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# CURRICULAR PRACTICAL TRAINING (CPT) APPLICATION PACKET

## FOR F-1 STUDENTS

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- CPT is defined as off-campus work experience (training) which is an *integral part of an established curriculum*.
- Employment for the sole purpose of earning extra money or to gain work experience is not an applicable use of CPT.

**CPT can be authorized by the IPO for the following situations only:**

- 1) **Training is credit-earning\***. Student will earn academic credit denoted on student's UMass transcript for the training. Training must be directly related to student's field of study and integral to their program curriculum.
- 2) **Training is formally required for your degree program completion**. *An internship, practicum, etc. that is required for degree program completion. May be non-credit, but must be a specific, published degree program requirement in the course catalogue.*
- 3) **Training is required for thesis/dissertation completion (GRADUATE STUDENTS ONLY)**. *Off-campus training is necessary to pursue graduate thesis or dissertation research. Training is necessary in order to complete student's degree program.*

### **Eligibility**

**You must apply for CPT authorization BEFORE you begin working.**

You must have completed two full semesters in F-1 immigration status and be in good academic standing making satisfactory progress towards your degree to be eligible. In very limited circumstances this can be waived if your degree program requires a training opportunity within your first two semesters (graduate students only).

CPT may be undertaken during vacation periods at full-time (40 hours/week) or part-time during the academic semester (20 hours or less/week). If you engage in full-time CPT during a semester, you must maintain your student status/enrollment at UMass by making the necessary arrangements with Career Services (if you are an undergraduate) and your department (all students).

Important note: Students who utilize 12-months of full-time CPT will not be eligible for future post-completion Optional Practical Training (OPT). In general, short-term training programs such as summer internships are more common than longer term appointments, such as a 12-month position. Any amount of CPT authorized for less than 12-months at the full-time rate will not impact future OPT eligibility and will not be subtracted from your initial 12-months of OPT eligibility.

Because CPT must be an **integral** part of your academic program, you will **not** be eligible for CPT once you have completed all degree requirements. Once you have complete studies (i.e. no further required course registration, all academic requirements met), you may not apply for CPT (exception only for #3 above). Note also that CPT cannot be authorized if it will interfere with your academic progress and cause a delay in your completion of studies.

If you currently have a CPT training position wish to continue the same position without interruption following completion of studies, you must apply for OPT at least 3-months before your completion of studies date. Unlike CPT, OPT takes approximately 3-months for the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) to process an OPT application, so be sure to make OPT plans well in advance and plan ahead accordingly.

### **Application Procedure**

Application for CPT is processed by the International Programs Office (IPO) and does not require a formal application through USCIS. *However, please note, CPT authorization is not automatic and will be denied if the IPO determines that the proposed employment does not meet the specific criteria for CPT outlined above.*

\* International students considering a cooperative ("Co-op") education experience must get: 1) CPT authorization through IPO, 2) submit an online contract in Career Services' CareerConnect system (in the Internship/Co-op section), and 3) will need to have their Co-op supervisor complete a final evaluation of the student's performance to ensure the Co-op is denoted on the student's transcript and endorsed by the University. For further details see: <http://www.umass.edu/careers/internships/coopprocess>

**To apply for CPT, bring the following completed documents to 467 Hills South (IPO Main Office):**

**1) A job offer letter on company letter head (with complete mailing address) which must contain ALL of the following information:**

- ◆ Job title
- ◆ A brief description of job duties
- ◆ Number of hours student will work per week
- ◆ An exact employment start and end date

**2) Academic CPT Recommendation form.** Your Academic Advisor or Graduate Program Director must check the appropriate box on this CPT application, sign and date the attached form.

**Assuming that the training meets the criteria for CPT, the International Programs Office will grant CPT authorization by issuing an updated I-20 form with a specific CPT endorsement for the named employer, for the exact dates indicated. Your I-20 form endorsed for CPT, along with your valid passport and evidence of your F-1 immigration status (F-1 visa or USCIS F-1 approval notice, I-94 record) will satisfy Federal employment authorization requirements for your employer.**

**A few more points about CPT to reiterate:**

- You are still considered to be in valid F-1 student immigration status during your authorized CPT employment period. The same international travel requirements (valid F-1 visa, signed I-20 form, etc.) still apply. Likewise, it is always important to remember the overlying notion of "non-immigrant intent" with your F-1 visa status. Whereas CPT employment is perfectly legal and common for F-1 students, you may want to be prepared how to answer an immigration inspector or US consular officer (if you need a new F-1 visa) if you are ever directly asked about future post-completion employment in the United States.
- Any F-2 dependents (spouses/children) may of course accompany you to your CPT employment location, though they are not eligible for any type of work authorization in the U.S. The same F-2 travel requirements still apply to all dependents as well (see above). No additional I-20 forms are necessary for dependents at this time while you are authorized for CPT.
- CPT employment is date-specific and employer-specific. Additional employment at any other off-campus location besides the designated CPT location indicated on your new I-20 form is not permitted. In certain circumstances, separate authorized CPT employment employers and locations can be arranged, if appropriate. **If your CPT employment will be extended beyond the authorized CPT ending date on your new I-20, YOU MUST receive additional CPT authorization from the IPO.** Continuing to work beyond your authorized CPT ending date is a major violation of F-1 immigration regulations.

**SOCIAL SECURITY INFORMATION:**

If you have not yet been eligible to apply for a Social Security number since your arrival in the U.S., CPT authorization will allow you to become eligible to apply for and obtain a Social Security card and number. Your CPT employer will need to furnish you with an offer letter or contract verifying your employment, which you can then take, along with your immigration documents (passport, visa, I-20 with CPT endorsement PLUS all previous I-20 forms) to any Social Security Administration office in the U.S. If possible, it would be advisable to apply at our local SSA office in Holyoke, MA: <http://www.umass.edu/ipo/iss/social>. **Please note that you may not apply for your Social Security number any earlier than 30-days from the starting date of your CPT internship authorization as indicated on your new I-20 form.**

**TAXES, etc.:**

Finally, although the IPO cannot directly advise you regarding your personal tax strategies, keep in mind that certain tax treaty benefits may (or may not) apply to you as an F-1 visa holder depending on your citizenship. This situation varies from student to student and country to country so it may be worth reviewing Internal Revenue Service (IRS) Publication 519 (<http://www.irs.gov/publications/p519/index.html>) to consider your own personal situation. **NOTE also that as an F-1 student visa holder you are exempt from Social Security tax withholding (also referred to as "FICA").** Many employers are not necessarily familiar with this rule so it is highly advisable to discuss these matters with your CPT employer's Payroll or Human Resources Office when you complete the necessary employment eligibility and tax forms once you begin your CPT employment.

Please contact the International Programs Office for any additional CPT questions. Good luck!



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**CPT ACADEMIC RECOMMENDATION FOR F-1 STUDENTS**  
**IMPORTANT INFORMATION FOR ACADEMIC DEPARTMENTS & ADVISORS**

**Eligibility for Curricular Practical Training**

Curricular Practical Training (CPT) is off-campus work experience (training) which forms an *integral part of an established curriculum* of a student’s academic program. Students who have already completed their degree requirements are not eligible (and should instead apply for Optional Practical Training). Authorization for CPT may be granted only if one or more of the following is met:

- The employment is part of a credit-granted Independent Study course/Internship/Co-op\*/or other class for which the student is registered and will earn academic credit to be denoted on the student’s UMass transcript.
- The work experience is formally **required** by the degree program.
- Training is required for thesis/dissertation completion (**GRADUATE STUDENTS ONLY**). *Off-campus training is necessary to pursue graduate thesis or dissertation research and is necessary in order to complete student’s degree program.*

**The IPO defers to the expertise of the academic department advisor/GPD in evaluating the student’s CPT application and its appropriateness to the Federal F-1 student visa requirements found at 8 CFR 214.2(f)(10). Therefore, kindly:**

- Read/verify the student’s job offer letter
- Check the appropriate box below
- Sign this form and return it to the student.

**TO BE COMPLETED BY STUDENT’S ACADEMIC ADVISOR OR GRADUATE PROGRAM DIRECTOR**

Student’s Last Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Student’s First Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Student’s SPIRE ID#: \_\_\_\_\_ Student’s Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Exact period of employment: From: \_\_\_\_\_ To: \_\_\_\_\_ #hrs/week: \_\_\_\_\_

Check one of the following:

- The student **will receive academic credit** for the proposed training as part of an Independent Study/ Internship/Other. This credit will be awarded during the \_\_\_\_\_ semester/term. Course number: \_\_\_\_\_
- The proposed training is specifically **required** by the student’s academic program and is a published degree program requirement. Course number: \_\_\_\_\_
- \*The student will participate in a **University-sponsored cooperative education (“Co-op”)** following Career Services procedures at: <http://www.umass.edu/careers/internships/coopprocess>; **Co-op must be denoted on the student’s UMass transcript.**
- The proposed training is required for thesis/dissertation completion (**GRADUATE STUDENTS ONLY**). *Off-campus training is necessary to pursue graduate thesis or dissertation research. Training is necessary in order to complete student’s degree program. Training must yield specific data, research, etc. that is integral to the student’s thesis or dissertation and will in no way cause a delay in the student’s planned completion of studies date. [Please attach a detailed memo clearly explaining how this work experience is integrally related to the student’s thesis/dissertation as outlined above.]*

Advisor’s Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Advisor’s Name & Title: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_