



CPT APPLICATION PACKET

Updated October 2011

What is Curricular Practical Training (CPT)?

“...Curricular practical training is defined to be 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.” [8 CFR 214.2(f)(10)(i)]

Curricular Practical Training is **not** a means of simply gaining employment eligibility or a stepping stone to be able to work until Optional Practical Training begins.

Who is eligible for CPT?

Students who are in F-1 status and have been enrolled full-time at the University of Iowa for at least one full academic year in the current degree program (unless the internship is *required* by the program of study) are eligible for Curricular Practical Training before completion of all semester hours required for the degree. CPT can be done during the regular academic year or during the summer or winter break.

Who is not eligible for CPT?

1. Students who have received a program extension to extend the end date on the I-20; the OISS advisor will need to discuss the nature of your program extension to determine whether CPT will further delay your completion of studies.
2. After completion of all semester hours required for a degree. There are **only four exceptions**:
 - a. an unusual opportunity of **short duration**, such as a weekend performance in a symphony orchestra or one-day participation in a workshop or research study; *OR*
 - b. the internship is **required** by the program of study as documented by information published in the UI General Catalog, department catalogs, etc.; *OR*
 - c. the internship will contribute **directly** to the student's thesis or dissertation (ex.: data gained through internship is used in thesis); *OR*
 - d. the student is a **PhD candidate who is ABD** and who is registered for PhD Continuous Registration, in which case may be eligible for CPT following completion of all required semester hours but prior to submitting the first deposit of the thesis in the Graduate College.
3. After graduation or completion of a course of study.
4. While enrolled in a Professional Improvement or Non-Degree course of study.
5. Based on a course of study for a Certificate or Minor degree.
6. After applying for OPT.
7. After resuming studies following a period of OPT, unless starting a new degree program and the established curriculum requires immediate participation in CPT; otherwise the student entering a new degree program after OPT will be eligible for CPT after one academic year in the new program of study.
8. After returning to finish the current degree program following completion of OPT.
9. Anyone who has fallen out of status for any reason, including not maintaining full-time registration or working without proper authorization.

When can I apply and when can I begin CPT?

You are eligible to *apply* up to 90 days before the end of your first year of study. The actual CPT employment cannot *begin* until the first academic year is complete. You **CANNOT** begin to work *before* you obtain your CPT authorization from the OISS or continue to work *after* your authorization expires or you graduate. If you do, you will be engaged in unlawful employment (i.e., you will be “working illegally”). Generally, it is best to apply for CPT authorization 1-4 weeks prior to the start of employment. When you apply, you must be able to demonstrate you will continue to work towards your degree. Therefore, you should be able to demonstrate you are registered and continuing to make academic progress for the academic term in which you will be on CPT. For example, if you are applying during the fall semester for CPT with a Spring semester start date, you should be registered in classes for the Spring semester. The only exception to this policy is for CPT taking place in the summer, during which enrollment is generally not required for international students.

Do I need to apply to the USCIS for CPT authorization?

No. You do not need to apply to the USCIS. In fact, only the OISS can authorize CPT for eligible UI students.

When can I begin my CPT employment?

You may begin working immediately after you receive your I-20 authorizing you for CPT from the OISS, and as soon as the start date requested on the I-20 arrives. **DO NOT** begin your employment before you receive the CPT authorization from OISS, or you will be working illegally!

What if I want to do CPT for more than one semester?

The OISS will require you to renew your CPT application each semester. This means you must plan in advance to renew your authorization before your current semester’s authorization expires if you wish to continue working. Remember, you must also be able to demonstrate you are registered and continuing to make academic progress for the future semester at the time of application, unless you will be applying to extend your CPT into the summer.

Will I be eligible to extend my I-20 if I do full-time CPT?

In most cases, no. While you may be eligible to be approved for full-time CPT, you are still expected to be making normal progress on your degree. Unless your CPT is required by your program, OISS will not be willing to extend an I-20 if a student did one semester or more of full-time CPT and then cannot graduate on time. If you believe you may find yourself in this situation, please talk to an OISS advisor before applying for full-time CPT.

Do I have to be registered when I am participating in CPT?

Yes, you must always be registered as a student at the University of Iowa. If you are participating in part-time CPT, you must maintain full-time enrollment (12 s.h. for undergraduates or 9 s.h. for graduate students, or 6 s.h. for grad students with assistantships of 25%-time or greater). If you are participating in full-time CPT (more than 20 hours/week), **graduate students** must be registered for at least 0-2 s.h. through your academic department (signing up for the Cooperative Education internship alone does not satisfy this requirement). **Undergraduate students** must still be registered for 12 s.h. while doing full-time CPT.

What is the difference between Optional Practical Training (OPT) and CPT?

OPT permits employment *after* completion of a course of study. You don't need a job offer to apply for OPT. There is no time limit to CPT, while full-time OPT is limited to one year. It is possible to do part-time OPT while still in the middle of a program of study, but most students are also eligible for CPT so it is very rare for students to apply for OPT before they complete their required semester hours.

If I do CPT, can I still do OPT later?

Yes, as long as you do not engage in *full-time CPT (that is, more than 20 hours/week) for a cumulative total of 12 months*. Part-time CPT (20 hours or less per week) has no impact on subsequent eligibility for OPT, even if you work for more than a year.

Can I change employers if I have CPT authorization? Can I work full-time instead of part-time, or vice-versa?

Yes, but only with prior authorization from OISS. If you change employers, or if you change from part-time to full-time employment, you **MUST** re-apply for a new CPT authorization. You cannot make the change until you have obtained a new CPT authorization I-20, or you will be working without authorization (i.e., "working illegally"). If you change from full-time to part-time employment, you *should* let OISS know so that your employment will not affect your eligibility for OPT (see previous question).

Am I eligible for CPT if I am or ever have been a part-time student?

If you have ever been enrolled as a part-time student, you must have an OISS "Full-Time Equivalency Form" on file for the semester(s) you were under-enrolled. Otherwise, CPT cannot be authorized.

If I have an internship or other work opportunity which is unpaid, do I still need CPT authorization?

Yes, if the internship, work, or volunteer opportunity is related to your major field of study, you should still apply for CPT authorization even if you will not receive payment. You are strongly encouraged to apply for CPT authorization prior to beginning the volunteer opportunity.

Can I travel outside the USA if I have been authorized for CPT?

Yes. For further information on traveling outside the USA and carrying proper documentation, please review our travel information packet at <http://international.uiowa.edu/oiss/documents/Travel-Information-Packet.pdf>

If I am authorized for CPT employment and I decide not to use it, can I file another CPT application later?

Yes, unless you are ineligible due to one of the factors listed previously in this packet. However, please ask OISS to notify the USCIS of the cancellation of your CPT as soon as you know you will not use the entire period authorized.

Required CPT Application Materials:

1. Completed Student Eligibility verification form, available in this packet
2. Completed Academic Advisor Verification form, available in this packet (*exception MBA and Engineering Students*)
3. Job offer letter, which must include all of the following information: be on **letterhead**, contain your employer's **name and full address** and specifies an **EXACT** future **start date** of employment and the **number of hours** per week you will work (*Exception MBA/Engineering Students ONLY if your coop ed forms list the complete employer address, including zip code*)
4. Cooperative Education Registration
 - a. College of Engineering Students—Apply with Career Services office, 3124 SC
 - b. MBA students—Apply with Career Services office, C432PC (you will find the online internship application form on your simplicity homepage)
 - c. All other programs of study—Career Center website <http://www.careers.uiowa.edu/hireahawk/>
 - i. Follow the instructions on this website to list your internship information with the Career Center. Be sure to fill in all required information and SAVE it. Make sure this is done before you visit an OISS advisor. Please note that a one-time fee of \$32 will be applied to your U-Bill by the Career Center to do the internship. Registering the internship is required and satisfies federal government conditions for CPT.
 - ii. When the OISS advisor approves your CPT, they will indicate the approval on the Career Center site.
 - iii. If your internship is for 10 or more hours per week and will last at least 10 weeks during the fall or spring or 8 weeks during the summer, the Career Center will then send you a department and course number. You MUST log on to ISIS to then register this internship so it appears on your transcript.
 - iv. If your internship is for less than 10 hours/week or for short duration, no department and course number will be sent to you by the Career Center.
5. Note: If you are a **graduate student with a 50% assistantship requesting permission to work more than 20 hours/week** on campus during the fall or spring semester at another assistantship position, you must first receive permission from the Graduate College to do so.
 - a. Meet with your academic advisor to request a recommendation letter or email, addressed to Dean Berkowitz, supporting your request to work more than 50%.
 - b. Have the letter mailed or emailed to Dan Berkowitz, Associate Dean, Graduate College, 205 Gilmore Hall or dan-berkowitz@uiowa.edu. Dean Berkowitz will review the recommendation letter based on the following criteria as stated by the academic advisor:
 - i. the additional position has more than a monetary benefit
 - ii. the position won't interfere with progress towards the degree
 - iii. the student is making good progress towards degree completion
 - d. If the Graduate College denies the request, you will not receive CPT authorization from OISS.
 - e. If the Graduate College approves the request, bring a copy of the approval email or letter to OISS along with the rest of the CPT application material listed.

Student Eligibility for CPT Verification Form

To Be Completed By Student:

Family Name: _____ First Name: _____

Student ID #: _____

Major: _____ Degree (BA, MA, PhD, etc.): _____

UI program start date: _____ Anticipated graduation date: _____

Will the CPT cause you to delay graduation or request an extension of your I-20? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Have you ever received an I-20 extension in the past? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Requested Start Date for CPT: _____ Requested End Date for CPT: _____

OISS will not issue retroactive CPT authorization. You **must** have authorization from OISS **before** you start working

How many hours/week will you work? _____

Have you been authorized for CPT in the past? ☐ Yes ☐ No

If you are a graduate student and you are applying for CPT in order to work more than 20 hours/week on campus, have you applied for and received permission from the Graduate College?

☐ No ☐ Yes (please bring a copy of the approval email or letter)

Have you registered your internship with the appropriate Career Center? ☐ Yes ☐ No

By signing below, you agree that:

I have read the information presented in the CPT Application Packet and in items 1-5 above. I certify that the information presented by me in this application is complete and correct to the best of my knowledge. I understand that it is my responsibility to register for Cooperative Education or receive credit for the internship. I am aware that once I have completed all semester hours required for my degree, I am no longer eligible for CPT, and I attest that I have not/will not take any actions to delay my graduation or delay completion of my required semester hours. I understand that if I request part-time CPT during the fall or spring semesters (20 hours/week or less) I must register for a full-time courseload. I understand if I request full-time CPT during the fall or spring semesters (more than 20 hours/week), I attest that the full-time employment will not impede or delay the progress of my academic program.

For PhD candidates who are ABD: I understand that I am allowed a maximum of 12 months CPT eligibility following completion of my required semester hours, that I must be registered for PhD Continuous Registration as well as Cooperative Education, that I must continue to make normal progress on my dissertation, and I attest that I am not delaying my graduation by participating in this Curricular Practical Training.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Academic Advisor CPT Eligibility Verification Form

To the Academic Advisor:

This information is used solely by OISS to assist us in determining whether this student is eligible for Curricular Practical Training authorization as provided by U.S. immigration law. CPT provides work authorization for employment that is an **“integral” part of a student’s curriculum** and which must be **related to his/her major**.

CPT **must not delay** the student’s completion of studies or completion of semester hours required for the degree.

To Be Completed Only By Academic Advisor or Other Program Faculty:

Student Name: _____

How many semester hours has the student completed? _____

How many semesters hours is the student enrolled in currently? _____

How many semester hours are **required** for a student to earn this degree? _____

After this current semester, how many semester hours is the student **required** to take before eligible to earn the degree (not counting Continuous/Post-Comp registration or independent study/research credit beyond the number of semester hours required)? _____

Is this internship **required** by the program of study in which the student is involved, as demonstrated by publication in a UI General Catalog or other departmental document?:

- ☐ Yes – we now have sufficient information to process the CPT application, thank you.
☐ No – please proceed to the next question. ↓

Is this internship an integral part of the program of study (i.e. related to the student’s current area of study)?

- ☐ No – stop here; student not eligible for CPT.
☐ Yes – please proceed to the next question. ↓

Will this internship prevent the student from making normal progress in his/her degree program?

- ☐ Yes – stop here; student not eligible for CPT.
☐ No – please proceed to the next question. ↓

Will participation in the internship/employment cause the student to delay graduation?

- ☐ Yes – stop here; student not eligible for CPT.
☐ No – please proceed to the next question. ↓

Will research conducted during the internship, or data gathered during the internship, be used in the student’s thesis/dissertation?

- ☐ Yes – we now have sufficient information to process the CPT application, thank you.
☐ No or Not Applicable– please proceed to the next question. ↓

If a PhD candidate, has student filed the first draft of the thesis with the Graduate College?

- ☐ Yes – stop here; student not eligible for CPT.
☐ No or Not Applicable – we now have sufficient information to process the CPT application, thank you.

Faculty Name: _____ Date: _____

Signature: _____ Email: _____

TAX INFORMATION TO SHARE WITH YOUR EMPLOYER

March 2008

Employers may legally hire students in F-1 visa status for academically-related employment when they receive either Curricular Practical Training (CPT) or Optional Practical Training (OPT).

TYPES OF EMPLOYMENT AUTHORIZATION

CPT	In most cases, international students in F-1 status pursuing degrees at The UI are eligible for internships or other types of work experience in their fields of study. This permission is granted by the OISS and submitted to SEVIS, the immigration service's informational database.
OPT	Following graduation or completion of coursework, most students in F-1 status are eligible to accept up to 12 months of employment for "optional practical training" experience. This authorization is granted by U.S. Citizenship & Immigration Services. OPT is an extension of F-1 status that allows for a period of work.

VERIFYING EMPLOYMENT ELIGIBILITY

Employers must ensure that all students have the proper work authorization.

CPT	A SEVIS I-20 issued by The UI with the employment authorization (employer name, address, dates of validity) listed on Page 3.
OPT	An Employment Authorization Document issued by U.S. CIS, also known as I-688B. Note the expiration date of employment listed on the small, laminated card. OPT is NOT renewable.

TAXES

Students who have been in the U.S. less than 5 years (and are therefore nonresidents for tax purposes) and who are on practical training off-campus are not subject to any FICA (social security) and Medicare withholdings. The mechanism for the exemptions are found under Internal Revenue Code 3121 (b)(19) and is available to persons in F-1 immigration status. It is a blanket exemption with the only qualification being that the person be a nonresident for tax purposes and that the work is authorized (CPT, OPT). IRS Publication 519 is a good resource, specifically pages 44 and 45.

Though F-1 students working off campus are exempt from FICA, they are subject to the higher federal (and state) withholding for nonresident aliens.

Since it is cumbersome to request a refund of taxes withheld in error, OISS would like to ask employers to make a determination of the student's tax status prior to withholding. In most cases, the student will be a nonresident alien and therefore not subject to the taxes mentioned above.

COMPLETING THE I-9

The employer should mark in Section 1 that he/she is “an alien authorized to work until” (date of expiration of work authorization). The admissions number is the 11 digit number given on both his/her I-20 and the I-94 entry document.

For student on Optional Practical Training, the employer can use the I-688B to complete List A on the I-9. The document title is “Employment Authorization Document”, issuing authority is CIS, document number and expiration can both be found on the front of the card.

For further information, see the U.S. Department of Justice Handbook for Employers, Publication M-274 available at http://uscis.gov/graphics/lawsregs/handbook/hand_emp.pdf . Page 33 and 34 address practical training.

STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES

It is the responsibility of the student to insure that the job he/she takes on practical training is related to the degree he/she is seeking or has completed at The UI. The student is also responsible for maintaining contact with The UI, as the institution is still responsible for the student’s legal status in the U.S. Under federal immigration law, students have 10 days to report a change of name or address to the UI.

***We welcome questions about the employment of University of Iowa students.
Please do not hesitate to contact us if we can be of any assistance to you.***

**Office of International Students and Scholars
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1111 University Capitol Centre
Iowa City, IA 52242**

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Fax: 319-335-2021

Email: oiiss@uiowa.edu

Web: <http://international.uiowa.edu/oiiss>