

CURRICULAR PRACTICAL TRAINING Messiah College

EXPLANATION

Curricular Practical Training is defined as:

The regulations state that curricular practical training must be “an integral part of an established curriculum.” They define curricular practical training as “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. (8C.F.R. §214.1(f)(10)(i))

In other words, you must be enrolled for a course that requires a work experience. Examples include an Internship or Professional Development Experience that is part of your major and is off-campus.

1. CPT is not meant to facilitate the creation of a special employment opportunity. If the primary goal is practical work experience rather than an academic pursuit, you should apply for Optional Practical Training (OPT).
2. Curricular Practical Training (CPT) is only available to F-1 students who have not graduated and who have been enrolled on a full-time basis for one full academic year (i.e. fall and spring.) Full-time is defined as a minimum of 12 credits/semester. If your degree program requires you to engage in off-campus employment before you have met this one full academic year requirement, please see your PDSO/Immigration advisor.
3. In order to determine if you are eligible for CPT, you will need to consult with your academic advisor, the internship office, and the PDSO.
4. Students maybe authorized for CPT only one semester at a time. If two consecutive semesters of CPT are desired, the student must complete a new application 2-3 weeks before the next CPT period begins.
5. As with any work authorization, students may apply for full-time CPT during an annual vacation period and part-time CPT (no more than 20 hours per week) during an academic semester.
6. Students are not eligible for CPT once they have completed all course requirements for the degree (except for the masters or PhD students who will be collecting data for a thesis or dissertation). CPT is not meant to serve as a means to delay graduation; therefore, CPT is not generally allowed in the final term unless the student is also enrolled in required coursework simultaneously.
7. You must have an employment letter and job offer to apply for CPT. The employer and work dates are entered into SEVIS and you are given a new I-20 with work authorization.

8. There is no limitation upon the length of time you may participate in full-time Curricular Practical Training, but if you participate for 12 months or more, you will not be eligible for Optional Practical Training.

REMEMBER: It is illegal to work off-campus under any circumstances until you first receive authorization from a PDSO. If a student has a job offer and meets the eligibility requirements for CPT, authorization is given on a new SEVIS I-20 form, and no additional employment authorization document from US Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) is required,

APPLICATION PROCESS

Complete this process as soon as you receive a job offer or at least 1 week before your expected start date.

1. Register (i.e. for classes) for either an Internship or a Professional Development Experience.
2. Work with the internship office to secure employment (if you do not already have an offer).
3. Once you are registered and you have completed all of the documents at the Internship Center, schedule an appointment with the PDSO and bring the following documents:
 - Valid passport
 - Form I-20
 - A signed form from the Internship Office indicating that you have met the requirements for taking the internship course (including approval from the academic advisor)
 - Original offer letter from the employer that includes the following information:
 - number of hours per week
 - location of employment
 - beginning and ending dates of employment

NOTE: If any of these details change, new forms must be completed a new authorization must be obtained.

4. The CPT authorization is granted by the PDSO. Note that there may be a one or two day delay in processing a new SEVIS I-20 with the CPT authorization. You may not begin working until you have the new SEVIS I-20 with the CPT authorization. Apply for CPT as early as possible to avoid delay in starting employment.

Note: Work Start Dates and End Dates

Once you have received the authorization from the PDSO, you can begin work no earlier than the date specified on your SEVIS I-20. You must not continue employment beyond the completion date authorized on your I-20 unless you apply for and are granted another period of work permission by the PDSO.

OTHER IMPORTANT INFORMATION

1. **Curricular Practical Training and Eligibility for Optional Practical Training**
If you participate in 12 months or more of full-time CPT you are not eligible to apply for Optional Practical Training. However, if you participate in less than 12 months of CPT, you may still use all 12 months of OPT. Participation in authorized “part-time” CPT does not “add up” and therefore does not affect your eligibility for OPT. Part-time employment is defined as 20 hours or fewer per week.

2. **Employment Eligibility Verification**
When you begin work, you and your employer must complete a form entitled “Employment Eligibility Verification” (Form I-9: <http://www.uscis.gov/files/form/i-9.pdf>), which the employer retains. The I-9 must be updated each time you receive a renewal of your work permission. This form requires you to document your identity and work authorization according to directions on the back of the form. The most convenient combinations of acceptable documentation include:
 - Sevis I-20 with the Curricular Practical Training work authorization
 - Valid passport
 - I-94 card marked for F-1 student status
 - Social Security number

Your employer, who keeps the Form I-9, should make copies of the document you submit and return the originals to you.

3. **Social Security Number**
For payroll purposes, you will need a social security number if you work in the US. If you do not already have a social security number, or if your card is marked “not valid for employment”, take your passport, I-94 Departure Record, Form I-20 showing the CPT authorization and apply for a social security card. Note that your number will remain the same if you already had one, but the notation on the card should change to “employment is valid with authorization”.

4. **Social Security and Other Taxes**
In general, F-1 students who have been in the US fewer than five years are “non-residents for tax purposes” and are exempt from Social Security (FICA) and Medicare taxes (see the Internal Revenue Service Publication 519, “US Tax Guide for Aliens”). However, your earnings are subject to applicable federal, state, and local taxes. Tax returns must be filed on or before April 15 each year for the previous calendar year, which will determine if any of the withheld taxes can be refunded.

5. **Volunteer Internships**
International students in non-immigration status may participate in volunteer internships without work authorization. In order to be eligible, there must be no compensation whatsoever for services rendered. Compensation includes money, lodging, meals, transportation, gift certificates, or other reward for services. Please consult the PDSO before engaging in a volunteer internship.

6. **Resources**
http://www.messiah.edu/admissions/international_students/immigration/