

## ***What type of work experience qualifies as CPT?***

Curricular Practical Training (CPT) is temporary off-campus work/internship authorization for current full-time F-1 students who want to gain practical experience in their field of study. The internship must be **an integral part of the degree program**. This includes any type of required internship or practicum, or any required work for which course credit is received.

## ***Do I need to apply for CPT if ...***

**My internship is unpaid?** Internships may be paid or unpaid. If your internship is unpaid, it is recommended that you apply for CPT authorization for any off-campus internship in the U.S. You will not be eligible to receive any stipend, bonus or other compensation without prior authorization. Labor laws should also be taken into consideration. For further details, please refer to the [Department of Labor - Fact Sheet #71: Internship Programs Under The Fair Labor Standards Act](#).

**My internship is volunteer?** Unpaid internships can easily be confused with volunteer positions. Volunteering refers to donating time with a non-profit organization whose primary purpose is charitable or humanitarian in nature, without remuneration or any other type of compensation. You are free to engage in volunteer work, without CPT authorization, as long as it meets this description.

**My internship is on campus?** No, you do not need to apply for CPT if you will be paid by UCR to work on campus. International students are allowed to work on campus up to 20 hours per week while courses are in session and up to 40 hours per week during break periods.

**My internship is in my home country?** No. CPT is authorization to work in the United States. You do not need to apply for CPT if your internship is in your home country.

## ***Am I eligible to apply?***

In order to apply, you must have completed one academic year as a full-time student. Students must also be in good standing with immigration when applying for CPT and while working, if approved for CPT. You must also be registered for a full-time course load (with the exception of summer). Students on filing fee status are not eligible for CPT.

## ***How much CPT can I use? Will it affect my eligibility for OPT in the future?***

Students are not limited to the amount of CPT they may utilize; however, students who have engaged in full-time CPT for one year or more are not eligible for Optional Practical Training (OPT). Part-time curricular practical training is not counted towards OPT eligibility. Generally, CPT is authorized as part-time during the academic year.

## ***What is considered "full time" CPT? "part time" CPT?***

Full-time CPT is over 20 hours per week. CPT is part-time if you are working 20 hours or less per week. Please note that during the academic year, students may only apply for part-time CPT (20 hours per week or less), unless the student has advanced to candidacy or is pursuing a program that requires full-time CPT. During the summer, students may apply for full-time CPT; however, students will be required to enroll for an approved internship course.

## ***How do I apply for CPT?***

1. Obtain an internship offer letter from your prospective employer on company letterhead specifying: your job title and responsibilities, whether the internship is full-time or part-time and the dates of employment.
2. Complete the CPT Request Form (available at the ISS office). The form must be completed by you and your Academic Advisor (if you are an undergraduate student) or your Graduate Advisor (if you are a graduate student).
3. Submit the completed CPT Request Form and the internship offer letter to the ISS office. If you are an undergraduate student, your documents will be reviewed for approval by the ISS office. If you are a graduate student, your

documents will be routed to the Graduate Division for review. Please allow at least two weeks to process CPT applications.

4. Enroll in the appropriate internship course as recommended on the CPT Request Form. CPT is authorized for the period in which you are registered for the course, *with the exception of MBA students who may complete their internship in the summer and register for Fieldwork in Management in the subsequent fall term.*
5. If approved, you will receive an email to your UCR email address. The ISS office will issue you a new I-20 with CPT authorization on page 2. You may then pick up your new I-20 at the front desk of the International Students and Scholars office. Make sure to provide a copy of your CPT I-20 to your employer. Please keep all original copies.

***What internship course do I enroll in?***

Undergraduate students should consult their academic advisor and the UCR Career Center for guidance regarding internship course enrollment and procedures. Graduate students should consult their graduate advisor for guidance regarding course enrollment. Your advisors will recommend you for a specific internship course on your CPT Request Form.

***Can I begin my internship while I'm waiting for authorization?***

No. You **MUST** be approved for CPT before your internship begins and have a CPT I-20 issued from our office. We do not back-date CPT authorization, so make sure you plan early and submit an application well before your internship is scheduled to begin. Please allow at least two weeks for to process the CPT application.

***May I change my employer, the dates, or my status as full-time or part-time once I've been approved?***

No. You may only work for the employer listed on your I-20, for the specific dates listed, and only full-time or part-time as authorized. Any changes require an entire new CPT application packet and would necessitate a new CPT I-20.

***What do I need to do to renew my CPT authorization next quarter?***

**Extending your internship:** You must submit all new documentation (including a new CPT Request Form and offer letter) for each quarter in which you would like to work. **You must also continue to register for the internship course each quarter, as necessary.**

***I'm a graduate student. What if I'm also working part-time on-campus as a TA or a GSR? What if I have a fellowship?***

If the combined time you plan to work (both CPT and on-campus employment) exceeds 20 hours per week, you should contact the Graduate Division and/or your Departmental Advisor to discuss how this will affect your funding (fellowship, etc.) Working more than 20 hours total may be considered full-time employment by either your department or the Graduate Division and will affect your funding, so please check with them.

***Can I apply for CPT in the summer if I've been on filing fee in the spring?***

No. If you were on filing fee in the spring, you are not eligible for CPT during the summer.