

Pacific Union College

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

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.

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 practica. 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."

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)
3. Have an offer of employment in your academic field of study

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 be careful to limit your work to no more than 20 hours per week. 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. (Pacific Union College does not currently have an ESL program.)
2. If you engage in CPT during the academic year, you must maintain your full-time F-1 status.
3. CPT authorization will only be given for one quarter at a time.

4. 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.
5. Use of full-time CPT for one year or more eliminates eligibility for Optional Practical Training. Use of part-time CPT does not affect eligibility for Optional Practical Training.
6. Students 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.
- 7. *You may NOT start working until you have received your SEVIS I-20 from your International Student Advisor with authorization to engage in CPT.***

Documents Required

1. Academic Advisor Recommendation for CPT
2. 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.) The letter should be an original (no photocopies) on letterhead, and have your employer's signature.
3. Copy of I-20 with CPT

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.