

F-1 CURRICULAR PRACTICAL TRAINING

FOR THOSE WITH REQUIRED INTERNSHIP OR WHO ARE ENROLLING IN AN
OFFICIAL INTERNSHIP OR PRACTICUM LISTED IN UNM COURSE CATALOGUE

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 U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS). This handout will explain one type of USCIS off-campus work authorization that can only be taken BEFORE COMPLETION OF STUDIES called, “curricular practical training,” or “CPT.”

USCIS defines “curricular practical training” as 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 or important 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 credit 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 for the new employer**
- **CPT authorization is granted by GEO. Students do not need to mail an application to USCIS; however, students 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 have a specific position that is directly related to your major field of study 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 be officially enrolled in the CO- OP program or in an official internship or practicum course (as listed in the UNM course catalog AND be receiving academic credit for the degree at the time of the training.
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) or Full-time (more than 20 hours):** during the summer vacation or between semesters
 - b) **Part-time:** during the course of study provided the training does not exceed 20 hours per week total**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 THE 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" (USCIS 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 back of the form. The most convenient combinations of the various items acceptable as documentation include: your I-20 with the Curricular Practical Training 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 (if you are Canadian you may use another form of photo-bearing identification), I-94 Departure Record, form I-20, and letter from GEO 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 change to 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.

V. APPLICATION PROCESS

Provided you meet all the requirements, an advisor in GEO will authorize the CPT. You do not need to apply through the US Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS). However, it is recommended that you apply as soon as you receive the job offer, or at least 2 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: Obtain Your Department's Recommendation

Have your academic advisor or other authorized department personnel complete a curricular practical training recommendation form (PAGE 4, attached). The internship must be required for all students in your degree program, or you must be enrolling in the current semester for an official internship or practicum course that is listed in the UNM course catalog and designate the course number on this form. **YOU MUST BRING THIS FORM TO GEO IN ORDER TO RECEIVE THE CPT WORK AUTHORIZATION.**

STEP 3: Obtain an Offer Letter from Your Employer

Get an offer letter from your curricular practical training employer that states the type of employment, as well as the dates and the location of the training.

STEP 4: Come to GEO during Walk-in Hours (from 1-3pm) or make an Appointment with an International Advisor

If you cannot come in during walk-in hours, call 277-4032 and make an appointment to see an international advisor as soon as possible. You will need to bring:

- Passport
- Current I-94
- Employer offer letter
- Curricular practical training recommendation form signed by your academic advisor

The international advisor will review the paperwork, and if everything is in order authorize the training in SEVIS.

STEP 5: Pick up your SEVIS I-20 at GEO

You will have to come back within 5 business days to pick up your new I-20 with the CPT authorization.

When you come to pick up your new I-20, please check to make sure that your CPT authorization is properly recorded on page 3 of the I-20. Also, please sign your new I-20 on page 1 in #11.

STEP 6: Work Start and End Dates

Once you have received the authorization 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. 3 of your I-20 form unless you apply for and are granted another period of work permission. You must reapply **EACH** semester for CPT if you want to continue your internship

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



The University of New Mexico

Global Education Office (GEO)

2111 Mesa Vista Hall
MSC06 3850 1 University of New Mexico
Albuquerque, NM 87131-1056
Phone (505) 277-4032 ♦ Fax (505) 277-1867
Email geo@unm.edu Web: www.geo.unm.edu

CURRICULAR PRACTICAL TRAINING RECOMMENDATION FORM

To: Academic Advisor or Authorized Department Personnel

The below-named student is applying for permission to engage in employment for curricular practical training as provided in regulations of the Department of Homeland Security for F-1 students. Curricular Practical Training is employment in a job related to the student's field of study that is either **required** for all students completing the degree or for which the student will be enrolled in an internship or practicum course and receiving academic credit. The training is intended to enhance and supplement the formal, classroom education. The International Advisor in the Global Education Office (GEO) must authorize such employment.

Before this authorization can be granted, GEO must have a statement from the student's academic advisor indicating that the training is required for completion of the degree for all students or indicating the internship/practicum course in which the student is enrolled. The advisor must also indicate the date the student is expected to complete all degree requirements. The date of completion is not necessarily the end of the term or the graduation date, but the date all requirements for the degree are fulfilled.

Please complete the form below and return it to the student (or send it through campus mail to GEO, 2120 Mesa Vista Hall) so that we may process this student's request. Should you have any questions, please feel free to call GEO at 277-4032.

THIS FORM MUST BE COMPLETED AND SIGNED BY THE ACADEMIC ADVISOR OR OTHER AUTHORIZED DEPARTMENT PERSONNEL, NOT BY THE STUDENT.

To: Global Education Office, 2120 Mesa Vista Hall

This is to certify that _____ (please check one)

(Student's name)

- Has a required internship for his/her degree program
- Is enrolling for internship/practicum course number _____

Through this practicum, the student will be employed at _____ in _____

(Company) (Address/Location)

from _____ to _____. The student is expected to complete all requirements for the degree

(Date) (Date)

on _____ and will receive the degree of _____ in the field or major of _____

(Date) (Name of degree) (Field of Study)

(Name of Academic Advisor or Authorized
Department Staff Member—Please Print)

(Signature of Academic Advisor or Authorized
Department Staff Member)

(Telephone number and email address)

(Date)