CURRICULAR PRACTICAL TRAINING

Curricular Practical Training (CPT) allows F-1 students who are maintaining status and have completed one academic year of full-time study in the U.S. the opportunity to work off-campus (either full or part-time). Internship opportunities generally fall in this category. Immigration regulations for F-1 students require that CPT must be ‘an integral part of an established curriculum’. The University’s definition for ‘integral’ is explained below. CPT is authorized by the Center for International Education (CIE) in the form of an endorsement on page 2 of the I-20 indicating the location, number of hours, and duration of the practical training.

In order to be authorized for CPT, you will be working with 3 offices (or perhaps more) on campus – the CIE, Academic Advising and Career Education (AACE) and your academic department. Therefore, you will need to plan in advance to be sure that you have met all of the requirements before you wish to begin your CPT experience.

DO NOT BEGIN WORKING UNTIL YOU HAVE RECEIVED THE EMPLOYMENT AUTHORIZATION ON YOUR I-20.

How is an employment opportunity considered an ‘integral part’ of my program?
To be considered ‘integral’, the employment must be either a REQUIRED or OPTIONAL part of your academic program. If the employment is related to and a requirement of your degree program, then it automatically qualifies for Curricular Practical Training. However, you still need to apply for the Curricular Practical Training through the CIE in order to have legal authorization to work in the U.S.

If the employment is related to but not a requirement of your degree program, then to consider the employment ‘integral’, you must enroll in, and pay for, academic credit. Most students enroll in the Cooperative Education course, but some departments also offer internship or fieldwork courses that are independent of Co-Op. For more information on the criteria for enrollment in the Cooperative Education course, please review the AACE’s website: http://www20.csueastbay.edu/academic/academic-support/aace/career-education/co-op.html

How do I know if I’m eligible for Curricular Practical Training?
The following requirements must be met before CIE will authorize CPT:
♦ You must currently hold valid status.
♦ You must have been enrolled as a full-time student in the US for at least 1 academic year (3 quarters) in an immigration status that allows full-time study.
♦ You must be still working towards completion of the academic program indicated on your I-20. If you have completed all degree requirements (even if you have not filed for graduation), you have reached the end of your status as an F-1 student at CSU East Bay, and are no longer eligible for CPT.
♦ You must be a student in good academic standing. If you are on Academic Probation or Disqualification, you will NOT be authorized for CPT.
♦ The employment must be considered an ‘integral part’ of your academic program.
♦ Your academic program department must offer the Cooperative Education class for that quarter.
Can I work full-time through CPT?
You may only be authorized for full-time employment if it is your authorized vacation term and you are enrolled less than full-time (including Cooperative Education units).

(It is only a vacation term if you have completed at least 3 consecutive quarters as a full-time student, you are going to be enrolled part-time while partaking in Cooperative Education, and you will still be a student the quarter after taking the Cooperative Education course.) You may not both study full-time and work full-time during the same quarter. You must still be enrolled in the cooperative education or another internship or field experience course to be eligible for CPT, even if it is your ‘vacation quarter.’

*Full-time study is defined as 8 units for graduate students, 12 units for undergraduate students, or other exceptions approved by an international student advisor.

If it is your last quarter of the degree program or if you are no longer taking coursework but are working on your thesis or comprehensive exam, you will only be authorized for part-time CPT.

When can I begin my CPT?
The Academic Advising and Career Education Center (for those participating in the Cooperative Education course) and your faculty advisor must approve your dates of employment. In addition, since you are working as a requirement of an academic course, the dates of employment will be tied to the dates of the academic quarter. In other words, you may not begin sooner than the first day of the quarter, or work beyond the last day of the quarter.

**Exception:** If you have been authorized for CPT for one quarter and before the end of that quarter you apply to CIE to renew your CPT for the following quarter, we will authorize you to work during the break between quarters (in other words, continue your employment without a break). **However,** you must continue employment at the same company and we CANNOT backdate employment authorization, so you must come in to renew your CPT before your current employment authorization ends.

Is there a deadline for submitting my application for CPT to the CIE?
You may apply for CPT as long as you are still able to enroll in the appropriate academic course for the quarter of the proposed employment. However, keep in mind that your employment is authorized only by the Center for International Education, so even if you’ve received academic approval to participate in Cooperative Education or another internship course, you may not begin work until you have received employment authorization on your I-20 from an international student advisor. Please see an international student advisor regarding applying for CPT after the add/drop deadline.

For how long can I do CPT (how many times may I renew my CPT)?
Enrollment in Cooperative Education may be repeated for CPT for a MAXIMUM of 4 QUARTERS during a student’s degree program, regardless of change of option within a particular major or change of major degree program. However, if the departmental requirements as defined in the University catalog allow for FEWER than 4 quarters, Center for International Education will not exceed the requirements in the catalog. If you are applying for CPT based on a department specific course (such as fieldwork experience), the limit will depend on the requirements of that department.
An F-1 student will only receive authorization for Curricular Practical Training beyond the maximum stated above if he/she completes one degree (i.e. bachelor’s degree) at CSUEB and is admitted to a new degree program that allows for use of cooperative education.

**How do I renew my CPT?**
If you are continuing your CPT with your current company, you will need to complete all the Co-Op and obtain a memo from the employer verifying you will be continuing your CPT. If you are changing employers, you will be required to complete all steps outlined below and you will not be authorized to work during the quarter break period.

**Does CPT affect my eligibility for Optional Practical Training (OPT)?**
Usually, no. Curricular Practical Training and Optional Practical Training are separate categories of employment in U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) Regulations. Therefore, time authorized for CPT is not deducted from your 12 months of possible OPT. There is only one exception: if you complete 12 months of FULL-TIME CPT, you will NOT be eligible to apply for OPT.

**My department has a fieldwork or internship course that is not a part of the Co-op program. How do I use that course for CPT?**
This process is very similar to obtaining CPT with a Co-op course. You will need to meet with an international student advisor in the **CIE** and bring the following documents:

- A memo from your department explaining the course that you are taking and the employment that will fulfill the requirements for that course.
- A letter from your proposed employer describing your position, employment location, dates of employment, and number of hours per week.

**CIE** will review your documents and after we have determined that you are eligible for Curricular Practical Training, the employment authorization will be noted on your new I-20.

**What happens if I received CPT authorization and then I am offered a job with a different employer? Can I take the new job instead?**
The authorization you receive is employer and site specific. Therefore, **CIE** would need to authorize new employment and notify USCIS that you have terminated your previous employment. We will only consider this if you first re-do the Cooperative Education agreement (or a memo from your department if you are not going through Co-op) and have it approved by all parties. In addition, **CIE** will request written documentation from your first employer verifying the termination date of your employment with them.

**REMINDER - DO NOT BEGIN EMPLOYMENT UNTIL AFTER YOU HAVE RECEIVED THE AUTHORIZATION FOR CURRICULAR PRACTICAL TRAINING ON YOUR I-20.**
So, I want to enroll in the Cooperative Education course and apply for Curricular Practical Training. How do I proceed?

1) **Read through this packet carefully.** Make a list of any questions you still have. You may consult with an international student advisor to be sure you are eligible.

2) **Obtain a job offer letter.** Find a position related to your field of studies and obtain an offer letter. The Academic Advising and Career Education (AACE) office can assist you.

   Offer Letter must include but not limited to: On company letterhead, signed by employer, include full address of location where employment will take place, your name, dates of employment, whether employment is full time or part time, job duties.

3) **Complete the Cooperative Education Form.** The Co-Op forms are available from the AACE website http://www20.csueastbay.edu/academic/academic-support/aace/career-education/co-op.html Visit the AACE office if you have your Cooperative Education Agreement **reviewed, approved and signed**

4) **Academic Department Approval.** Visit your academic department and meet with the Faculty Advisor who will supervise your employment opportunity. The Faculty Advisor will need to approve and sign the Co-Op forms as well.

5) **Enroll in Co-Op class.** Your academic department can help with this. If you are trying to add the class after the add/drop deadline, you will need to pay for the class at the cashier’s office and bring the receipt to CIE at your appointment time. NOTE: Not all departments will allow you to add the Co-op class after the add/drop deadline

6) **Schedule an appointment with CIE:** Bring the following documents:
   - Copy of practical training/internship offer on employer’s letterhead, indicating your position, hours per week, dates and location of employment.
   - Copy of completed Cooperative Education Agreement signed by AACE and your academic department
   - Completed “Acknowledgement of Stipulations for Employment through CPT form.”

7) **Obtain new CPT I-20:** CIE will review your documents and after we have determined that you are eligible for Curricular Practical Training, we will issue you a new I-20 with the CPT authorization

**NOTES:** You will have to be enrolled full time AND enrolled in the Co-Op class before CIE can authorize CPT. Waitlisted classes do not count towards full time. If you plan on being on a reduced course load during the quarter for which you wish to apply for CPT, the Reduced Course Load has to be approved before CPT will be authorized.
Acknowledgement of Stipulations for Employment through Curricular Practical Training

I understand that my employment authorization for curricular practical training during the ________ quarter at ______________________ (list employer) is limited to the terms specified by the authorization on my I-20 and is based on the continued enrollment and completion of the following academic course: ________________ (list course number).

I understand that if I do not continue enrollment in the course, I must suspend employment immediately. Failure to do so is considered unlawful employment.

Signed: ____________________________________________

Name (print): ________________________________________

Net ID: _____________________________________________

Date: _______________________________________________
To:    Prospective Employers of International Students on F-1 Visas:

International students on F-1 visas may, before completion of their course of study, be legally employed under a program called Curricular Practical Training (CPT). CPT is defined by the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) as an “alternative 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” (8 CFR 214.2 (f)(10)(i). Students qualify for the benefit of CPT if the employment is an integral part of the establish curriculum. CPT can be either part-time (during the time school is in session) or full time (during vacations and holidays).

The authorization for CPT comes in the form of an endorsement on the second page of the student's I-20 by a Designated School Official (DSO) of the student’s school. This endorsement, along with an I-94, satisfies I-9 requirements (page 31 Department of Justice publication *Handbook for Employers: Instructions for Completing the I-9*). CPT is only valid for the period indicated by the DSO’s endorsement.

It is important to note that before the authorization on the I-20 can be done -- and therefore before the student can legally begin any form of employment -- the student MUST meet the on-campus requirements related to Cooperative Education activities. Information regarding those procedures is available in our office, or at the Academic Advising and Career Education office. Those requirements include the need to have the employer provide a Learning Contract to the campus Career Office and also have a faculty person agree to serve as supervisor for a cooperative education course.

If you have any questions or would like additional information, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Cordially,

Kelly S. Moran, Director  
Center for International Education  
California State University, East Bay