student's Name: _____ / _____ / _____
(Family/Last) (Given/First) (Middle)

Major: _____ **Degree:** _____

Employer's Name: _____

Number of hours per week: _____ **Position Title:** _____

Dates of Employment: From: Month: _____ Day: _____ Year: _____ **To:** Month: _____ Day: _____ Year: _____

Description of proposed employment: _____

CPT Recommendation is based on the following (check only one):

- The CPT employment is a **mandatory** graduation requirement for **all** students in the program, *not just for this student*. I have **attached a copy of the school publication** verifying that this is **mandatory**.
- The CPT employment is an **integral part of the student's academic program of study/curriculum** for which he or she will receive **academic credit**:

Course Number: _____ Academic Term: _____

Name Academic Advisor: _____

Phone: _____ **Email:** _____

Signature Academic Advisor: _____ **Date:** _____

B: Request to Be Completed by Student

Date of Birth: Month: _____ Day: _____ Year: _____

Phone: _____ **Email:** _____

Are you currently employed on campus? No Yes **Are you currently employed off campus?** No Yes

List all periods of previously authorized CPT (indicate full or part time – attach separate sheet if needed):

Previous Full-Time or Part-Time CPT 1:

From: Month: _____ Day: _____ Year: _____ **To:** Month: _____ Day: _____ Year: _____

Previous Full-Time or Part-Time CPT 2:

From: Month: _____ Day: _____ Year: _____ **To:** Month: _____ Day: _____ Year: _____

If applicable, I have registered for the course related to this CPT request for the applicable semester and understand that CPT authorization will be voided if I drop the course. If CPT authorization is voided, I understand that I may not be eligible for further F-1 benefits. I have maintained valid immigration status since I began my study at the University of Pennsylvania.

Signature of Student: _____ **Date:** _____