Curricular Practical Training (CPT)

What is CPT?

F-1 regulations define Curricular Practical Training as “alternate work/study, internship, cooperative education, or any other type of required internship or practicum which is offered by sponsoring employers through cooperative agreements with the university.”

An F-1 student must be authorized by International Center to participate in a curricular practical training program. Once approved, you will be issued an I-20 with CPT as work/employment authorization.

Eligibility for CPT

- Currently have lawful F-1 student status
- Have completed at least nine months of full-time study. (Graduate students may begin earlier if their program requires an internship earlier)
- Generally, only part-time CPT (20 hours a week or fewer) is granted during the required Fall and/or Spring semesters since you are a full time student (12 credits or more for undergraduate and six credits or more for graduate). Full-time CPT may be possible during summer. There are potential exceptions during the semester -- See “Academic Department Guidance” (back side of this page).
- Have an internship or practicum credit that you must complete to earn your degree program that counts towards your major/program of study. You must work with your advisor to make sure the credits will apply to your program of study/degree requirements or is a Cooperate education or contractual relationship with MSU (e.g., Co-op programs). Electives viewed as unnecessary courses that would prolong the degree attainment are not appropriate for applying for CPT.

The Application Procedures

Information and the CPT forms are on Kearney International Center website: http://www.mnsu.edu/international/f1employment.html. Please provide and complete the following:

- Curricular Practical Training Advisor Verification Form completed and signed by your advisor, chair, and/or internship coordinator (depends on major and system for internship).
- Offer letter from the company/institution where you will work; including the name of the company, location (city and state) and a brief job description, dates of employment and number of work hours per week.
- Register for the appropriate course and course credits as recommended on the CPT Advisor Verification Form.

Once you completed the above, you may either drop off the forms, scan, or send to the Kearney International Center. If you have questions, you may set up an appointment with a Kearney International Center Advisor.

Note: You cannot start a paid internship without a prior approval from the Kearney International Center. If you do, it is considered to be unauthorized employment and will jeopardize your status. Please provide the Kearney International Center three to five working days to complete your CPT application.
FAQs

- **For how long can CPT be authorized?**
  
  There is no limit to the total (aggregate) time CPT may be authorized. However, there are limitations to consider. First, your department may have limits on the number of credits approved for internship experiences. Second, the CPT authorization is limited to the semester or summer term that the form and course registration is specified. Therefore, even if the internship for a longer duration, the CPT may be for only one term and you may need to receive another CPT advisor form with additional course credit to extend that internship experience. Remember that CPT is intended to be an “integral part” of the student’s program so you need to ensure your internship is approved by the department and that you register each term for that credit. Watch your end date - do not work beyond what you are authorized.

- **If I participate in Curricular Practical Training, will I lose my opportunity for Optional Practical Training (OPT) after I graduate?**
  
  If you have been authorized (in total) on year or more full-time Curricular Practical Training, you will not have any remaining OPT eligibility. Full-time CPT that has not met (or surpassed) the one year mark does not affect your eligibility. Part-time does not impact OPT.

- **How will my employer know I am authorized to work under Curricular Practical Training?**
  
  The I-20 (page 3) indicates the dates you are authorized to work for that employer. Employers are to verify legal employment; CPT is explained in the Employer’s Handbook by USCIS/Immigration page 18: [http://www.uscis.gov/files/form/m-274.pdf](http://www.uscis.gov/files/form/m-274.pdf)

- **Do I need CPT if my internship is unpaid?**
  
  No, however, if there is any compensation at all, the Kearney International Center can authorize the CPT to cover your experience in the event you would be paid or reimbursed for expenses.

CPT Academic Department Guidance

The Kearney International Center will work each academic department to ensure that paid internship experiences comply with the immigration regulations cited for CPT. Note a few guidelines within MSU to ensure consistency with internships:

- Internship credits need to go toward the degree program. The internship credits cannot prolong the degree or be simply “add on” extra courses.

- Internship in each semester would require of some credit. For example, summer internship requires registration for summer. If the internship continues in fall semester, another registration of credit for that experience is needed. Co-op experience with a contract established between MSU and that internship site is the only exception.

- Part-time internships (20 hours a week or less) can be authorized for Fall or Spring semester if the student has full-time coursework needed yet to complete the degree requirements. Full-time internships during the academic term are possible if the student has completed all course requirements or will complete all course requirements with only one course in addition to the registered internship. The student should also have a Reduced Course Load (RCL) form on file if course load is less than full time during Fall or Spring semester. Full or part-time internships are possible during summer term. Other department questions should be directed to the International Center.

- For summer internship, no other class registration is required.

- Graduate students may have an internship experience that would be directly related to the thesis or Alternate Plan Paper (APP). This type of course credit can be justified for CPT, but written confirmation is needed to ensure the relationship between the employment and actual research paper or project.
Curricular Practical Training (CPT) - Academic Advisor Verification Form

Please Print or Write Clearly

Student’s Name: ____________________________ Tech ID: ________________

First            Middle           Last

Major: ________________________________    □ Undergraduate □ Graduate

Dates of Planned Internship: ___/___/____ to ___/___/____  Hours per Week: ______

Graduation/Degree Completion Date (expected): ____________________________

According to the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, the proposed internship must be an integral part of the established curriculum in order to be authorized Curricular Practical Training (CPT). Please contact the Kearney International Center to authorize CPT. At least one of the following criteria must be met. Please check the appropriate item for the student’s proposal.

□ Major Requirement - The student is required to be engaged in the proposed internship by his/her degree program. This requirement is published in the Minnesota State University, Mankato catalog. This internship cannot be used to fulfill open elective requirements.

Number of Internship Credits: __________  Course Number: __________

□ Optional Course Major Requirement - The proposed internship is required by a specific course as an option of his/her degree/major requirements. The course must be listed in the MSU Course Catalog and the advisor’s signature confirms that the internship course is considered an integral part of the student’s program.

Number of Internship Credits: __________  Course Number: __________

Name of Faculty Teaching Course: ____________________________

□ Cooperative Education Requirement - The proposed internship is facilitated through a cooperative education agreement/contract between Minnesota State University, Mankato and the proposed company (i.e., registered in course 398); and is also an integral part of the degree program.

By signing below, I indicate that the aforementioned information is true based on my best knowledge and information.

(Academic Advisor/Department Chair Signature)  (Internship Coordinator Signature, if applicable)

Date Signed: ___/___/____  Date Signed: ___/___/____

Does your department/college have an hours worked-credit hours equivalency? ____________________________

(For example: 75 hours of internship work=1 hour of internship credit)

If the department has no equivalency established, the Kearney International Center will use the following standard: 80 hours of work= 1 internship credit

PLEASE NOTE: International students on F-1 (student) status are only authorized to stay in the U.S.A to complete the number of credit hours required by their degree program. International students cannot carry credit hours beyond the number required for their degree program, as published in the Minnesota State University, Mankato catalog.

Staff/Brochures/OPT,CPT, EH instructions/CPT 2013
CPT CHECKLIST – Kearney International Center - Internal Use to process request

STUDENT
_____ Provides original/signed CPT Academic Advisor Verification Form
_____ Provides copy of offer letter
_____ Registers for appropriate internship credit as listed on CPT form

IC STAFF CHECKS
Student is CPT eligible:   _____ Enrolled full time or RCL   _____ No holds   _____ Passport is valid

_____ Check registration for course during term on student’s unofficial transcript or on MSU ISRS enrollment screen – matches CPT adviser form

_____ In F1 status at least 9 months for UG   _____ If student on in-state scholarship, inform about pre-approval for off-campus volunteer hours

IC STAFF UPDATES NEW I-20 ON SEVIS DATABASE

_______ Date recommended for CPT in SEVIS

_______ IC prints I-20 and signs #10 on page 1 of the I-20 and signs page 3 of the I-20

IC FRONT DESK PROCESSES
_____ Paperclip this cover page and all attached documents with the original I-20.

_____ Notify the student to pick up I-20. Make notes below when/how you contacted student. Identify how student wishes to receive the original I-20:

_____ In person: If student comes into office to pick up original I-20, have student sign and date original I-20. Make a copy of the signed I-20 front and back (do not copy middle page). Paperclip the remainder of the documents and put in the file to be scanned.

_____ Authorized representative: If student authorizes another person to pick up the I-20, write the name in comments below. Keep packet together and copy I-20 at the time the authorized representative picks up the I-20 on behalf of the student. Have person authorized sign and date in the comments below (NOT ON THE I-20) that they picked up that I-20. Copy I-20 before representative takes packet. Paperclip copy of I-20 with the remainder of these documents to put in file to be scanned.

_____ Mail: If the student requests to send the original I-20, write address below. Copy I-20 (front and back, do not copy middle page) and paperclip copy of I-20 with the remainder of these documents to put in file to be scanned. Send to address student provided – sign/date when you sent by mail as a record.

_____ E-Ship/Express Mail: If the student signs up for E-ship, send only original I-20. Copy I-20 (front and back, do not copy middle page) and paperclip copy of I-20 with the remainder of these documents to put in file to be scanned. Tracking number can be provided to the student and written below.

COMMENTS/NOTES BELOW:

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