

# CURRICULAR PRACTICAL TRAINING

## Definition of Curricular Practical Training

The U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) define "curricular practical training" as employment which is an integral or important part of your 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.

According to USCIS, the word "required" does not always limit this type of practical training only to work experiences that are required parts of the curriculum. This clarification is discussed below in more detail.

## Job Eligibility Requirements

To be considered curricular practical training, the work must not only be related to your major field of study but also must be an integral or important part of your studies. Training that is required by your degree program always meets the requirements for curricular practical training, regardless of whether or not you receive academic credit for your work. Training that is not required by your degree program may meet the requirements for curricular practical training if you receive academic credit for the employment experience or if it is offered by a sponsored employer through a co-op program at your school. In either case, it must be an important part of your studies. If you have a training opportunity that involves employment, check with your international student adviser to determine if it qualifies as curricular practical training.

**NOTE: A course offered for the primary purpose of facilitating employment authorization does not qualify for curricular practical training (i.e., independent study).**

## Student Eligibility Requirements

**Employment Which Is a Required Part of Your Degree Program:** If (1) you are a graduate student, (2) you are maintaining lawful F-1 status, and (3) the proposed employment is a required part of your studies, you may apply for permission to engage in curricular practical training whenever your program requires your participation, even if it is immediately upon beginning your studies. Undergraduate students must have completed nine months of full-time study in order to be eligible for any form of curricular practical training.

**Employment Which Is Not a Required Part of Your Degree Program:** In order to be eligible to apply for permission to work in a job which is not a required part of your study program, you must (1) be in lawful F-1 status and (2) have been a full-time student for at least one academic year.

**English Language Students:** Students enrolled in English language training programs are not eligible for curricular practical training.

## Part-Time vs. Full-Time Curricular Practical Training

**Part-Time Training:** Employment for 20 hours or less per week while you are also enrolled for classes is considered "part-time" curricular practical training. In this case, the employment authorization on page three of your *I-20* should specify permission to engage in "part-time" training, and you must be careful to limit your work to no more than 20 hours per week. There is no limitation on the length of time you may participate in a part-time curricular practical training, but you must be enrolled in school during your training in order to maintain lawful F-1 status.

**Full-Time Training:** Employment for more than 20 hours per week is considered “full-time” curricular practical training. The employment authorization on page three of your I-20 should, in this case, specify permission to participate in “full-time” training. While in full-time training, you need not be enrolled for classes in order to maintain lawful F-1 status. There is no limitation upon the length of time you may participate in full-time curricular practical training, but if you participate for twelve months or more you will not be eligible for optional practical training.

### **Curricular Practical Training and Eligibility for Optional Practical Training**

It is important that you understand that if you participate in twelve months or more of “full-time” curricular training, you lose eligibility to apply for twelve months of optional practical training. Participation in “part-time” training programs does not affect your eligibility for optional practical training.

### **Employment Eligibility Verification**

When you begin work, you and your employer must complete a form entitled “Employment Eligibility Verification” (INS Form I-9), which the employer retains.

### **Tax Concerns**

In general, F-1 students who have been in the United States less than five years are exempt from Social Security (F.I.C.A.) taxes. Your earnings are subject to applicable federal, state, and local taxes. Students must file a tax return on or before April 15 of each year. Students may be entitled to a refund of taxes withheld from their wages if the amount of tax owed is less than the amount withheld.

### **Procedures for Applying for CPT**

- 1. Obtain a letter supporting practical training from your academic advisor. (Present the attached memo to your advisor so that s/he understands what information must be included.)**
- 2. Obtain a letter from the employer on their official letterhead which includes the name and location of the employer, period of employment, and whether it is for full-time or part-time work.**
- 3. Complete the “Request for Employment Authorization” form (Attached Below).**
- 4. Provide proof of registration of the appropriate course supporting your CPT – you may present an unofficial transcript to meet this requirement.**
- 5. Schedule an appointment with the International Student Coordinator/Advisor (852-6602).  
*Be sure to bring all the above required credentials with you at the time of your appointment.***

**The International Student Advisor will review the above credentials and if appropriate will authorize either part-time or full-time curricular practical training by issuing you a new I-20 document.**

***You must be careful not to begin work prior to this approval and the start date requested and you should not continue employment beyond the date authorized on your I-20 unless you apply for and are granted an extension of your permission to work. Either situation constitutes unauthorized work by USCIS.***

**TO:** Academic or Co-op Advisor

**FROM:** Sharolyn Pepper, International Student Coordinator  
Anshu Anand, International Student Advisor  
Barbara Jones, International Student Advisor

**RE:** Curricular Practical Training (CPT)

International students with F-1 visas may be eligible for Curricular Practical Training (CPT). Curricular Practical Training includes cooperative education, internships and practicum, which can be done before completion of studies. To be considered Curricular Practical Training, one of two conditions must apply:

- 1) The training is required for the degree, regardless of whether or not academic credit is given, or
- 2) If it is not a degree program requirement, then the training must be related to the student's major field of study and must also be an integral or important part of his/her studies. Training which is not required by the student's degree program may meet the requirements for curricular practical training if the student receives academic credit for the employment experience or if it is offered by sponsored employers through the co-op program. A course offered for the primary purpose of facilitating employment authorization does not qualify for curricular practical training (i.e., independent study).

A student requesting Curricular Practical Training must have a letter of support from you as his or her academic or co-op advisor.

The letter must specify the following:

- 1) That the training is “required for the degree” OR “an integral part of the student’s degree program and s/he will receive academic credit” OR “being offered by a sponsored employer through the co-op office”
- 2) The course for which the student will receive credit
- 3) The name and location of the employer, period of employment and whether it is for full-time or part-time work.

If you prefer sending an email note, you may send it to either [sfpepp01@louisville.edu](mailto:sfpepp01@louisville.edu), [a0anan01@gwise.louisville.edu](mailto:a0anan01@gwise.louisville.edu) or [bajone01@louisville.edu](mailto:bajone01@louisville.edu). If you have any questions, please feel free to contact us at 852-6602.

Thank you for your assistance.

## REQUEST FOR EMPLOYMENT AUTHORIZATION

<b>Name:</b> _____		
<b>Family</b>	<b>First</b>	<b>Middle</b>
<b>Phone Number:</b> (____) _____		<b>Date of Birth:</b> ____/____/____
		<b>Month                      Date                      Year</b>
<b>Major Field of Study:</b> _____		<b>Level of Education Currently Completing:</b> _____
<b>Graduation Date:</b> _____		<b>University Email Address:</b> _____
<b>If you completing a dissertation or thesis, what will be your defense date?</b> _____		<b>Personal Email Address:</b> _____

**For OPT Applicants (Graduate Students):** If you have completed all coursework, but have not graduated, you must register for residency or candidacy each spring and fall semesters. This must be done before the last date to register each term.

**Please indicate the semester all coursework completed:** \_\_\_\_\_

<b>INDICATE THE TYPE OF OFF CAMPUS EMPLOYMENT AUTHORIZATION REQUESTED</b>	
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Optional Practical Training (OPT)</b> <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Pre-Completion Optional Practical Training</b> <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Post-Completion Optional Practical Training</b> <input type="checkbox"/> <b>STEM Extension Optional Practical Training</b> <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Curricular Practical Training (CPT)</b> <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Economic Hardship</b>	
<b>Are you requesting:</b>	
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Part Time (1-20 hours per week)</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Full Time (more than 20 hours per week)</b>
<b>REQUESTED BEGIN DATE:</b> _____	
<b>REQUESTED END DATE:</b> _____	

<b>LIST ALL PERIODS OF PREVIOUSLY AUTHORIZED OFF CAMPUS EMPLOYMENT</b>			
<b>CURRICULAR PRACTICAL TRAINING</b>		<b>OPTIONAL PRACTICAL TRAINING</b>	
<b>DATES (FROM - TO)</b>	<b>FT or PT</b>	<b>DATES (FROM-TO)</b>	<b>FT or PT</b>

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Signature**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Date**