

CPT and OPT Comparison
College of Arts and Sciences & Maxwell School
February 2025

	Curricular Practical Training (CPT)	Optional Practical Training (OPT)
Purpose	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To provide work experience directly related and integral to a student's degree of study, for example, internship Not intended for general, ongoing work authorization 	Temporary employment that is directly related to an F-1 student's major area of study
Type of Job	<p>Two types of internships</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> required as part of a degree program, no need to register for academic credit not required but considered integral to academic experience, must register for at least one credit per semester <p>Any internship, even if it is unpaid, requires CPT authorization at SU</p>	Part time or full-time employment within the field of study
Work Hours per Week	Part time (up to 20 hours) or full time (more than 20 hours)	Must be at least 20 hours per week
Student Eligibility	Must be degree seeking in valid F-1-status and have been a full-time student for one academic year	Must be degree seeking in valid F-1-status and have been a full-time student for one academic year
When to Apply	After receiving an internship offer letter	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pre-Completion OPT: 90 days prior to the employment start date with a job offer letter Post-Completion OPT: 90 days prior to graduation or up to 60 days after graduation with or without a job offer letter
Processing Time	3 to 5 days at the SU Center for International Services	90 to 120 days at the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS)
Cost	None	\$470 (online application); \$520 (paper application); \$1,685 (premium processing)
Duration	A student will be ineligible for OPT if he/she participates in greater than 364 days of full time CPT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Up to 12 months (can be unpaid employment) An additional 24 months for students in the STEM fields (must be paid employment) All periods of pre-completion OPT will be deducted from the available period of post-completion OPT Maximum unemployment period is 90 days from the OPT start date
Academic Course with Internship Credit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CAS270, PAF270, PSC317 CAS490 (experience credit) with a faculty sponsor Major credit through academic department, coded with the abbreviation of major (270 for lower division credit or 470 for upper; with a faculty sponsor) 	N/A