



OFFICE OF INTERNATIONAL SERVICES

University Center for International Studies
University of Pittsburgh

Curricular Practical Training (CPT) Guidelines for the School of Computing and Information

Curricular Practical Training (CPT) is defined as employment which is an **"integral part of an established curriculum, including: 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."** *Source: 8 CFR 214.2(f)(10)(i)*

As per federal regulations, CPT is a benefit extended to F-1 students only, and requires an offer letter prior to authorization. CPT can only be granted after a student has been lawfully enrolled on a full-time basis for one academic year (i.e., two full consecutive semesters). Exceptions to this can only be made for graduate students in a program which *requires* immediate practical training.

CPT may be full-time (more than 20 hours/week) or part-time (20 hours/week or less). Use of 12 months or more of full-time CPT will prohibit the student from applying for OPT. Use of part-time CPT does not affect OPT eligibility.

The following guidelines apply to all SCI students, and ensure that students can take advantage of opportunities that are appropriate to their academic program while protecting their F-1 status.

- CPT will be granted if:
 - Practical training is a requirement of all students to fulfill a degree requirement, or
 - A student will be awarded credit that will count toward degree requirements (e.g. through an internship or practicum course offered by the program), as listed in department/program literature.
- Credit earned to satisfy CPT requirements must appear on the transcript during the semester that the internship takes place (e.g. summer internship requires summer internship enrollment).
- CPT employment may not delay completion of the academic program.
- CPT authorized for the fall or spring semester, or in the final semester of study may only be part-time. Exceptions will be made if the student is participating in a Pitt Co-Op, and it is not their final semester of study, or in a program that requires a full-time internship to fulfill a degree requirement.
- CPT authorized in the summer may be full-time. If summer will be the final semester of study, CPT will be authorized part-time, unless the student is participating in a program that requires a full-time internship to fulfill a degree requirement.
- Doctoral students may be eligible for CPT authorization for employment that will directly contribute to their thesis. OIS reserves the right to review the relationship between practical training experience and dissertation research.
- CPT is granted on a semester-by-semester basis, unless a longer length of time is needed to complete program requirements.

CPT and on-campus employment:

- Individuals can be employed [on-campus](#) and participate in CPT at the same time, provided they adhere to regulations for employment.
 - **Note:** students with academic appointments (TA, TF, GSRs) should check with their academic departments about any potential restrictions about off-campus employment while they participate in their academic appointment.



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CPT Course Enrollment options for School of Computing and Information students

CPT can be pursued through the following mechanisms within the School of Computing and Information. Students should research which options are available in their program of study.

Experiential Learning courses can be found [here](#) and more in-depth policy pages for each option can be found [here](#).

Co-Op

- Students eligible for the Co-Op program must apply *separately* for each period of CPT to correspond with each rotation.
- Each rotation must be at least 12 weeks of paid, full-time work to be authorized for CPT, as per Co-Op policy, although most rotations are 4-6 months in length.
 - One rotation = one semester
- Typically, students complete 2 full-time rotations per academic career.
 - Additional rotations may put students at risk of exceeding 12 months of full-time CPT authorization, which prohibits students from applying for OPT.

Practicum or Field Experience

- Students eligible for practicum, or field experience credits are limited by the number of times they can take the course per their program's policies.
- Credit earned to satisfy CPT requirements must appear on the transcript during the semester that the internship or field experience occurs.
 - e.g., *summer* internship used for practicum requires *summer* practicum course enrollment
- Practicum or field experience courses must count towards graduation requirements.
- Specific practicum or field experience courses vary by program.
- In the student's last academic semester of enrollment, CPT can be part-time, only; the student must enroll in the appropriate course, *plus at least one other course* that counts towards degree requirements; graduation must be verified by the academic department.

Internship

- Students eligible for internship credits are limited by the number of times they can take the course per their program's policies.
 - However, graduation should not be delayed and use of 12 months or more of full-time CPT will prohibit the student from applying for OPT.
- Credit earned to satisfy CPT requirements must appear on the transcript during the semester that the internship activity occurs
 - e.g., *summer* internship requires *summer* internship course enrollment
- In the student's last academic semester of enrollment, CPT can be part-time, only; the student must enroll in the appropriate course, *plus at least one other course* that counts towards degree requirements; graduation must be verified by the academic department.

Full-Time Dissertation Students

- Doctoral students must be enrolled in full-time dissertation (FTD) status for OIS to consider employment contributing directly to a thesis.
- PhD students not yet enrolled in FTD must be enrolled in a relevant internship, practicum, or field experience course during the semester they are working.
- Use of 12 months or more of full-time CPT will prohibit the student from applying for OPT.

(continue to next page for instructions about how to apply for CPT)



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How to apply for CPT

An application for CPT authorization should be submitted to OIS at least 2 weeks prior to the anticipated start date of employment.

Step 1: Meet with your SCI advisor to ask about your academic eligibility.

- Determine if a relevant course is needed and if so, that you understand the requirements and process to enroll.
- Details can be found [here](#).

Step 2: Once you have obtained a relevant position, request an offer letter from the employer (on company letterhead).

The letter should include:

- Your name
- The start date and end date of the work experience (Keep in mind that CPT can only be authorized one semester at a time)
- Position title
- Employment site address (street, city, state, and zip code).
 - This must be where you will be physically present for the duration of your employment
 - If there will be multiple locations, all must be listed
- The number of hours to be worked per week

Step 3: Submit a CPT request in [My OIS](#) and list intl-sci@pitt.edu as your advisor's contact information.

- Normal processing time of a CPT request is **five business days** from the date OIS receives a completed e-form.
- Please remember that your school's designated reviewer will receive an email requesting their approval for the practical training experience.
- Once they have completed their section of the e-form, OIS will review and contact you via email once a determination has been made.
- Authorization will be granted for the employer, location, and dates specified on the new I-20.
 - Please contact OIS prior to commencing employment if any of this information will change.
- Once CPT has been approved, you will receive a confirmation mail, with an attached, digitally-signed Form I-20.
 - CPT will be authorized for specific location(s) and for a set length of time.
- **You may not begin employment until you receive the new CPT I-20.**