

INTERNATIONAL STUDENT & SCHOLAR SERVICES

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Curricular Practical Training Guidelines

What is CPT?

Curricular Practical Training (CPT) authorization is required for F-1 students to participate in any internship, work, experiential learning or training activity that is part of your academic program, whether paid or unpaid. CPT can *only* be granted when the internship/training is part of the academic curriculum. Examples include internships, practicum courses, fieldwork, externship and clinical placements that you need to graduate, earn credits toward your degree or complete your graduate thesis/dissertation. Other students may be eligible for CPT if they are participating in UConn sponsored research or entrepreneurial programs.

Only ISSS International Advisors can determine your eligibility for CPT. If you want to do an internship and you are not eligible for CPT, you might still be eligible to conduct your internship using pre-completion Optional Practical Training (OPT). OPT processing time can take several months; therefore meet with an ISSS International Advisor well in advance to discuss your internship/training opportunity.

VERY IMPORTANT: You must have approved CPT before you begin your internship or training, paid or unpaid. You may be in violation of your visa status if you begin your internship before obtaining CPT authorization. You must submit your completed CPT authorization at least one week before your internship start date. Once approved, you will receive a new Form I-20 with CPT authorization details, which you should present to your training site supervisor upon request.

General CPT Guidelines

-CPT is **academic** work. If an internship opportunity is good professional experience, but is not academic, then CPT is not appropriate.

- You must have completed at least one academic year of full time study before you may be approved for CPT. Exceptions apply for graduate students who are required to complete practical training in their first year of study.

-CPT may be part-time or full-time, depending on the requirements of your academic course or program. CPT hours do *not* count toward the maximum 20-hour per week employment restriction during the academic term, because the work is part of your academic curriculum. You may work on-campus or through pre-completion OPT at the same time you are doing CPT, provided your on-campus/pre-OPT employment hours are restricted to 20 hours per week during the academic term.

-During the academic term, you are still required to enroll on a full time basis to maintain your visa status (even if you are authorized for CPT).

-Your CPT authorization **cannot be extended**. You must plan to complete by your CPT authorization end date. If your program has multiple practical training requirements or opportunities, you must submit a new CPT application for each curricular requirement.

-If you complete 12 months of full time CPT in a particular degree level, you will not be eligible for OPT (Optional Practical Training) at that same degree level. Otherwise, CPT use does *not* impact the amount of time available to you for OPT.

-UCAELI students are not eligible for CPT.

CPT Options/Requirements

Internships for credit: If your program offers academic credit to complete an internship, externship or other off-campus clinical training, you are required to apply for CPT. To qualify for CPT, your academic program must approve the credits to appear on your Plan of Study. Your internship must occur during the term in which you register for the credits, and must fall within the specific dates listed on the CPT application form. You must register for the internship course before applying for CPT with ISSS, and submit proof of your course registration with your CPT application.

Internships/practice hours to fulfill a degree/graduation requirement, NOT for Credit: Some academic programs require students to complete an internship or practice hours in order to graduate, but do not award credit for those opportunities. To qualify for CPT, your academic program must list the degree requirement in their published curricular materials, and you may not have already fulfilled the specific degree requirement through past work. Your Plan of Study must also list the degree requirement, and how you fulfill that requirement.

Internships to complete thesis/dissertation: ISSS may approve CPT for graduate students who require internships to complete their thesis/dissertation research. An internship may be required for data collection purposes, or to use equipment not available at UConn, among other reasons. Your academic advisor must complete Appendix A of the CPT application forms, providing full details on why the internship is required for your thesis/dissertation, and how the work will apply directly to your thesis/dissertation.

Internships conducted under the terms of a contractual agreement between UConn and an outside institution/employer: If UConn has a contract with an outside institution or employer, and your internship with that employer is integral to your academic program and conducted under the terms of the contractual agreement, you may be eligible for CPT for that internship. The UConn staff or faculty member responsible for the agreement must complete Appendix B, and your academic advisor must agree that the experience is integral to your academic program. The opportunity must not delay the completion of the degree program by your I-20 program end date.

UConn Center for Career Development Co-Op: If you are participating in an approved co-op opportunity through UConn's Center for Career Development, you will be eligible for CPT. Even though Co-op students do not register for coursework during the co-op; you are still considered a full time student. Co-op participation must not delay the completion of the degree program by your I-20 end date. You must submit a copy of your approved co-op paperwork with your CPT application.

UConn Sponsored Entrepreneurial Program: Participants in UConn sponsored entrepreneurial programs must have CPT authorization for the period of time in which you are affiliated with the program. Examples include the Third Bridge Grant Program, CCEI Summer Fellowship, and Accelerate UConn. After your affiliation with the program ends, you are required to have Optional Practical Training authorization to continue your entrepreneurial activity, and that entrepreneurial activity must be directly related to your degree program.

WHAT TO SUBMIT TO ISSS:

To apply for CPT, please submit the following documents to International Student & Scholar Services (ISSS) at least one week before your internship start date:

1. Completed "**Curricular Practical Training Application Form (IS 358: <http://iss.uconn.edu>> Forms > CPT Information and Forms)**"
2. Copy of **internship offer letter** or **UConn placement paperwork** certifying the following items:
 - a. the training site and address
 - b. the training start date and end date
 - c. hours required per week
 - d. brief description of what you will do
3. For credit bearing internships: Print out of your **course registration** from StudentAdmin.
4. Copy of enrollment verification, including all semesters enrolled. Request this from the Registrar office at your campus, or by **calling/emailing** the Storrs campus registrar.
5. Other support documents may be required to determine eligibility for CPT. Your application is not considered complete until all documents are received. Apply early!