Curricular Practical Training (CPT)

Internship Authorization for F-1 International Students
What Qualifies for CPT?

• The work experience is an *integral part of your degree program*.
• Required internship or practicum and/or an enrollment in a course you receive credit for.
• Internship must be related to your field of study.
• Employment is off-campus, in the U.S.
Eligibility for CPT

• Completion of one academic year of *continuous* full-time enrollment. (3 quarters = 1 year)
• Must be in good standing with immigration when applying and while on CPT.
• Must enroll as a full-time student, with the exception of summer quarter.
• Obtain all *approvals*. 
How much CPT may I use?

• Regulations do not limit the amount of CPT used, however, accumulating 12 months or more of full-time CPT makes you ineligible to apply for OPT.

• Part-time CPT does not count against eligibility for OPT.

• Generally, CPT is authorized on a part-time basis during the academic year. Part time = 20 hours or less.

• The number of internships you may have depends on your program specifications. Check with your department for details regarding maximum units and/or enrollment for the internship course.
Unpaid Internships?

- Position must truly be voluntary.
- CPT is recommended for unpaid internships.
- Monetary compensation is not the only consideration; you may not accept food, clothing, gas/mileage funds, etc. if you are not authorized for employment.
- Consider the possibility of a stipend, gift, or future employment opportunity.
- **When in doubt, ask!**
How do I apply for CPT?

**STEP 1:**

Obtain an internship offer letter from your prospective employer on company letterhead, specifying:

– Your job title & responsibilities
– Whether the position is part-time or full-time (Full-time is over 20 hours/week.)
– Dates of the internship
– Location of the internship

*Note: This letter will need to be scanned.*
How do I apply for CPT?

**STEP 2:**

Complete the CPT request form

- After completing the top half of the form, take it to your graduate or academic advisor to discuss the internship opportunity and receive their signature.
- After receiving the advisor’s signature, bring the CPT form to the International Affairs (IA) office.
- Enroll in the determined internship units.
- If you are a graduate student, the IA office will submit your form to the Graduate Division to determine if you have on campus employment that will interfere with your CPT request.
- The IA office will authorize your CPT request and issue an updated I-20.
- You will receive an email once your I-20 is ready.
- Once your new I-20 is issued, you may begin your employment from the authorized start date.
Social Security Number

• If this is your first time working in the U.S., you will also need to apply for a Social Security Number in order to receive compensation.

• Visit local Social Security Administration office with
  – Your passport (passport, visa, admission stamp)
  – I-94 card or print-out
  – CPT I-20

• You will receive a receipt and the original card will be mailed.
CPT Frequently Asked Questions

Can I begin working while I am waiting for approval?

- No. You must be approved for CPT and have your CPT I-20 (indicating dates of authorization) before you begin your internship.

- We cannot back-date your authorization dates, so make sure to apply in a timely manner. It is best to allow at least 3 business days (for undergrad) and 2 weeks (for grad) for processing.

May I change my employer, authorization dates, part-time/full-time status?

- No. You may only work for the employer listed for the specified dates and status once the CPT has been authorized.

- Any changes require a new CPT application, approvals and new CPT I-20.
What do I need to do to renew my CPT?

- If you wish to continue your internship, you must submit a new application. **You cannot continue working without authorization.**
- If you have already been approved for a multi-quarter internship, contact the IA office once you are registered for internship units for the upcoming term. Your I-20 is not automatically updated. **CPT must be authorized each quarter.**

Can I do CPT while I am on Filing Fee Status?

- No, as you must be enrolled in internship units.
- If you are on Filing Fee for spring, you would not be eligible for CPT for the summer.
Important Reminders

• PLAN AHEAD! Timing is not only important for the application process, but also for paying your student fees.

• Make sure to complete all requirements for your internship course to remain in status.

• If your internship is in another location, make sure to update your address with both the International Affairs office and the university when you move and when you return. Also make sure your employer has your current address to ensure you receive your W-2 forms. You will need to complete the appropriate tax forms.
Important Reminders (Cont.)

- **Keep your ORIGINAL I-20 forms.** You should provide a copy to your employer, but you must keep the original. This is only documentation that shows your employment authorization. Always use your most current I-20 form, but keep all originals safe for future reference. You will use this I-20 for all official purposes until a new one is issued.

- **CPT → OPT Transition:** If your employer wishes to hire you in a permanent position, make sure you apply for OPT in a timely manner. OPT applications usually take approximately 90 days for processing by USCIS.
Resources

CPT Process/Immigration Concerns
• Schedule an appointment! 951.827.4113
• Email your questions! internationalstudents@ucr.edu

Internship Enrollment
• Academic Advisor or Graduate Student Affairs Officer

Finding an Internship/Employment Tips
• UCR Career Center!
• Academic Department
Resources (Cont.)

Social Security Administration

www.ssa.gov

Prospective Employer Concerns/Questions:

What Employers Should Know about Hiring International Students

I-9 Resource for Employers