Immigration Services
Office of Global Engagement
UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA

Curricular Practical Training Policies

The United States Department of Homeland Security (DHS) regulations define F-1 Practical training as "employment…that is directly related to [a student's] major area of study. DHS regulations further clarify that F-1 Curricular Practical Training (CPT) is employment that is "an integral part of an *established* curriculum."

Guidelines for All* Curricular Practical Training Approvals

- CPT *may not* be used to facilitate employment only. Any authorized CPT work authorization is subject to audit or review by the Department of Homeland Security, Student and Exchange Visitor Program, and Department of Labor and must be clearly curricular in purpose.

- CPT is limited to 20 hours per week during the fall and spring terms. Summer permits additional hours of work per week.

- Graduate Assistants (RA/TA/GA) should ensure they meet all Graduate School and Departmental employment policies.

- In addition to meeting all CPT regulatory requirements, students must have maintained their immigration status for one academic year prior to the CPT authorization.

- Students <u>may not</u> begin work before the CPT authorization has been granted and the approval on the I-20 has been received.

*Please review "Special Eligibility Considerations for Curricular Practical Training" for additional guidelines.

Academic Department Responsibilities

- **Advising** – Departments must meet with the applicant to determine relevance and necessity of CPT in their academic program. Ensuring that the proposed employment is directly related to the student's major and is an integral part of the curriculum.

- **Verification of Employment** – Departments should confirm that the internship offer meets academic requirements of the internship, practicum, or required experience.

- **Academic approval of CPT request through Compass.uga.edu.** – The Department representative will receive an email containing log in credentials and instructions for the Compass portal. Within the portal, the Department will confirm:

  - student's information
  - employer details
  - job description
  - course or academic requirement related to the CPT
  - justification of how the job is integral part of the curriculum
  - student's anticipated date of program completion
  - normal academic progress confirmation
  - basis of CPT request
    - Option 1: Required by Degree Program
    - Option 2: Internship/Practicum/Experiential Learning Requirement
    - Option 3: Required by Thesis or Dissertation

Three Authorization Options for Curricular Practical Training

- **Degree Requirement**

  Employment or fieldwork experience that the academic department requires of *all* degree candidates in a program. For graduate level programs that require employment of all degree candidates, academic credit may not be required for CPT authorization.

- **Internship or Practicum – Receiving Academic Credit through Enrollment**

  Employment experience in the major area of study that is a mandatory part of an enrolled course. This course may be an elective, but the credits, or a portion of the credits, must be counted toward the degree. The course must meet the following criteria:

  - Have an internship or practical training experience as a required component for all students enrolled in the course

  - Bear academic credit that will count toward the student's total credits required to complete the degree

  - Indicate clearly in the course description, bulletin, or web information:
    - that the course may be used for an internship or practical training;
    - the minimum or maximum internship hours for the course, if any; and
    - the limit, if any, on the number of internship hours, courses, and credits that may count toward the degree program or degree requirements

  Guidelines

- CPT is authorized by academic term (fall, spring, summer). If the CPT request overlaps between terms, two separate CPT requests in Compass are required, and each must meet all CPT requirements.
- Student & Departmental Pre-Application Procedures
  - The student should meet with the Academic Advisor or Graduate Coordinator to discuss the internship or practicum experience prior to the submission of the CPT application to confirm that the experience

meets internship class requirements, discuss if employment is appropriate in light of academic requirements, and ensure that the student is registered for the appropriate course.

- **Work Experience Required for Thesis or Dissertation**

    CPT may be authorized for thesis or dissertation credits if:

    o The CPT experience is directly related to the student's major area of study

    o Experience must be directly and clearly used in the student's thesis or dissertation work. Example: Data Collection for specific chapter

    o The student must be registered for the appropriate thesis or dissertation credits

    o The Academic department must provide an explanation indicating how the work is materially integral to the thesis or dissertation

    o The Academic department must meet with the student to review the thesis or dissertation requirements, discuss if the employment is appropriate in light of the academic requirements

Application Process

Please plan ahead! Requests are reviewed within 5 business days of complete submission. Immigration Services *does not* receive the application until your Academic Department submits their approval.

Step 1: Complete the CPT Workshop

Step 2: Student/Academic Department meeting – determine the academic eligibility.

Undergraduate Students: Meet with Academic Advisor

Graduate Students: Meet with Graduate Coordinator – Advisor or Supervisor in Academic Department may also provide input for the Graduate Coordinator

Step 3: Obtain Employment Offer & Supporting Materials

Offer Letter must meet all criteria provided in sample offer letter

Screenshot of enrollment, if applying based on option 2 or 3

Experiential Learning approval document, if applicable

Step 4: Submit online request in Compass.uga.edu

Step 5: Immigration Advisor Review

Immigration Services student advisors will review the request *after* the complete e-forms have been submitted.

Students will receive an email if the request does not meet regulatory requirements.

When the request has been approved and the authorization added, students will receive an email notification. The student should download, print, and sign the updated I-20.

The I-20 should be provided to the employer as proof of work authorization for the approved time period.