



## Curricular Practical Training

### What is CPT?

The U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) defines Curricular Practical Training (CPT) as alternate work/study programs

- **A required part of the degree program** – If the academic program requires unpaid/paid employment (internship, field experience, student teaching, applied research project-working with a company) in your field of study, you may participate in CPT as long as you are otherwise maintaining lawful F-1 status.
- **An optional but integral part of the degree program** – Paid or unpaid employment (internship, field experience, or student teaching) in your field of study may be considered CPT as long as you are otherwise in valid status.

It is highly recommended that you obtain CPT authorization for unpaid employment as well as paid.

### Am I eligible?

- You must be lawfully enrolled on a full-time basis in F-1 visa status at a USCIS-approved school for **one full academic year** before you will be eligible for CPT. Exceptions exist for graduate students whose programs require immediate curricular practical training.
- CPT is only available if you are in F-1 status *before* completion of your degree program.
- Only part-time CPT during the school year will be approved. Full-time CPT during the summer and winter breaks is also possible, as well as during your final semester before completion of your program. Part-time is anything up to 20 hours per week; full time is anything more than 20 hours per week. Exceptions exist for graduate students.
- The internship is required to be related to your **current field of study**. CPT will not be granted for an internship that is related to any previous degrees you may have earned.
- You are required to register for ENSL-050 International Internship (audit only, no credit, cost \$0) before CPT can be granted (see details on next page).
- **If you engage in full-time CPT for 12 months or longer, you will lose your Optional Practical Training (OPT).** Any amount of part-time CPT does not have any effect on OPT, nor does any amount of full-time CPT less than one year (cumulatively).



### What is the procedure?

- 1) Student finds the internship
- 2) Student submits the following to the Director of International Programs:
  - a. **Letter from academic advisor** explaining that the internship is
    - i. An integral part of an established curriculum and
    - ii. Directly related to the major area of study
  - b. **Letter from employer** stating
    - i. Job title and responsibilities
    - ii. Dates of intended employment
    - iii. Number of hours per week
    - iv. Employer's address and phone number
    - v. Address where the employment will take place
    - vi. Signature of hiring manager or supervisor

**OR**

- c. The Center for **Career Development (CCD) Learning Contract**

(see [http://www.ucwv.edu/ccd/current\\_students.aspx](http://www.ucwv.edu/ccd/current_students.aspx))

- 3) Director of International Programs determines whether or not the internship is a valid situation for the student's academic program
- 4) If the student *IS NOT already receiving academic credit* for the internship, the student registers for **ENSL-050X International Internship** (Audit only, no credit, cost \$0). The student then provides Director of International Programs with evidence of enrollment in internship class.

If the student *IS receiving academic credit* for the internship, the academic advisor must **confirm this in the letter**. There is no need to enroll in ENSL-050X.

- 5) Director of International Programs issues the student an **I-20 with CPT authorization**. The student may only participate in the internship during the dates listed on the I-20.

**Please do not engage in any type of unauthorized internship.** You could put your F-1 status in jeopardy. ASK FIRST before starting a job! Starting to work before your CPT has been approved is **ILLEGAL** and could subject you to deportation or denial of future benefits such as a change of status to H1-B or Permanent Resident.

Remember that the primary purpose of an internship is to gain practical training in your field of study and NOT to make money. CPT is intended to provide practical experience, not an income.