

F-1 Curricular Practical Training (CPT) Information

The U.S. Department of Homeland Security regulations state that Curricular Practical Training (CPT) must be “an integral part of an established curriculum.” They 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 school.” Thus, CPT for F-1 students is intended to provide work experience in situations where the work serves as an integral part of an established curriculum or in the student’s course of study. It is not simply a blanket work authorization.

Eligibility

The student must have been legally enrolled on a full-time basis for one full academic year before being eligible for CPT. It is available only while the student is in valid F-1 status and before the completion of their program. If the student had a gap in study or a status violation, the one academic year waiting period may need to be recalculated once the student has again obtained valid F-1 status.

Criteria

The Office of International Relations (OIR) can authorize CPT if it can be clearly documented that the proposed training experience meets one of the three conditions below.

- **The training experience is required of all candidates in the program and is necessary for the awarding of the degree.** Included in this category is required workplace experience for an internship or practicum. There are only a few academic programs at UAFS which require a period of off-campus workplace experience for all degree candidates. This requirement must be formally documented in school publications.
- **The training experience will result in the awarding of academic credit.** Included in this category is training for a course specifically designed to award academic credit for a workplace experience. Students must register and complete the CPT-related course during the period of CPT authorization, even in the summer.
- **The training experience must be an integral part of the current program of study.** A department chair, program head, or dean must approve the work experience. Department faculty and/or advising staff must put in place measures to ensure that the experience serves as effective practical training.

If CPT is during a student’s last semester, they must have at least one other remaining degree-required course in their program in addition to the CPT course, unless the CPT course is a degree-required course.

Part-Time vs. Full-Time CPT

Part-Time Training

While classes are in session, the OIR will authorize CPT on a part-time basis, limited to no more than 20 hours per week. If eligible, there is no limitation on the length of time a student may participate in part-time curricular practical training, and it will not count toward the 12 months that eliminate eligibility for OPT. Students must maintain legal F-1 status at all times.

Full-Time Training

Under normal circumstances, the OIR will only authorize full-time CPT during official university breaks and vacation. Full-time CPT allows the student to work more than 20 hours per week. A student during their last semester may be authorized for full-time CPT if the student has been approved for a Reduced Course Load by OIR. There is no limitation upon the length of time a student may participate in full-time CPT. However, if a student participates in 12 months or more of full-time curricular practical training, they will not be eligible for post-completion optional practical training (OPT).



Application and Documentation Requirements

If you are unsure about your eligibility for CPT, you should first meet with an OIR advisor. If applicable, you should register for the CPT course prior to seeing an OIR advisor. To apply for CPT, you must meet with an OIR advisor and bring the following documents with you:

- You must have an offer of employment from an employer offering work that qualifies as curricular practical training. Provide a copy of your official offer letter on company letterhead that is signed by the prospective employer. A photocopy is acceptable. The letter should include the employer's name, address, dates of employment, and job description.
- A CPT Recommendation form and approval letter completed by your academic advisor.
- Proof of registration for CPT-related course if earning academic credit for the training. Note: You must be registered for the CPT-related course in the same semester during which the work will be done (i.e., you must be registered for CPT-related course in the summer if you will be working in the summer.)
- Copies of your current immigration documents: passport (biographical data, photo, and expiration date pages), I-94, and I-20(s).

Authorization Procedures

If you are eligible and have the documentation required for CPT, an OIR advisor will authorize CPT by issuing a new I-20. Processing time is seven (7) business days. You may engage in CPT employment only after you have received the I-20 with your CPT authorization from OIR. This work authorization is valid only for the specific employer, location, time period, and on a part-time or full-time basis as approved and recorded by an OIR advisor as evidenced on your I-20 issued for CPT. You may not continue employment beyond the date authorized unless you apply and are granted an extension of your permission to work from OIR. To do so would be a violation of your non-immigrant student status, and such a violation would jeopardize your ability to remain in the United States.

Social Security Number

Your UAFS Student ID number is not a valid Social Security number. If you do not have a Social Security number, you should apply for one based on the CPT authorization. For more information, please visit the [Social Security Administration webpage](#).

Taxes

In general, F-1 students who have been in the United States for no more than five (5) different calendar years are exempt from Social Security taxes. You should be sure to bring this to the attention of your employer because many employers are not familiar with this provision of the tax laws. Students in F-1 status are subject to all other taxes that may apply, including federal, state, and local. For more information, please consult with a tax professional and/or Publication 519 of the [Internal Revenue Service](#).

Failure to Comply with Regulations

It is your responsibility to comply with all immigration regulations which apply to F-1 students including employment regulations. Working without the proper authorization is a serious violation of your non-immigrant status in the United States. If you fail to comply with your responsibilities, you may not be eligible for benefits normally granted to F-1 students and may jeopardize your stay in the United States. Prior to accepting any employment in the United States, we advise you to consult with an OIR advisor.



UAFS

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

Curricular Practical Training Recommendation and Request Form

Bring this form and required supporting documentation to meet with an OIR advisor.

A. Request to be Completed by Student

Family/Last Name: _____ Given/First Name: _____ Middle Initial: _____

Date of Birth: (month)____(day)____(year)____ UAFS Student ID: @ _____

Phone Number: _____ Email: _____

Are you currently employed on campus? ☐ Yes ☐ No Are you currently employed off campus? ☐ Yes ☐ No

List all periods of previously authorized CPT (indicate full- or part-time; attach a separate sheet if needed):

☐ Full-time CPT ☐ Part-time CPT

From: (month)____(day)____(year)____ To: (month)____(day)____(year)____

☐ Full-time CPT ☐ Part-time CPT

From: (month)____(day)____(year)____ To: (month)____(day)____(year)____

If applicable, I have registered for the course related to this CPT request for the applicable semester and understand that CPT authorization will be voided if I drop the course. If CPT authorization is voided, I understand that I may not be eligible for further F-1 benefits. I have maintained valid immigration status since I began my study at the University of Arkansas - Fort Smith.

Student Signature: _____ Date: _____

Recommendation to be Completed by Academic Advisor or Instructor of Record (not by student)

Student's Major: _____ Degree: ☐ Associate ☐ Bachelor's

Employer's Name: _____

Employer's Address: _____

Student's Position Title: _____ Number of Work Hours per Week: _____

Dates of Employment: From (month)____(day)____(year)____ To: (month)____(day)____(year)____

Description of proposed employment relating to curriculum:

CPT recommendation is based on the following (check only one):

- **The training experience is required of all candidates in the program and is necessary for the awarding of the degree.**

Included in this category is required workplace experience for an internship or practicum. There are only a few academic programs at UAFS which require a period of off-campus workplace experience for all degree candidates. This requirement must be formally documented in school publications.

The training experience will result in the awarding of academic credit. Included in this category is training for a course specifically designed to award academic credit for a workplace experience. Students must register and complete the CPT-related course during the period of CPT authorization, even in the summer.

The training experience is an integral part of the current program of study. A department chair, program head, or dean must approve the work experience. Department faculty and/or advising staff must put in place measures to ensure that the experience serves as effective practical training. Please attach a letter detailing the training plan.

Course Number: _____ Academic Term: _____

Name of Recommending Academic Advisor/Instructor of Record: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

Advisor Signature: _____ Date: _____