

Pacific Union College

Curricular Practical Training (CPT): *General Information for Students*

What is CPT?

Curricular Practical Training (CPT) is a work authorization granted to students in F-1 visa status. It is designed to enable students to apply knowledge and practice skills gained in their academic program and it is most often used for internships or practicums. Employment may be paid or unpaid and may take place anywhere in the US.

CPT is defined 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." The regulations state that a student may participate in a "curricular practical training program" that is "an integral part of an established curriculum" **and** "directly related to the student's major area of study."

Complex rules apply to CPT because the training opportunity must comply with both federal regulations and school policies regarding internships, experiential learning, etc.

Eligibility Requirements

Employment that IS NOT a required part of your degree program: In order to be eligible to apply for permission to work in an internship or as part of a directed research project that is not a required part of your program of study you must:

1. Be maintaining lawful F-1 status
2. Have been a full-time student for at least one academic year (3 quarters/9 months-PUC)*
3. Have an offer of employment in your academic field of study

However, the DSO/international student advisor will determine eligibility to ensure compliance with the federal government and school policies.

***Note:** Transfer students may verify completion of three quarters or two semesters at an SEVP-approved "college, university, conservatory, or seminary for one full academic year" to meet the one full academic year requirement.

8 CFR 214.2(f)(10)(i)

"Practical training may be authorized to an F-1 student who has been lawfully enrolled on a full-time basis, in a Service-approved college, university, conservatory, or seminary for one full academic year."

How many hours can I work during CPT?

CPT employees can work part-time up to 20 hours or less per week while you are enrolled full-time. You must limit your work to no more than 20 hours per week to maintain your visa status. Participation in part-time CPT does not affect your eligibility for optional practical training. *Full-time of 21 hours or more per week is available during Summer/Academic Breaks.*

CPT Restrictions

1. English Language Students (ESL) are not eligible for curricular practical training.
2. You must be in lawful F-1 status for at least one full academic year (3 quarters/9 months-PUC) and must be in good academic standing. *As noted above, transfer students may verify completion of three quarters or two semesters*

at an SEVP-approved "college, university, conservatory, or seminary for one full academic year" (full-time basis) to meet the one full academic year requirement.

3. If you engage in CPT during the academic year, you must maintain your full-time F-1 status.
4. CPT authorization will only be given for one quarter at a time and it must occur before the student's program end date on the Form I-20.
5. You may not mix or combine any two or more categories of employment that exceeds 20 hours per week, unless you have full-time CPT. For example, you may not work on-campus for 20 hours per week, and have part-time CPT concurrent.
6. Use of full-time CPT for one year or more eliminates eligibility for Optional Practical Training (OPT) at the same educational level. Use of part-time CPT does not affect eligibility for OPT.
7. You may have more than one CPT authorization at the same time. However, CPT authorization is needed for each specific employer and each specific time period.
8. There must be an established curriculum (a course from the general catalogue associated with the practicum or internship work). Course units should be associated with the CPT as part of the degree program. The units should not be excess units which are not needed for the degree.
9. You must secure the CPT training opportunity before CPT can be authorized.
10. CPT must occur *before* the student's program end date on the Form I-20.
11. The CPT training must be directly related to the student's major area of study.
12. You must have an offer of employment or training from an employer offering work or training that qualifies as curricular practical training. CPT authorization is employer- and employment-specific.
- 13. You may NOT start practical training/work until you have received your SEVIS I-20 from your International Student Advisor with authorization in SEVIS to engage in CPT.**

Additional regulations applicable to CPT: <https://www.ice.gov/sevis/practical-training>

Documents Required

1. CPT Application with Academic Advisor's Recommendation for CPT
2. Academic department recommendation (on letterhead)
3. Letter of Employment/Internship (needs to include job title, exact dates of employment, detailed description of job duties, number of work hours per week, and employer's physical address.) Ideally, the letter should be an original (no photocopies) on letterhead and have the employer's signature.
4. Copy of I-20 with CPT (authorized by international student advisor)

International students enrolled at PUC may review the CPT Tutorial on Canvas when available for more details regarding CPT regulations, restrictions, and institutional policies.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding CPT, please do not hesitate to contact Student Life / International Student Advising at isa@puc.edu or (707) 965-7362.

Disclaimer: PUC OISS has prepared this guide to provide you with general guidance. However, any advice provided to you by our office, as well as the information in this document, should not be construed as legal advice. PUC international staff will provide regulatory and practice information as it stands at the time of the consult. Due to the fluid nature of governmental interpretation, individuals must understand that the US Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) office may change its interpretation of established immigration laws/regulations and eligibility requirements for benefits at any time. For legal advice, you may consult with an immigration attorney.