UNIVERSITY REGISTRAR
FLORIDA POLYTECHNIC UNIVERSITY

F-1 Graduate Curricular Practical Training (CPT) Guidelines

WHAT IS CURRICULAR PRACTICAL TRAINING (CPT)?

The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) defines Curricular Practical Training as alternative work/study, internship, cooperative education, or other required practicum that a sponsoring employer offers through cooperative agreements with your school.

- CPT **must** be related directly to the student's field of study and be a part of the school's established curriculum.
- Students must meet the criteria for CPT and obtain internship offer letter before CPT may be authorized and an updated I-20 can be issued with CPT endorsement.
- CPT can be approved for a student's final semester only if they are enrolled full-time (**Exception**: students with 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 does apply to an experiential training/learning opportunity.
- CPT **CANNOT** be used as a reason for a program extension.
- Students with approved program extensions are **ineligible** to be considered for CPT.
- CPT **CANNOT** be approved for students that have completed all program requirements for their degree and are seeking to delay the completion of their academic program.

CPT CRITERIA

EGN 5911 RESEARCH: Students must be enrolled in a course that requires alternative work/study, an internship, cooperative education, or other required practicum.

- At Florida Poly, there is one course that meets this requirement for graduate students – EGN 5911.
- F-1 students must meet prerequisites for this course to apply for CPT, if not, they must obtain Course Enrollment Permission from the applicable faculty member.

ENROLLMENT: Students must be enrolled for one academic year (one Fall and Spring term) to participate in CPT.

- **Transfer students** who have completed one academic at their previous school, or one academic year between their previous school and Florida Poly, may meet the one academic year requirement this way.

PART-TIME vs. FULL-TIME CPT: DSOs will authorize up to 12 months of CPT (per request) for eligible students.

- Students who participate in over 12 months of **full-time** CPT are **ineligible** for OPT at the same degree level.

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** are not.

CPT EXTENSIONS: Students may request an extension **after** completing their initial CPT internship.

- Students must submit a CPT Request per extension and be re-enrolled into IDS 4941.

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, or Pre-Completion OPT Training. If you are uncertain if an internship is considered unpaid employment or a form of volunteering, **please contact your DSO**, to ensure you do not violate the terms of your F-1 visa.

- **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).
    - 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.
    - 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).
- **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.
    - **If your unpaid internship is related to your field of study, and does not meet the parameters of volunteering, you will still require CPT approval.**

EMPLOYER REQUIREMENTS:

Internships offer letters are required and crucial to authorizing CPT. Letters **must** be on official letterhead, signed and provide all required information. Please see CPT Employment Offer Letter Example.

HOW TO APPLY FOR CPT

Complete Graduate CPT course in CANVAS and obtain CPT Request form upon completion.

1. Obtain internship offer letter (see example).
    - If the offer letter is missing required information, student and employer must complete the Off-Campus Verification form in addition.
2. Submit completed and signed CPT Request signed with offer letter to ISS@floridapoly.edu.
3. Obtain CPT approval on I-20
4. Enroll in EGN 5911.
5. Apply for SSN if you do not already have one.
6. Start CPT internship.