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.
- CPT opportunity MUST be directly related to a student’s declared major.
- Students who have a job/internship/volunteer opportunity that is not employment driven.
- 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 may be authorized for either part-time or full-time, providing a student meets all eligibility requirements.

- **Part-time CPT**
  - Part-time CPT is defined as working **1-20 hours per week** (not an average).
  - Students authorized for medical reduced course load: part-time employment may be approved if it is encouraged by the student’s physician in order to promote the student’s health and wellness.

- **Full-time CPT**
  - Full-time CPT is defined as working **21-40 hours per week**.
  - 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 may be available only for students whose programs require internship participation for completion of the program. All the grades from previous semesters must be posted on the CIS before we can review your application.
  - F-1 students are eligible for full-time CPT during the summer vacation semester regardless of GPA (unless it is their first semester).
  - 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.**
  - Students authorized for medical reduced course load: full-time employment is not permitted

CPT Location
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.

Graduate and/or PhD students who are in a thesis or dissertation program: exceptions may be reviewed on a case-by-case basis.

CPT is required:
- If the internship is off-campus, and the employer is affiliated with the university but does not provide direct services to student
- If the internship is located on campus, but offered through a third party that does not provide direct student services
**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.

**Pay vs. No Pay/ Volunteering**

- You will need to apply for and receive approval for CPT regardless of whether you are offered a paid or unpaid position.
- F-1 students may work as volunteers on a part-time basis for public service, religious or humanitarian objectives. CPT is NOT required for this. If you are interesting in volunteering, please visit the Study in the Status Volunteering website at https://studyinthestates.dhs.gov/2013/12/volunteering-in-the-united-states
- Please review “Volunteering and Unpaid Internships” guide for more information.

**Employer**

CPT is employer specific. You may only work for the employer listed on the I-20. Before 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. It is the student’s responsibility to ensure your employment information is accurately reflected on your CPT I-20.

**Offer Letter**

Your offer must contain all the information requested below. Any incomplete offer letter will result in denial and the student will be asked to resubmit the CPT request with an updated offer letter.

- The letter should be written on company letterhead
- Student’s official name
- Job title
- Job description
- The number of hours per week
- The physical work location (office location and remote work address)
- Employment start date
- Employment end date
- Immediate supervisor information (name, phone number/email address)
- Signed by a representative of the company with physical signature in ink

**CPT Authorization Period**

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.

**CPT Start and End Dates**

CPT will only be authorized for one semester at a time. Your start and the end date must be mentioned on the offer letter.

- CPT authorizations cannot be made before the first day of the semester for which they are authorized. For example, if the summer term begins on May 13, this is the earliest date that CPT can be authorized.
- CPT can be authorized through the break following a semester and must end no later than the day before the next semester begins. For example, if the fall term begins on August 19, this means that August 18 is the final date that a summer CPT can be authorized.
- If you wish to pursue a CPT opportunity that spans more than one semester, you must submit a CPT request for each semester. You must also be enrolled in a CPT-eligible course for each semester that you are requesting CPT.
- In your last semester, your CPT cannot be authorized beyond your program end date which will coincide with either the last day of finals or for graduate students, your thesis defense date if you select that as your program end date.
- Approved CPT Start and End Dates for upcoming semesters:
  - Fall 2020: August 24, 2020 – January 10, 2021
  - Spring 2021: January 11, 2020 – May 17, 2021
  - Summer 2021: May 17, 2020 – August 22, 2021

**Learning Objectives**

All students are required to provide 3 (three) personal learning objectives to ISSS with their CPT E-form. Learning objectives must be related to the courses they are taking on the semester they are applying for CPT and/or 1 (one) previous semester.

Example:

“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.

- If a student is using courses they are taking concurrently with CPT for learning objectives, the courses must be registered prior to CPT request submission.
- **The CPT course itself, the Seminar, or the special topic/independent study cannot be used as the learning objective course.**
- 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.
**Required Course Enrollment**

**Students must be enrolled in the CPT course by the add/drop deadline for the semester they wish to apply for CPT.** Failure to register in CPT course by the add/drop deadline will result in denial of CPT or rescinding of former CPT approval.

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.

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.

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 activity is necessary for your APPROVED thesis or dissertation, and the experience and/or data from it will be directly and clearly used your dissertation or thesis work. However, if your CPT experience and/or data from the internship will not be directly and clearly used in your dissertation or thesis work, you should instead register for any appropriate internship course and seek CPT authorization based on that. Please speak to your department to determine the appropriate internship course.

Students who fail to enroll in the required CPT course will have their CPT authorization discontinued as well as become ineligible to apply for CPT the following semester.

- The internship course you wish to take must be listed on the [Approval Curricular Practical Training (CPT) Courses](#) list on the ISSS website. 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 documented 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.

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. Any student who did not enroll in the course for their CPT will be considered to have engaged in illegal work and their F-1 visa status may be at risk.

*Updated 08/28/2020 AKC*
BSIP/CSIP Course Options

If you are planning to use one of these courses for your internship, you must speak with the BSIP or CSIP advisor before submitting your CPT request. Please note that this option will be considered on a case-by-case basis as determined by ISSS. This course SHOULD NOT be used as a means to simply get employment.

- **BSIP**: For business students, registration in the Business Student Internship Program (BSIP) will occur automatically by School of Business after your CPT approval.

- **CSIP**: 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 wish to participate in the Career Services internship Program, you must make your request through Handshake Experiences. Please see the link and instructions on how to request experience in Handshake. Please allow 2-3 business days for the review and approval. Once approved, Career Services will be in touch with you, your internship supervisor and the career coach you will working with to finish signing up for the course.

  **Request an Experience through Handshake:**
  
  [https://app.joinhandshake.com/experiences/new](https://app.joinhandshake.com/experiences/new)

  1. Login into your Handshake account
  2. Click “Career Center” → “Experiences” → “Request Experiences” →
     Select Experience type, “CSIP” and Term → Follow the rest of the prompts

**Required Course Grade**

Student must earn one of the following grades for their CPT course:

- a C- grade or higher
- a Credit if a student elected to take an internship credit for NC/CR

Student will not be eligible for CPT the next semester if:

- a student elects to take an internship credit for NC/CR and an NC grade is earned
- Students who officially withdraw or earn an unofficial withdrawal (EU) without the consent of ISSS

A student who fails 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.

**Repeating CPT**

Students may repeat CPT up to 3 (three) times if they have same position, employer and same course. Students should also consider potential negative immigration consequences to excessive CPT use. USCIS is questioning OPT and H1B applications when a student has repeatedly used CPT. Please keep in mind that any opportunities that are deemed employment driven rather than curricular, are not eligible for CPT.

Updated 08/28/2020 AKC
- A C- grade or better in their previous CPT course is required.
- 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.
- 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. Please meet with ISSS advisor if you have any concerns.

CPT in the Last Semester

ISSS recommends that you do not use your CPT to bridge into OPT employment. Please be aware that bridging may result in issues with your Post-Completion OPT application, STEM OPT, or H1B in the future as USCIS may interpret it as misuse of CPT. If your CPT internship unexpectedly becomes an offer for full-time OPT, we recommend seeking legal advice from an experienced immigration attorney. Students are responsible for understanding the risks involved with CPT in a final semester and should consult with an ISSS advisor for any questions.

- 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.
- 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.
- 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.
- 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 may be available only for students whose programs require internship participation for completion of the program.
- In your last semester, your CPT cannot be authorized beyond your program end date which will coincide with either the last day of finals or for graduate students, your thesis defense date if you select that as your program end date.
Transfer Students or Students Returning to School from POST/STEM OPT

- Students returning from a period of OPT and participating in a new degree program must be enrolled in two consecutive semesters of full-time study before being eligible for CPT.
- Students transferring their SEVIS record 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.

Applying for CPT

1. Read the CPT policy guide first and attend a CPT workshop (highly recommended) or meet with an ISSS Advisor to discuss CPT if you have further questions
2. Meet with academic advisor to discuss the internship course and CPT process
3. Discuss employment opportunity with employer and obtain an offer letter
4. **Enroll in the appropriate internship/CPT course by the Add/Drop deadline.** If you have any holds that prevents you from registering for courses, you will need to address them as well so you can enroll in the course.
5. Go to www.isss.utah.edu and login to UAtlas and complete the CPT request. Please remember that ISSS asks for **10 business day processing time once you and your advisor submit the request.** We recommend that you plan ahead and submit your CPT request at least three weeks before your anticipated internship start date.
6. The academic advisor reviews the CPT request, makes a recommendation, and submits the CPT “advisor form” through UAtlas (this can only be completed AFTER you have submitted your portion of the CPT request). ISSS will not receive your CPT application until you AND your advisor have completed the CPT form.
7. ISSS evaluates the CPT request for approval or denial.

**Students may not begin the internship prior to the authorized start date or work past the end date listed on the I-20. Working outside of the authorized dates may result in a loss of future immigration benefits.**

Disclaimer: International Student & Scholar Services (ISSS) provides support and information related to U.S. immigration laws and regulations related to F and J status at the University of Utah. ISSS staff are not attorneys and any information provided by ISSS should not be construed as legal advice. Individuals are welcome to consult a qualified immigration attorney for specific legal advice, particularly in complicated cases. For a list of local Utah attorneys please visit our website [here](#).

Employment: ISSS reviews work related requests based upon the information provided to us by the student. If USCIS later determines that the student misused the work authorization, or otherwise did not follow the required rules and regulations, additional immigration benefits could be denied by USCIS.
April 1, 2020

Odafin Tutuola  
1235 University Village,  
Salt Lake City, UT 84108

Dear Odafin,

We are very pleased to offer you the position of Intern this summer with Dolp Tech. Please find the following confirmation of the specifics of your internship:

**Job Title**: Software Development Intern  
**Job Duties**: Responsibilities will include developing and supporting applications using C#, JavaScript, HTML, CSS, ASP.Net, MS SQL with SQL Server databases and SSRS reporting services. You will work on our automated testing infrastructure and craft the tools that provide real-time monitoring of our service.  
**Start Date**: May 13, 2019  
**End Date**: August 18, 2019  
**Number of Work Hours Per Week**: 40 hours per week  
**Reporting Supervisor**: Amanda Rollins arollins@dolptech.com or 609-348-7100 # 105  
**Office Location**: 28th East Bay Road Atlantic City, New Jersey 08403. The student will work remotely due to Covid-19. She will work from home at 1235 University Village, Salt Lake City, UT 84108.  
**Salary/Stipend**: $25.00 per hour

Should you have any questions regarding the specifics of your internship, please contact me by phone 609-348-7100 # 109 or by email obenson@dolptech.com.

Sincerely

Olivia Benson  
Human Resources  
Dolp Tech