



## **Curricular Practical Training (CPT)**

### **F-1 Student Work Authorization for Required Academic Internships**

International students in F-1 status are only permitted to work off-campus under certain circumstances and only after receiving **prior written authorization** on their I-20 from the Office of International Student Services (OISS) or an EAD from USCIS. The U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) regulates the various types of employment authorization available to international students through the F-1 regulations. The OISS at the Regent University is the only office authorized to provide information on F-1 employment options and to authorize employment for F-1 international students seeking to work off-campus during their academic programs. A signature or verbal approval from any other office or department is **not** acceptable employment authorization for students in F-1 immigration status.

Curricular Practical Training (CPT) is just one type of employment authorization available to students in F-1 immigration status. **The USCIS requires students to seek written approval from the OISS before they can begin any paid off-campus work experience (including internships).** Failure to obtain **prior written approval** on the I-20 is a serious violation of the F-1 student immigration status. CPT application packets will be distributed during the CPT Information Sessions, which will be advertised through the OISS email messages. All students who plan to work in the U.S. will need to have a U.S. Social Security number for payment and tax purposes. Details about the Social Security card application are available in the OISS website.

---

---

### **DEFINITION OF CURRICULAR PRACTICAL TRAINING (CPT)**

According to the USCIS, Curricular Practical Training is work experience that is an “integral part of an established curriculum.” “Curricular Practical Training is defined to be alternative work/study, internship, cooperative education, or any other type of required internship or practicum that is offered by sponsoring employers through cooperative agreements with the school” [8 CFR 214.2(f)(10)(i)]. Sponsored employment is structured employment that is monitored by Regent University through the student’s Academic Department.

---

---

### **ACADEMIC INTERNSHIPS & CPT ELIGIBILITY**

In order to qualify for Curricular Practical Training, an academic internship must meet the definition of CPT as described above. In addition, the following three eligibility requirements must be met:

- 1. The F-1 student must have been “lawfully enrolled on a full-time basis in a Service-approved college, university...for at least one full academic year” [214.2(f)(10)].** Exceptions to the one full year enrollment requirement can only be made for graduate students who are required by their academic department to begin an internship earlier.

(Over)

2. **The internship/work experience must be “directly related” to the student’s “major area of study” [214.2(f)(10)].**
3. **The proposed employment (internship) must be required of all students for the completion of the degree; OR**  
**The proposed employment (internship) must be required for a particular course within the program of study from which the students can choose.** In this case, the internship course credits must count toward graduation and the course must appear on the student’s transcript. The course must also be listed in the school’s course catalogue with the assigned number of credits, and the name of the faculty member teaching the course clearly indicated. There should also be a description of the course with the course objectives clearly defined” [INS cable, 22 January 1992, pp. 3-4].

▶ Paid internships that do not meet the specifications for CPT can still be done through Optional Practical Training (OPT), but students must plan ahead because the OPT application may take USCIS 2-3 months to process. Students must attend an OPT information session before their OPT application can be processed.

---

---

## **PART-TIME & FULL-TIME CPT**

### **PART-TIME CPT (20 hours or LESS per week)**

▶ Students engaging in part-time CPT during the academic term (Fall and Spring semesters) must take concurrent course work in order to maintain status as a full-time student (generally 12 hours for undergraduates, 9 hours for graduates).

### **FULL-TIME CPT (MORE than 20 hours per week)**

▶ Full-time CPT during the academic term (Fall and Spring semesters) can only be granted if it is required by the student’s Academic Department for the completion of the degree.

▶ Students may engage in full-time CPT during the summer vacation period without being enrolled in classes full-time.

▶ Students who receive 12 months or more of full-time CPT will **not** be eligible for any Optional Practical Training (OPT).

---

---

## **OTHER IMPORTANT INFORMATION**

▶ Employment is considered to be the rendering of services for compensation, financial or other.

▶ Students must maintain their lawful F-1 status while on CPT and must continue to be enrolled full-time.

▶ Students must be enrolled in the course that qualifies them for CPT during the semester/term they engage in CPT/internship experience.

▶ Engaging in CPT must not delay the completion of studies or graduation.

▶ CPT is not available after the completion of all required coursework, except for graduate students who need CPT for their thesis/dissertation research. Students interested in gaining work experience in their field of study after completing all required coursework would need to consider applying for the Optional Practical Training (OPT) benefit, which may be used before or after graduation.

▶ Students **MUST** apply for a new CPT endorsement on their I-20 from the International Student Advisor each time they apply for a different job (internship), and each time they wish to increase/decrease their work hours.