CURRICULAR PRACTICAL TRAINING
For F-1 Students

Curricular Practical Training (CPT) is off-campus employment, internship, or other training experience that is a required or integral part of your curriculum. CPT may be a type of internship or practicum required by your major. CPT is not available for all academic majors. Refer to the USF catalog or consult with your academic advisor regarding internships or practical experience for your degree. Students enrolled in the Intensive English Program (IEP) are not eligible for practical training.

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A. GENERAL REQUIREMENTS FOR CPT

1) You must be lawfully enrolled on a full-time basis for one academic year in order to be eligible to apply for CPT. Exception: Graduate students may begin employment immediately upon the beginning of studies, if required by the academic program.
2) Employment must be required by your degree program OR count toward academic credit for your degree (e.g. internship course offered through your academic department). You may or may not receive academic credit for your work.
3) Employment must be directly related to your major field of study.
4) You must be registered full-time unless it is your final semester of study.
5) GPA of at least 2.0 (undergraduate level) or 3.0 (graduate level)

B. TYPES OF CURRICULAR PRACTICAL TRAINING

1) PART-TIME CPT
   Employment for 20 hours or less per week is considered part-time CPT. 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 part-time CPT.

2) FULL-TIME CPT
   Employment for more than 20 hours per week is considered full-time CPT. You must be enrolled full-time during the academic semester even while on full-time CPT. Please
note that if you participate in full-time CPT for 12 months or more, you will not be eligible for Optional Practical Training (OPT). Otherwise, CPT does not impact your eligibility for OPT.

C. ACTUAL DATE EMPLOYMENT BEGINS AND ENDS

You may not begin work until the ISSS office has received all your application materials and has authorized your CPT. CPT is authorized once the request has been entered in your Student and Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS) record and a new Form I-20 is issued with the employer information and authorized dates of employment noted on Page 3. Note: CPT authorization that is based on a course requirement is authorized on a term-by-term basis and may be extended only if the student will be enrolled in a course in the next term that requires off-campus employment, internship, or other training experience. You may not continue employment beyond the date authorized on your Form I-20 unless you apply for and are granted an extension of your CPT.

Please note that while U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) regulations provide a variety of opportunities for you to be employed during your time in F-1 status, working improperly or without authorization is a serious violation of your status. You should therefore consult with an ISSS advisor before taking up any employment to determine if it qualifies as practical training.

D. APPLICATION PROCEDURES

Please submit the following documents to the ISSS office. An application for CPT is considered incomplete until all the required information has been submitted to the ISSS office. Additional information about the documents is provided below.

1) **Evidence of course enrollment** (i.e., schedule print out or copy of the course drop/add form)

2) **A letter from your prospective employer describing the proposed employment or training** (refer to sample letter on page 3)
   - This letter must contain the following information:
     - Student’s job title
     - Exact dates of employment
     - Detailed description of job duties
     - Number of work hours per week
     - Employer’s address
   - The letter should be an original (no photocopies), on letterhead stationery, and have your employer’s signature.

3) **A letter from your academic advisor** (refer to sample letter on page 4)
This letter must verify your degree program, area of specialization, and date of completion. Your advisor is also requested to state that to the best of his/her knowledge, the proposed employment involves training that is directly related to your major field of study. The letter should be an original (no photocopies), on university letterhead stationery, and have your academic advisor’s signature.

Please note that it takes the ISSS office 6 business days to process any request, so you and your prospective employer will need to plan your anticipated employment start date accordingly. Also, please note that any missing or incomplete documentation may cause additional delays and that CPT authorization cannot be granted retroactively. Once your request for CPT has been processed, ISSS staff will contact you to pick up your new Form I-20 with the CPT authorization.

E. EMPLOYMENT ELIGIBILITY VERIFICATION

When you begin work, you and your employer must complete a form entitled “Employment Eligibility Verification” (Form I-9). The I-9 must be updated each time you receive a renewal of your work permission.

F. SOCIAL SECURITY AND OTHER TAXES

In general, F-1 students who have been in the United States less than five years are exempt from Social Security and Medicare (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 each year, which will determine if any of the withheld taxes can be refunded.
SAMPLE LETTER FROM EMPLOYER
(For use with Curricular Practical Training)

* Please note: Letter should be printed on letterhead that includes the employer’s address.

(Date)

United States Department of Homeland Security
United States Citizenship and Immigration Services

To Whom It May Concern:

This letter is written in support of the application for \textit{(part-time/full-time)}\textsuperscript{1} Curricular Practical Training of \textit{(name of student)}.

\textit{(Name of student)} will be working as a \textit{(student's job title)} at \textit{(name of company)} beginning on \textit{(date employment will begin)}\textsuperscript{2}. We expect to continue to employ \textit{(name of student)} through \textit{(date employment is expected to terminate)}. \textit{(Name of student)}’s duties will include \textit{(provide a detailed description of the duties)}.

\textit{(Name of company)} therefore requests that the application of \textit{(name of student)} for Curricular Practical Training authorization be granted by the University of San Francisco’s International Student and Scholar Services (ISSS) office.

Sincerely,

\textit{(Name and Title of Employer)}
\textit{(Name of Company)}

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\textsuperscript{1} Part-time employment is 20 hours or less a week. Full-time employment is anything over 20 hours a week.

\textsuperscript{2} The student cannot legally begin work in the U.S. until the request has been authorized by the ISSS office at the University of San Francisco (USF). Therefore, to allow for processing time, the employment/training start date indicated should be at least six business days from the date the student plans to submit his/her complete request for CPT to the ISSS office.
SAMPLE LETTER FROM ACADEMIC ADVISOR  
(For use with Curricular Practical Training)

* Please note: Letter should be printed on university letterhead. Please make sure that dates of practical training requested in this letter match dates on the prospective employer’s letter. If the Curricular Practical Training (CPT) is based on a USF course requirement, the dates of the requested practical training cannot exceed the date of the academic term in which the student will be registered for the course.

(Date)

United States Department of Homeland Security
United States Citizenship and Immigration and Services

To Whom It May Concern:

This letter is written in support of the application for curricular practical training of (name of student), who will receive (type of degree and major) from the University of San Francisco on (last day of final exams, last day of all course work or thesis).

(Name of student) is applying to the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services for permission to accept Curricular Practical Training for a period of (state length of practical training period). (Name of student) would like to gain valuable experience in American methods of (student’s field of study) and has secured an offer of employment from (name of company) as a (student’s job title).

Choose one of the following statements as appropriate:

1) The (level) degree program requires the completion of (# of work hours per week) for (# of months) of this type of practical training in order to fulfill degree and curriculum requirements for a student majoring in (major).

2) (Name of student) is/will be enrolled in (course title and course number) which requires the completion of (# of work hours per week) for (# of months) of this type of practical training in order to fulfill curriculum requirements for this course.

3) This type of practical training for (# of work hours per week) for (# of months) is part of a special co-operative educational program between USF and (Corporation), which needs to be completed by the student to fulfill curriculum requirements for the (level) degree program in (major).

(Name of student) is registered as a full-time student at the University of San Francisco and is in good academic standing.

I therefore hope that you will grant (his/her) request for practical training.

Sincerely,

(Name and Title of Academic Advisor)