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## Off-Campus Employment (Internships)

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## CURRICULAR PRACTICAL TRAINING (CPT)- INTERNSHIPS

### WHAT IS CURRICULAR PRACTICAL TRAINING?

CPT is an academic learning experience that allows a student to apply theoretical knowledge and skills gained through coursework in a practical work environment. CPT can be used during the fall, spring, or summer semesters.

CPT is defined as employment, which is an integral part of an established curriculum, including: "alternate 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." Source: [8 CFR 214.2(f)(10)(i)].

CPT is available only prior to the completion of your degree program and you must have a job offer at the time of application. CPT employment may not delay completion of the academic program.

Please watch this overview presentation of CPT, its regulations, and the application process.

### CPT Overview



## CPT ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

To be eligible for CPT, the following must be met:

- Student must be in valid F-1 status.
- Student must be enrolled in a Bachelor's, Master's, or Doctoral degree program.
- Student must have been enrolled for one academic year in a current degree program at USF. Academic year is defined as a fall and spring semester (Summer not included). Time in Academic English or Pathway programs does not count towards this requirement.
- Student must be making normal progress toward degree completion.
- Curricular Practical Training must be an integral part of the student's degree program.
- Student must have applied for and received a work authorization on their I-20 prior to starting CPT.

## CPT COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Your CPT course must be credit-bearing – Minimum of 1 credit. The number of credit hours for the CPT-related course is determined by the department and official course catalog.

### **Examples of Courses acceptable for CPT Authorization:**

- Internship course
- Cooperative education course
- Practicum or field experience course

- Dissertation or thesis course if the CPT experience is integral to the student's research

## HOW TO APPLY

1. View the **CPT Presentation**.
2. Meet with graduate coordinator, academic advisor, or Center for Career & Professional Development advisor to discuss their requirements.
3. Obtain an internship/job offer letter (see section **Job Offer Letter** below for list of requirements and to view a sample letter).
4. Login to **iStart.usf.edu**
  - a. Start the CPT Application located under F-1 Practical Training - Apply. (Note: The CPT Application is only visible to current F-1 students).
  - b. View the CPT "How to Apply for CPT" video.
  - c. Pass the CPT quiz.
  - d. Upload the CPT Job Offer Letter that meets all requirements.
  - e. After OIS approves the letter, submit the Academic Validation E-Form.
    1. While filling out the Academic Validation E-Form, you will need to upload proof that your internship, practicum, field experience, etc. is an integral part of your curriculum. Each category of CPT requires a different type of proof Please review **this document** to see the examples of proof.
5. Register for an appropriate CPT related course.
6. Academic Advisor or Graduate Coordinator receives automatic email and confirms academic nature of work experience.
7. When the CPT request is approved, a new I-20 with CPT authorization is produced. OIS will send an e-mail to the student's USF e-mail address with the CPT approved I-20 attached. (**Note:** OIS will process the CPT authorization within 10 business days after the academic department approves the CPT.)
8. Receive e-mail from OIS and a new I-20 with CPT authorization.
9. Start employment **only after receiving the I-20 with CPT authorization** and on or after the CPT start date listed on page two of your I-20.

**Do NOT start your CPT until you have obtained the CPT I-20 from the Office of International Services and not before the CPT start date.**

Please watch the following step-by-step video for applying for CPT.

## How to Apply for CPT



### TYPES OF CPT

When you apply for CPT, you must select a type. USF has three types of CPT:

**NECESSARY FOR COURSE** – Work experience fulfills a requirement of a course as specified by the official course description available to the public in a university catalog or website department course listings. The work experience must be directly related to the major/program listed on the first page of the student's I-20 and commensurate with the current educational level.

**USF CENTER FOR CAREER & PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT CO-OP OR INTERNSHIP (For Undergraduate Students Only)** – The work experience is assigned and monitored by USF's Career Services. The work experience must be directly related to the program (major) and commensurate with the current educational level.

**DISSERTATION AND THESIS** – The work experience must be necessary and contribute to the production of the final thesis or dissertation. The student must be in candidacy and enrolled in dissertation hours OR already in thesis track and enrolled in thesis hours.

Please watch the video below to learn more about the CPT options at USF.

## CPT Options at USF



### JOB OFFER LETTER

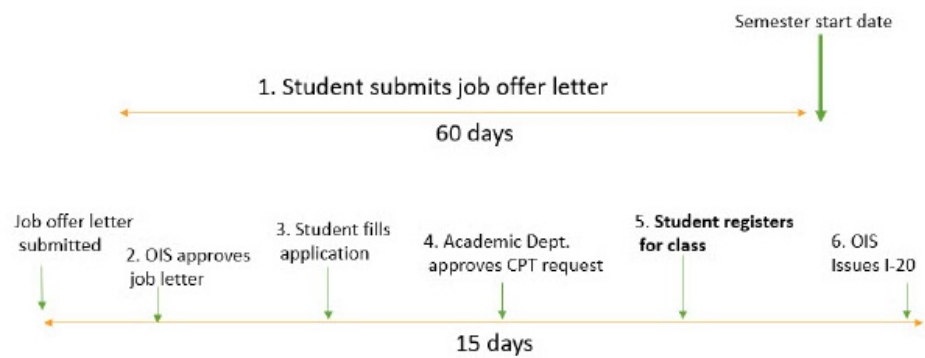
It is recommended to share this **Sample Offer Letter** with employers to ensure the letter includes all necessary information.

Students must upload the CPT learning experience offer letter at the time of submission. The offer letter must be on letterhead and include all the following:

- The student's name
- The company name and address
- Name and address of the company or location where the CPT will take place, if different from the address of the company
- Description of CPT employment including responsibilities and learning objectives.
- Specific start (month/day/year) and end date (month/day/year) within the dates of the term.
- Number of hours of CPT activity per week
- Name of supervisor
- Signature of hiring official

### WHEN TO APPLY

Students must have been completed one academic year to participate in a CPT. Students can submit their job offer letter for review **as early as 60 days prior** to the start of the semester and must submit CPT requests at least **15 working days prior** to the start date of the CPT learning experience. This includes the time necessary for departments to approve their portion of the E-Form.



There is no mechanism for expedited processing. If the student submits the CPT request with not enough time to be processed, the CPT start date will be changed to the date the CPT application is approved.

## CPT AND FULL-TIME ENROLLMENT REQUIREMENTS

Undergraduate students must be enrolled for at least 12 credit hours in a semester. Graduate students must be enrolled for at least 9 credit hours. In addition, graduate students need to be enrolled at least 2 credit hours during their final semester (summer included).

### If you are doing a full-time CPT.

- If full-time CPT lasts 12 weeks or more during a Fall or Spring Semester, the student may\* be eligible to enroll in less than a full course load.
- If full-time CPT lasts less than 12 weeks of a Fall or Spring Semester, the student is required to be enrolled in a full-time course load\*\* (including the CPT course)
- During summer, students can enroll for the CPT-related course only. No additional registration is required for immigration purposes.

### Part-time CPT:

- Students authorized for part-time CPT during a Fall or Spring Semester must be enrolled in full-time course load\*\* (including the CPT course) no matter the duration of the CPT experience
- During summer, students can enroll for the CPT-related course only. No additional registration is required for immigration purposes.

*\*Approval of full-time CPT that will last 12 weeks or more does NOT automatically authorize a student to drop below full-time. This will be*

*evaluated during the application process. You must consult with your academic advisor to determine what courses you must register for in addition to your internship in order to maintain normal academic progress.*

*\*\*Full-time enrollment requirements for students are as follows:*

- *Undergraduate: 12 credit hours of which only 3 credits can be online*
- *Graduate: 9 credit hours of which only 3 credits can be online*
- *Reduced Course Load (RCL), authorized by OIS, counts as full-time enrollment*

## **START AND END DATES FOR CPT**

### **Start Dates**

CPT does not have to start on the first day of the semester. CPT can start up to two weeks before the beginning of the semester if this does not overlap with the previous semester.

CPT can also be authorized after the semester start date, but the authorization must be on the I-20 before starting work; and students must follow above enrollment requirements; and if the course is added late, the department must include rationale to explain why the work experience is necessary to the program.

### **End Dates**

If graduating, the CPT must end by the Friday of Graduation Week.

If the student will be continuing their degree after the CPT experience, CPT may extend two weeks after the end of the semester.

### **CPT for more than 1 semester**

CPT is granted for one semester at a time. To extend CPT for another semester, students must reapply in iStart.

Remember, 12 months of full-time CPT eliminates eligibility for OPT at that same educational level following completion of degree program.

## **FREQUENTLY ASKED CPT QUESTIONS**

### **— What is considered part time or full time CPT?**

- Part time is anything up to 20 hours per week.

- Full time is anything above 20 hours.

— **Is there a limit of how much CPT I can have?**

- 12 months of full-time CPT at an educational level eliminates eligibility for OPT at that same educational level.
- Academic departments may have set restrictions on how much CPT a student can do, or how many credits can count toward a degree, based on the major curriculum.

— **Can I work on campus while doing a CPT?**

Students can work on-campus 20 hours per week during Fall and Spring and full-time during the summer while on CPT.

— **Can I have an internship on campus?**

CPT is for off-campus employment, so we do not approve internships for on-campus work. Internships cannot be used to increase hours worked on-campus. See the **on-campus employment** page for more information.

— **What if I need to request an extension of my I-20 in order to request CPT?**

An I-20 cannot be extended for the sole purpose of CPT. There must be an academic reason to request a program extension.

— **Can I drop a course on which my CPT is based?**

No, students may not drop the CPT-related course.

The student will be considered in violation of their F-1 immigration status if they fail to maintain registration in the CPT related course after being approved for CPT. In this case, the student's I-20 and legal status will be terminated (ended) and the student must meet with an immigration advisor for options.

— **What documentation to upload for the “CPT Requirement Proof” in the CPT Application?**

Proof is required to demonstrate that your practical experience (internship, practicum, field experience, etc.) is an integral part of your curriculum. Each category of CPT requires a different type of proof.

— **Can I submit just one request if I plan to do CPT for more than one semester?**



No, students must submit a request for each semester of CPT and register for the CPT-related course.

### **— Must I register for my CPT course before I submit my CPT request?**

Yes. Students should consult with academic/faculty advisers for information about courses that are appropriate for CPT prior to submitting the CPT request in iStart.

It is your responsibility to meet all the obligations of the CPT-related course. Our office cannot assist with fee adjustments if you do not find a job, or your CPT is denied.

Remember, you will be ineligible for CPT if you have been approved for a RCL for final semester.

If you have any further questions or concerns, please come to **OIS walk-in or virtual advising hours**.



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