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F-1 CURRICULAR PRACTICAL TRAINING
FOR THOSE ENROLLING IN CO-OP

I. EXPLANATION

As an F-1 student, you may only work off campus in the U.S. if you have received special written work authorization approved by the Department of Homeland Security (DHS). This handout will explain one type of off-campus work authorization that can only be taken BEFORE COMPLETION OF STUDIES called, "curricular practical training," or "CPT."

"Curricular practical training" is employment that is an integral or important part of your curriculum, including: alternate work/study, internship, cooperative education, or any other type of required employment, internship, or practicum. To be considered curricular practical training, the work must be related to your major field of study, and must also be an integral part of your studies. Training that is REQUIRED by your degree program always meets the requirements for curricular practical training, regardless of whether or not you receive academic credit for your work. Training that is NOT REQUIRED by your degree program may meet the requirements for curricular practical training if you receive academic recognition on the UNM transcript for the employment experience through CO-OP or enrollment in an official internship or practicum course (as listed in the UNM course catalog – Independent Study does NOT qualify). If you have a training opportunity, which involves employment, check with the international advisor to determine if it qualifies as CPT. **You must have a job to be authorized for this type of practical training.**

II. HIGHLIGHTS

➢ **A job offer is REQUIRED to be authorized for CPT**
➢ **The employment must be an integral or important part of your curriculum but can occur anywhere in the U.S.**
➢ **Students must be enrolled in the CO-OP program OR an official practicum/internship course, or the work must be a requirement for everyone in the degree program**
➢ **Changing employers is allowed only AFTER receiving additional approval and authorization by GEO for the new employer**
➢ **CPT authorization is granted by GEO. Students do not need to mail an application to DHS; however, students cannot work until authorized and MUST apply within specific UNM deadlines (check well in advance of the date of work)**
➢ **During the period of CPT, students are in F-1 visa status since CPT is considered to be part of the program of study**

III. CONDITIONS AND LIMITATIONS

1. You must be working in a job that is directly related to your major and it must be appropriate for someone having your level of education
2. You must have been enrolled as a full-time student in legal non-immigrant status for at least 9 months before CPT begins (unless you are in a graduate program that REQUIRES internship participation of ALL students before the end of the second semester)
3. The training/work/internship must either be REQUIRED for completion of your degree program (i.e., ALL STUDENTS IN THE PROGRAM MUST COMPLETE AN INTERNSHIP TO RECEIVE THE DEGREE) or you must enroll in the CO-OP program or an official internship or practicum course (as listed in the UNM course catalog) underlined during the work period (if working between semesters, you must be enrolled in either the prior or upcoming semester)
4. There are restrictions on when students may apply for part or full-time CPT. Students can take CPT:
   a) **Part-time (20 hours or less)**: during the fall and spring semesters provided the training does not exceed 20 hours per week total
   b) **Part-time or Full-time (more than 20 hours per week)**: during the summer vacation or between semesters
   Note: You cannot apply for CPT at all once you have completed your program of study
5. Students authorized for part-time CPT cannot work more than 20 hours per week
6. There is no limitation upon the length of time you may participate in full-time CPT, but if you participate for 12 months or more, you will not be eligible for optional practical training (see below)
7. YOU CAN NOT WORK OFF-CAMPUS UNDER ANY CIRCUMSTANCES UNTIL YOU HAVE BEEN AUTHORIZED BY AN INTERNATIONAL ADVISOR!

IV. OTHER IMPORTANT INFORMATION

A. **Curricular Practical Training and Eligibility for Optional Practical Training**
    If you participate in 12 months or more of "full-time" CPT, you are not eligible to apply for optional practical training. However, if you participate in less than 12 months of full-time CPT, you will still get all 12 months of optional practical training. Participation in authorized "part-time" CPT does not "add up" and therefore, does not affect your eligibility for optional practical training.

B. **Employment Eligibility Verification**
    When you begin work, you and your employer must complete a form entitled "Employment Eligibility Verification" (Form I-9), which the employer retains. The I-9 must be updated each time you receive a renewal of your work permission. This form requires you to document

your identity and work authorization according to the directions on the form. The most convenient combinations of the various items acceptable as documentation include: your I-20 with the CPT work authorization, a valid passport, and an I-94 card marked for F-1 student status. Your employer, who keeps Form I-9, may make copies of the documents you submit, and return the originals to you. You will also need a social security card. If you do not already have a social security card, or if you have a card that is marked "not valid for employment" take your passport, I-94, I-20 with CPT authorization, and a letter with the employer's ID Number (EIN number) to the office of Social Security Administration, and apply for a new Social Security card. Note that your number will remain the same if you already had one, but the notation on the card should indicate that employment is valid with authorization.

C. Social Security and Other Taxes

In general, F-1 students who have been in the US less than five years are "non-residents for tax purposes" and are exempt from Social Security (FICA) and Medicare taxes (see Internal Revenue Service Publication 519, "U.S. Tax Guide for Aliens"). However, your earnings are subject to applicable federal, state, and local taxes. Tax returns must be filed on or before April 15 each year for the previous calendar year, which will determine if any of the withheld taxes can be refunded. IF YOU ARE A TAX NON-RESIDENT, TALK TO YOUR EMPLOYER ABOUT NOT WITHHOLDING SOCIAL SECURITY TAX.

V. APPLICATION PROCESS

Apply as soon as you receive the job offer, or AT LEAST two weeks before you plan to begin employment. To apply, follow the steps below.

STEP 1: Be Informed

Read this entire handout thoroughly and carefully.

STEP 2: Once you have a job complete the Co-op enrollment form using the adobe sign instructions below – The Coop course is offered through UNM Career Services (located in UAEC, Room 220, above the One Stop)

The form includes your prospective job duties and learning objectives. You, your employer, your academic advisor, an International advisor, and a Career advisor from UNM's Career Services Office will need to E-sign this form. Email your academic advisor and job supervisor to look for an email from Adobe Sign or the work cannot be approved! After each person signs, the form will automatically go to the next person on your list in the order that you enter them. Engineering Students: MUST have an additional signature on the Adobe Sign form from the Engineering Dean at soe@unm.edu. The Dean will not approve CPT for an on-campus employer.

Architecture Students: MUST have an additional signature on the Adobe Sign form from the Chair of their Architecture program (if you do not know the name and email of the person ask your department before submitting the form).

STEP 3: Receive your completed signed Co-op application via pdf from Adobe Sign. It will be emailed to you automatically with the Coop course number listed.

STEP 4: Register for the Co-op class for the semester in which you are working.

Once your Co-op form is signed, you must enroll for the Co-op course number provided by Career Services on the pdf. CPT work authorization cannot be approved without Co-op course enrollment! It is not a class you will attend, is not credit-bearing, and does not cost any tuition. However, the Co-op course must appear on your transcript for you to be authorized for CPT. (Note that if your Co-op is approved after the official add/drop class deadline, you will need to pay a late registration fee to enroll.)

STEP 5: Email the completed application form to iadvisor@unm.edu with a copy of your unofficial transcript showing enrollment in the Co-op course. An international advisor will review the application, and if everything is in order authorize the training in SEVIS.

STEP 6: Receive your new I-20 with CPT authorization. Your new I-20 will be ready within 3 to 5 business days after your completed application is received at iadvisor@unm.edu. The I-20 with authorization will be emailed to you. Please check to make sure that your CPT authorization is properly recorded on page 2 of the I-20. Also, please print and sign your new I-20 on p.1. You will need to provide a copy of this I-20 to your employer as proof of work authorization. YOU CAN NOT BEGIN WORKING UNTIL YOU RECEIVE THE I-20 WITH THE CPT AUTHORIZATION!

STEP 7: Work Start and End Dates Once you have received the authorization and new I-20 from the International Advisor, you can work between the dates specified on the I-20 and for the number of hours authorized. You CAN NOT continue employment beyond the completion date authorized on p. 2 of your I-20 form unless you apply for and are granted another period of work permission. You must reapply **EACH** semester for CPT and enroll in the Co-op class for that semester if you want to continue your internship.

STEP 8: Complete the E Co-op work phase and receive credit for the class. Your employer will be sent an evaluation form by the Career Services Co-op coordinator. The supervisor must return the completed evaluation for you to receive credit for the class AND for you to be permitted to engage in any future Co-op/CPT work experience.

BEFORE BEGINNING THE ADOBE SIGN FORM FOR CPT, FOLLOW THESE INSTRUCTIONS:

1. **Complete the form only AFTER READING ALL INSTRUCTIONS:**

The names and emails you enter on the form are critical and your form will not be processed if you do not enter the emails correctly. Make sure to enter a custom message for your academic advisor and your employer. Here is how to complete the form:

- **First Signer**: Enter "International Advisor" for name and use the iadvisor@unm.edu email.
- **Second Signer**: Enter your own Academic Advisors name and email (this person will need to sign)
- **Third Signer**

IF you are in Engineering or Architecture you will need an additional department signature:

- Engineering: Enter the Name "Engineering Dean" and email soe@unm.edu
- Architecture: Enter the Name and email of your program chair

  IF you are in any other major you can leave this blank
  - **Fourth Signer**: Enter your job supervisor/employer name and email
  - **Fifth Signer**: Enter "Career Advisor for name and email as career4U@unm.edu

2. **Double-check that all names, email addresses, and messages for each recipient are correct before submitting the form.**
3. **Email all signers to look for an email from Adobe Sign. If you do not do this, they will not see and process your form.**
4. **Track the application with your Adobe account.**
   - If you have entered all the emails and recipients correctly, you can track your application as it moves to each signer, using your Adobe account. PLEASE DO NOT CONTACT GEO ABOUT YOUR FORM UNTIL YOU HAVE DONE THIS!
   - **If you are already using an Adobe account using UNM's email address:**
     - Log in to the Adobe Acrobat application, click on 'E-sign' in the toolbar, then select 'Manage all agreements'.
     - You can see all the forms that you have signed using Adobe sign.
     - Click on the form to see the status and details of the signatures on the right panel.
     - **You will be able to view where the application currently is (i.e., who has and has not signed)**
   - **If you do not have an Adobe account:**
     - Follow the instructions to create an Adobe account using UNM's email address at https://creativecampus.unm.edu/get-started.html.
     - After creating an account, log in to your account and follow the above steps to track your co-op application.
5. **Wait for an email with the pdf of the completed form. This will contain a CRN number for the Coop course at the bottom.**
6. **Register for the Co-op course.**
7. **After you register for the course email the pdf of the form with a pdf copy of your unofficial transcript showing co-op enrollment to iadvisor@unm.edu.**
8. **Wait for the new I-20 or DS-2019 with the work authorization to begin the work.**

IMPORTANT: Do not fill out the form multiple times or your authorization may be delayed! **Make sure to enter everything correctly the first time!**

REMEMBER: AS AN F-1 STUDENT, YOU CAN NOT WORK OFF-CAMPUS UNDER ANY CIRCUMSTANCES UNTIL YOU HAVE BEEN AUTHORIZED TO DO SO BY AN INTERNATIONAL ADVISOR. WORKING IMPROPERLY OR WITHOUT AUTHORIZATION IS A SERIOUS VIOLATION OF YOUR STATUS AND COULD LEAD TO DEPORTATION FROM THE US.

To apply, begin the adobe sign form