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WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW: INTERNSHIPS AND CURRICULAR PRACTICAL TRAINING

Many academic programs at UIU require students to complete internships in order to graduate or offer courses that require the student to obtain practical experience in the field. These requirements and opportunities give the students invaluable practical experience, but do require additional consideration for international students. International students are required to obtain work authorization prior to beginning any internship. This work authorization is called Curricular Practical Training or CPT. This document seeks to provide UIU departments with basic information regarding CPT.

What is Curricular Practical Training (CPT)?

CPT is defined in *8 C.F.R. 214.2(f)(10)(i)* as a work authorization for an “alternative work/study, internship, cooperative education, or any other type of required internship or practicum that is offered by sponsoring employers through cooperative agreements with the school” and is an “integral part of an established curriculum.” Furthermore, CPT is only available to F-1 students.

Internships: Full-Time vs. Part-Time and Paid vs. Unpaid

- CPT can be authorized as full-time (above 20 hours per week) or part-time (20 hours or less per week).
- CPT can be paid or unpaid internships. Note, CPT does not authorize the student to be paid; it authorizes the student to gain practical experience in their field of study.

CPT Eligibility

Students must meet certain requirements in order to be eligible for CPT. These requirements include but are not limited to:

- Undergraduate students must be in F-1 status for at least 1 full academic year. There is some flexibility for graduate students to begin CPT earlier, but contact the CIE for verification of eligibility.
- Student must be either an undergraduate or a graduate level student. The internship or practical training experience must be related to the student’s field of study and the student must receive credit for the internship or fulfill a program/major requirement.
- Student must continue to maintain full-time enrollment while on an approved CPT. Full-time enrollment is defined as 12 credits per semester for undergraduates and 3 credits per term for graduates.

- **CPT authorization must be received PRIOR to starting any internship or practical training.** Students should plan to submit their CPT request to the CIE at least 1 week prior to their intended start date.

Important Points Regarding CPT

- A student that exceeds 1 year of full-time CPT will lose their eligibility for work authorization post-graduation. A student can be approved for unlimited part-time CPT without affecting eligibility for work authorization post-graduation.
- If a student changes employers or their physical work location, the student must receive approval from their academic advisor and the international student advisor (ISA) prior to beginning with the new employer or at the new location. The approval of any changes must be made in writing to the ISA by the academic advisor.
- If a student wishes to end their internship early, the student must receive approval from their academic advisor. The ISA will need written approval from the academic advisor so that the authorization end date can be shortened on the immigration document.
- Employment without work authorization can have very serious immigration consequences and can require the termination of the student's F-1 status. Therefore, it is very important that the student meet with the ISA prior to pursuing any type of employment or practical experience.

How Does a Student Obtain CPT Authorization?

CPT authorization is processed and approved by the ISA in the CIE. The ISA will not determine whether the internship position will fulfill the academic requirements. The ISA determines whether the internship meets the immigration requirements for CPT authorization based on the information presented on the form.

In order to apply, a student must:

- 1) Obtain a copy of the CPT Packet available at <http://www.uiu.edu/international/iss/forms.html> and complete Part 1 of the form.
- 2) Schedule a meeting with his/her academic advisor. The advisor should determine whether the internship that the student wishes to pursue is appropriate and will fulfill the requirements of the internship course or the program. The advisor must respond to **all questions** in Part 2 and provide the exact start and end dates of the internship.
- 3) Schedule a meeting with his/her site/employment supervisor. The site/employment supervisor must provide all the information requested and list the physical address for the site where the student will physically be working in Part 3.
- 4) Return the CPT form (with all required information and signatures) to the ISA. Within 3 business days, the ISA will make a determination to approve or deny the CPT request.

If the CPT request is approved, a new immigration document with the CPT authorization will be prepared and given to the student.