

## 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 which 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 which 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 in 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 which REQUIRES internship participation of ALL students prior to 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 in an official internship or practicum course (as listed in the UNM course catalog) 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 semester 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 CANNOT 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 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 which 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: Complete the Co-op application form and collect all necessary signatures.**

Once you have a job offer, complete a Co-op Agreement form (below) that includes your prospective job duties and learning objectives. You, your employer, your academic advisor, a GEO advisor and a career development facilitator (CDF) from UNM's Career Services Office will need to sign this form before you can be authorized by GEO. All signatures may be obtained electronically and submitted by email. To obtain a signature from GEO, email your application to [iadvisor@unm.edu](mailto:iadvisor@unm.edu). To obtain the final signature from the Career Services Office, email your application to [khitz@unm.edu](mailto:khitz@unm.edu) after you have obtained all other signatures. In the case of students from the School of Engineering the Associate Dean also must sign this form. Note that the Associate Dean of Engineering will not approve the Co-op if the position is on UNM's campus.

### **STEP 3: Receive your completed signed Co-op application from Career Services.**

It will be emailed to you after it has been signed by Career Service with the required course number listed.

### **STEP 4: Register for the Co-op Work Phase 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. CPT work authorization cannot be approved without enrollment in this! 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 in order 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 GEO at [iadvisor@unm.edu](mailto:iadvisor@unm.edu).**

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 of GEO receiving your completed application and 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.

### **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 in the authorization and for the number of hours authorized. You must be careful not to 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 both CO-OP and CPT if you want to continue your internship.

### **STEP 8: Complete E Co-op work phase and receive credit for the class by having your employer complete an evaluation form.**

**REMEMBER:** AS AN F-1 STUDENT, YOU CANNOT 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.

**STUDENT INFORMATION**

 Co-op Term:  Fall  Spring  Summer Year: 20 \_\_\_\_\_  
PLEASE SELECT ONE

 Student Status:  Soph/Junior (Undergrad.)  Senior (Undergrad.)  
 Masters'  Ph.D.

UNM Student I.D.: | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

First Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Middle Int.: \_\_\_\_\_

 Last Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Sex:  F  M

Phone #: ( \_\_\_\_\_ ) \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Major: \_\_\_\_\_

Concentration: \_\_\_\_\_

 Graduation Date: | | | | - | | | | Current GPA: \_\_\_\_\_  
Month Year

 Work Status:  U.S. Citizen  Perm. U.S. Resident  
 F-1 Student Visa  Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**EMPLOYER INFORMATION**

Company: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: | | | Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

 Industry Sector:  Government  Non-Profit  Manufacturing  
 Service  Education  Research and Development  
 Other: \_\_\_\_\_

Supervisor: \_\_\_\_\_

Title/Position: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone #: ( \_\_\_\_\_ ) \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

**POSITION INFORMATION**

Position Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Work Hours: \_\_\_\_\_ (per week) \_\_\_\_\_ (semester total)

 Start Date: | | | | - | | | | - | | | | (beginning of semester)  
Month Day Year

 Wage: \$ \_\_\_\_\_ . \_\_\_\_\_  Monthly  Hourly  Stipend

 End Date: | | | | - | | | | - | | | | (end of semester)  
Month Day Year

 Is this your first Co-op position?  Yes  No

 Is this a continuation of a previous Co-op position?  Yes  No

**POSITION DUTIES & RESPONSIBILITIES**

(Highlight tasks and work activities or attach offer letter from the employer to this form.)

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**LEARNING OBJECTIVES**

 (Explain how duties and responsibilities directly relate to courses and UNM major/concentration. Specify at least three objectives.)

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