

Curricular Practical Training (CPT) for F-1 Students

Curricular Practical Training (CPT) is temporary work authorization that allows F-1 students to engage in practical experiences that are required as a part of their program. Experiences that require CPT authorization may be paid or unpaid, and includes internships, service-learning or community service related to your major, fieldwork, student teaching, clinicals, or any other work experience that occurs off campus and is a) required for your major and b) awarded academic credit.

Important Notes:

- CPT authorization is required for any work that occurs off-campus and is conducted for academic credit that fulfills graduation requirements for your program. If you are interested in an on-campus internship, you should meet with a DSO to discuss on-campus employment.
- You must be in F-1 status for at least one academic year (two consecutive semesters) before applying for CPT. Exceptions to this requirement will only be approved when an academic program requires the experience within the first year to avoid delaying your graduation.
- You must earn academic credit for the work that you do on CPT. This credit may be only associated with the work experience (for example: internship credit), or it may be a part of a course (for example: volunteer work required for a class in your major).
- CPT may be part time (20 hours per week or less) or full time (more than 20 hours per week).
- There is no limit to how many times you can be authorized for CPT. However, one year or more of full time CPT will make you ineligible for Optional Practical Training (OPT).
- If you are authorized for CPT, this authorization will be entered into SEVIS and you will be issued a new I-20 that includes a note that you are authorized for CPT for the time period indicated.
- CPT must be pre-authorized for each semester in which you are engaged in work that qualifies for CPT.

Is it CPT or not?

These activities are CPT:

- Internships, practicums, clinicals, fieldwork, or student teaching required for your major.
- Internships or practicums that are fulfill graduation requirements and are related to your major (ie: when you can choose either a course or internship credit to meet a requirement for your major)
- Service-learning that occurs off-campus and is required to meet a graduation requirement related to your major (ie: community service hours required for a course in your major).
- Field observations required for your major.

These activities are not CPT:

- Volunteer work in the community can be a great way to meet new people, get to know the Lehigh Valley, and practice your English and communication skills. If you are volunteering for your own interests and benefits, you do not need CPT authorization, but you should talk to a DSO to see if you need work authorization.
- Field trips related or required for a class.

Applying for CPT

To request authorization for CPT, schedule an appointment with International Student Services first.

Please complete the CPT Request Form and submit all required documents to International Students Services at Allen House Room 202 at least 2 weeks before you begin working.