

WHAT IS CURRICULAR PRACTICAL TRAINING (CPT)?

The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) defines [Curricular Practical Training](#) as alternative work/study, internship, cooperative education, or another type of required practicum that a sponsoring employer offers through cooperative agreements with your college or university. CPT **must** be integral to the degree program and an established curriculum within a school. Complex rules apply to CPT; the training opportunity **must** comply with both federal regulations and school policies regarding internships and experiential learning.

- CPT authorization is required **only** when the training is **inside the U.S.** (e.g., a summer internship in a student's [home country](#) does **not** require CPT authorization or qualify for CPT).
- CPT can be approved for a student's final semester **only** if they are enrolled full-time or have an approved reduced course load (RCL).
- CPT is **NOT** a way for students to earn money while attending school, to help secure a job after graduation, or to start OPT early. It will not be approved if it is not applicable to an experiential training/learning opportunity.
- CPT **CANNOT** be used as a reason for a program extension, and students with the approved program extensions are ineligible to be considered for CPT. It is recommended to complete program requirements and apply for [post-OPT](#).
- CPT **CANNOT** be approved for students that have completed all program requirements for their degree and delay the completion of the academic program.

CPT CRITERIA

REQUIRED COURSES: Students that maintain their academic and F-1 status, meet all criteria, and obtain approval from your Faculty Adviser or the Vice Provost of Academic Affairs (or designees) will be considered for CPT approval for an off-campus internship. **All program pre/ co-requisites must be successfully completed with a passing grade before CPT will be considered.**

Students must be eligible to enroll in one of the following courses, as applicable to their program and curriculum requirements.

- **EGN 5950** (Engineering Majors only)
- **IDS 5950** (Computer Science Majors only)

TERMS CPT CAN BE USED: CPT can be approved for the fall, spring, or summer semesters. While full-time enrollment is required for fall and spring, the [summer semesters do not](#). CPT approved for summer semesters **requires a full-time internship** and enrollment in the required course, but **not** full-time enrollment. **Full-time CPT is approved for the summer semesters only.**

CPT EXTENSIONS: Students may request one extension **after** completing the initial CPT internship if the internship will be with the **same employer and completed consecutively** and supporting evidence verifies the extension is essential to the research for the student's project or thesis. Requires approval of Department Chair and VP of Academic Affairs.

CPT Extensions require students to be [re-enrolled](#) into the previous course utilized for CPT and are responsible for any costs associated with the CPT extension that is owed to the university unless otherwise noted. Students that participate in **more** than 365 days of **full-time** CPT are **ineligible** for OPT (optional practical training) at the same degree level.

PART-TIME vs. FULL-TIME CPT: DSOs will authorize **up to 12 months** of CPT for students who are eligible, but students **must** meet CPT extension criteria. Students that participate in **more** than 365 days of **full-time** CPT are **ineligible** for OPT.

UNPAID INTERNSHIPS vs. VOLUNTEERING:

There is a difference between volunteering and an unpaid internship. F-1 students engaging in an unpaid internship off-campus **MUST** utilize and be eligible for CPT, Pre-Completion OPT Training, or Academic Training (J-1 students). If you are uncertain if an internship is considered unpaid employment or a form of community volunteering, **please contact your DSO**, to ensure you do not violate the terms of your F-1 visa.

- I. **Volunteering** refers to donating time to an organization whose **primary purpose is charitable or humanitarian in nature**, without remuneration or any other type of compensation, and the activity is **unrelated** to the student's field of study or intended profession (e.g., donating time with the American Red Cross, working in a homeless shelter).
 - o F-1 students are authorized to engage in volunteer work as long as it **meets the criteria** for performing civically charitable, or humanitarian reasons, without promise expectation or receipt of compensation.
 - o Students **meeting** this requirement do **not** require CPT authorization but **must** provide a statement from the organization verifying the volunteer position and expectations (**all** criteria must be met for approval).
- II. **Unpaid internships** do **not** typically qualify as "volunteer" work. Internships, both paid and unpaid, are primarily offered by the private sector and related to the intern's field of study. [The U.S. Department of Labor](#) has guidelines for unpaid internships; although the internship may include actual operation on the facilities of the employer, it must be similar to training given in an educational environment and be an experiential learning opportunity for the intern.

EMPLOYER REQUIREMENTS:

Employer offer letters are **required** and crucial to authorizing CPT. Letters **must** include all required information to prevent CPT processing delays. **Graduate students may not have more than one CPT employer and retroactive authorization is not permitted.**

Employer offer letter(s) MUST include (see CPT Employer Offer Letter) :

1. Name of employer and physical address where the student will work (if work performed remotely, it **must** be stated in the offer letter and include the company's physical location)
2. Supervisor name, title, direct phone number, and email address
3. Start and end dates of employment in the **MM/DD/YYYY** format (must align with start/end dates of the semester)
4. Job title and description of job duties (must directly relate to student's field of study/major)
5. Number of hours to be worked per week and rate of pay (if unpaid or volunteering, offer letter **must** meet the described requirements)
6. Signed statement employer will be cooperating with the university in achieving curricular purposes of CPT and verify how the work is essential to the research for student's project or thesis.

HOW TO APPLY FOR CPT

1. Obtain Offer Letter and Complete CPT Request
2. Obtain Faculty Adviser, Academic Department Chair, or Vice Provost of Academic Affairs Approval
3. Complete CPT Request online via [CANVAS](#) course and submit all required items to [DSO](#)