



Curricular Practical Training (CPT) Policy Guide

WHAT IS CPT?

*Curricular Practical Training (CPT) is temporary employment authorization that is “an integral part of an established curriculum” and “directly related to an F1 student’s major area of study.” It is granted by the Office of International Student and Scholar Services (ISSS) with the chief purpose of achieving a **curricular objective**. CPT includes alternate work/study, internship, or any other type of required internship or practicum.*

WHO IS ELIGIBLE FOR CPT?

- Students who have been in lawful F-1 status for one academic year (two consecutive full time semesters) and have a current active SEVIS record. Full-time enrollment as a student on a previous visa, such as H4 may count toward full-time enrollment.
- Students transitioning from the U Asia Campus (UAC) must have completed two consecutive semesters at the University of Utah main campus in F-1 status.
- Exception: An exception is allowed for graduate students in a degree program that requires immediate participation in an internship of all students in its program. Approval from ISSS to participate in the first academic year is still necessary and must be noted in the course catalog for the CPT course. If required by department, CPT may be full-time or part-time.
- Obtaining a grade below C-, NC grade, failure to enroll, or otherwise failing to complete a CPT course will disqualify a student to apply for CPT the following semester.

GENERAL CPT GUIDELINES

- **Part-time vs. Full-time CPT**
 - Part-time CPT is defined as working **1-20 hours per week** (not cumulative). Full-time CPT is defined as working **21-40 hours per week**. CPT may be authorized for part-time or full time during any semester, providing a student meets all eligibility and applicable GPA requirements.
 - F-1 students must have a cumulative **3.0 GPA** for undergraduates, or **3.5 GPA** for graduates, in the most recently reported semester prior to applying for **full-time** CPT in the fall, spring, or a student's last semester. Exceptions to the may be made for students whose programs require internship participation for completion of the program.
 - Accumulating 12 months or more of full-time CPT will eliminate eligibility for post completion OPT. Part-time CPT does not affect OPT eligibility. **Students are responsible for tracking their own full-time CPT accumulation.**

- **Employer Specific**
 - You may only work for the employer listed on the I-20. If you change employers while on CPT, or work for multiple employers during a semester, you will need to submit a separate CPT application for each request

- **CPT can be paid or unpaid**
 - Volunteer Work
 - If volunteering in a "traditional volunteer position," meaning that no one else that is performing the same duties is receiving compensation for his/her work/time, CPT is NOT required.
 - An unpaid position where the duties are similar to a paid position, or in which your function(s) are critical to the company's operation, should not be considered volunteer work and CPT is required.
 - Volunteers, as defined by the Department of Labor Fair Labor Standards Act are "individuals who volunteer or donate their services, usually on a part time basis, for public service, religious or humanitarian objectives, not as employees and without contemplation of pay."

- If you are wishing to receive compensation for your volunteer experience, you will need to apply for and seek approval for CPT.
- **CPT Authorization Period**
 - All CPTs will be authorized for the **full semester** in which the CPT course is taking place. Exceptions may exist for graduate students in a thesis program whose research is complete prior to the end of the semester.
 - CPT internships that are 30 days or less may be authorized for the actual length of work period. CPT internships longer than 30 days will be authorized for the entire semester. **ISSS will not shorten CPT authorization to avoid the 12-month full-time CPT restriction.**
 - CPT will only be authorized for one semester at a time. Students may not begin the internship prior to the authorized start date or work past the end date listed on the I-20. A need to work beyond the listed end date will require a new CPT authorization. Working outside of the authorized dates may result in a loss of future immigration benefits. Please note that CPT with a start date in the past will not be authorized nor will CPT dates be retroactively changed.
- **Course Requirement**
 - Students must enroll in a CPT approved course that is taken for academic credit. The minimum credits accepted for an elective internship course will be one (1) credit hour and registration in an authorized course will be required. The CPT course will count toward the immigration full-time requirement. If a student elects to take an internship credit for NC/CR and an NC grade is earned, the student will become ineligible for CPT the following semester. Students who officially withdraw or earn an unofficial withdrawal (EU) without the consent of ISSS may have their CPT rescinded and become ineligible for CPT the following semester as well.
 - A list of courses approved for CPT in each department may be found in the forms and publication section on our website at iss.utah.edu. If your chosen course is not included in this list, please contact ISSS and be aware this may delay the review of your CPT application.
 - If the CPT internship is a part of the established curriculum and required of all students in the program to graduate, an internship course is not required. An internship must be listed in the university's catalog as required of all students in the program for graduation and document as

such in any published program materials (i.e. website, program brochures, etc.). A department letter is not necessary if the above requirements are met.

- Students must earn a C- grade or higher or Credit for a C/NC in the CPT course. Failure to do so will result in ineligibility to apply for CPT the following semester.
- Students who fail to enroll in the required CPT course may have their CPT authorization discontinued as well as become ineligible to apply for CPT the following semester.
- For graduate students (Masters and Ph.D.) in a thesis program, enrollment in thesis credits will be accepted for CPT authorization as long as the internship is directly related to a student's thesis/dissertation research project. In this situation, enrollment in thesis credits may take the place of the internship course.

- **CPT in the Last Semester**

- Student may choose to participate in part-time or full-time CPT in their final semester. If approved, all general rules for part-time or full-time CPT apply.
- Students should be aware that participation in CPT in a final semester may be closely reviewed by USCIS to ensure it is an academically related internship and not employment. Students are responsible for understanding the risks involved with CPT in a final semester and should consult with an ISSS advisor for any questions.
- CPT may NOT be the only course taken in the final semester unless that specific CPT course is the only remaining requirement of the program for graduation. Please keep in mind; students must also have a course that requires physical presence in their last semester.

- **Repeating CPT**

- There is no limit on repeating CPT, however, students must maintain a C-grade or better in their CPT course. There is also no limit on full-time CPT participation, however, please keep in mind that 12 months of full-time CPT will disqualify you from participating in OPT.
- Please be aware that some departments may have restrictions on repeating particular courses. Students should consult with their academic advisor prior to re-enrolling in a CPT course.
- Each CPT request will be evaluated separately to ensure it is integral to the program, and not for employment purposes.

- Students are responsible to understand that repeat CPT with the same employer may be closely reviewed by USCIS to ensure it is an internship with academic purpose.
- **Transfer/OPT students**
 - Students returning from a period of OPT and participating in a new degree program must be enrolled in two semesters of full-time study before being eligible for CPT.
 - Students transferring to the University of Utah may qualify for immediate CPT if they have met the full academic year requirement at the previous institution. A transfer student must provide a current I-20 and transcripts from the previous school to demonstrate policy compliance.
- **CPT and On Campus Work**
 - Student may participate in part-time CPT and part-time on campus work simultaneously. Combined, these two work authorizations may not exceed 40 hours per week. On campus work cannot exceed 20 hours per week except in a summer vacation semester, regardless of whether part-time CPT is also authorized.
- **CPT Location**
 - If the internship is off-campus, and the employer is affiliated with the university but does not provide direct services to students, CPT is required. Likewise, if the internship is located on campus, but offered through a third party that does not provide direct student services, CPT is required.
 - CPT that is physically located outside of the state of Utah is allowed only when a student is on a summer vacation semester. Please note that if summer is your last semester, it is not considered a vacation semester. Exceptions may be made for Graduate and/or PhD students who are in a thesis or dissertation program on a case by case review.
- **CPT Application/Approval**
 - If a student is requesting multiple periods of CPT, the curricular objectives of the next CPT occurrence cannot be the same as the previous CPT. Multiple attempts of the course will require a new, university-level learning experience.

- CPT will not be granted to students that have completed their program requirements and are graduating or eligible to graduate. This is considered delaying graduation in order to participate in CPT. Additionally, CPT will not be granted if a student has a pending reinstatement request or a hold that prevents registration.
- **Learning Objectives-** All students MUST provide three personal learning objectives on the CPT application (see last page for examples)
- For CPT Students in the Chemical Engineering program, student must sign up for CPT credit courses: CH EN 4977 or 4978 (undergrads); CH EN 6877 (grads). Students enrolled in these courses may choose to enroll in the CPT credit course the same semester as CPT employment, or the semester following CPT employment.
- All other students should choose a department approved CPT course from the list of approved courses for CPT.

APPLYING FOR CPT

An online tutorial of the CPT application process may be found here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Hkmm2SNIPHQ>

1. Attend a CPT workshop/meet with an ISSS Advisor to discuss CPT
2. Discuss employment opportunity with employer and obtain job offer letter
3. Meet with academic advisor to discuss the internship course and CPT process
4. Login to **i-Start** and complete the CPT request <https://istart.ic.utah.edu/>
 - a. Click the **LOGIN** link under **Full Client Services**
 - b. Input your username (begins with a U) and your network password
 - c. Locate **F-1 student services** in the menu on the left
 - d. Click to open and complete the CPT e-form
 - e. Upload
 - i. I-20
 - ii. Signed offer letter on company letterhead from your employer
 - iii. Signed CPT employer form
 - iv. Thesis description if necessary

5. The academic advisor reviews the CPT request, makes a recommendation, and submits the CPT “advisor form” through iStart (this can only submit this AFTER you have completed and submitted your portion of the CPT request).
6. ISSS evaluates the CPT request for approval or denial. ISSS will not receive your CPT application until you AND your advisor have completed their portion of the CPT form.
7. ISSS approves/denies CPT and student and advisor receives an approval/denial email.

Please note that CPT processing time can take **up to 2 weeks from the date the academic advisor submits the recommendation**. If you have any holds, your request will not be processed until the hold has been released.

OPTIONS THROUGH CAREER SERVICES

If an internship course is not part of your curriculum, there still may be an opportunity to participate in CPT by scheduling an internship course through Career Services. If you are wishing to participate in the Career Services internship Program (CSIP), you must make an appointment with a Career Services Counselor. The following link can be used to find a counselor based on major (<http://careers.utah.edu/students/research/major/find-your-counselor.php>).

For business students, registration in the Business Student Internship Program (BSIP) will occur automatically. Career Services will be copied on the final CPT approval e-mail that is sent to both the student and the advisor.

Please note that this option will be considered on a case-by-case basis as determined by the Office in International Student and Scholar Services. The course SHOULD NOT be used as a means to simply get CPT employment.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Please use the following examples to formulate your own personal learning objectives:

During the internship, I will **use concise, accurate communication in a business context** as I talk to customers on the phone 3-5 times per week. This skill is related to MGT XXXX "Business & Professional Communication".

During the internship, I will create a **database of client information using Excel** for over 300 clients. This project is related to IS XXXX "Computer Essentials".

During the internship, I will **create detailed and professional PowerPoint presentations** for weekly staff meetings. This skill is related to IS XXXX "Computer Essentials".

At the end of the internship, I will have a **basic understanding of the marketing industry**. This knowledge is related to BUS XXXX "Foundations of Business".

During the internship, I will gain a deeper understanding of principles learned in "MKTG XXXX "Marketing through Interactive Media" by improving the company's social media presence. I will be responsible for **creating content and analyzing traffic on social media platforms**.

During the internship, I will learn **Six Sigma principles** by attending operations improvement meetings. This knowledge is related to OIS XXXX "Six Sigma".

At the end of the internship, I will be able to **create pivot tables in Excel for financial reporting**. This skill is related to FIN XXXX "Advanced Excel Financial Reporting".

At the end of the internship, I will **understand personal and social insurance risks**. This knowledge is related to FIN XXXX "Risk and Insurance".

This policy guide provides general guidelines on CPT eligibility and application procedures. Each case will be reviewed on its own merits.