CURRICULAR PRACTICAL TRAINING (CPT) GUIDELINES

GRADUATE STUDENTS

Curricular Practical Training (CPT) is a form of work authorization that allows F-1 students to engage in an off-campus academic internship or employment (paid or unpaid) that is a required or an integral part of their academic curriculum, as stated in the University catalog.

Eligibility Requirements

- Must have completed one academic year in valid F-1 status. Graduate students can waive this requirement if one of the following applies to them:
  - Students who have been in valid F-1 status at another institution will be given credit for the one academic year of valid F-1 status if they transferred their SEVIS record to UCLA.
  - Students whose degree program has a mandatory internship requirement that every student must complete to earn their degree. Graduate degree programs with a mandatory internship requirement include: Clinical Psychology, Environmental Science, Nursing, Public Health, Public Policy, Social Welfare, Financial Engineering (MFE), Management (MBA), LLM-Experiential Component track, Masters of Science in Business Analytics (MSBA). Please consult with your department for additional requirements.
- Must have obtained an internship/employment offer that is directly related to their major. For guidance on how to find an internship, get help with writing a resume, or to gain practice with job interviews, please contact the UCLA Career Center at 501 Westwood Plaza, Strathmore Building, North Entrance 2nd and 3rd Floors or call 310-206-1915.
- Must either be enrolled in an independent studies course or have obtained a department support letter.
  - Graduate students whose degree program does not have a mandatory internship requirement and have not Advanced to Candidacy (ATC) before the start of their off-campus employment must enroll in an independent study course (typically a 596 course) during the academic term their off-campus internship/job will take place.
  - Graduate students who have Advanced to Candidacy (ATC) before the start of their off-campus employment can waive the CPT course enrollment requirement by submitting a departmental support letter signed by their Student Affairs Officer indicating the student has Advanced to Candidacy and their off-campus employment is an integral part of their dissertation, thesis, or capstone project.
  - Graduate students whose degree program has a mandatory internship requirement can waive the CPT course enrollment requirement by submitting a departmental support letter signed by their Student Affairs Officer indicating their degree program has a required internship component and that the student’s off-campus employment fulfills this required internship.

CPT Work Restrictions

- Employment must be directly related to a student’s major.
- CPT work authorization can only be granted one quarter at a time. Students must apply for CPT work authorization each quarter they wish to engage in off-campus employment.
- Students cannot begin working off-campus (including orientations or training) until after they have received CPT approval from DCISS. It takes DCISS 5 business days to approve a CPT request. Graduate students engaging in CPT during the academic year (Fall, Winter, and Spring) must maintain full-time enrollment (i.e., 8-12 units).
- Graduate students cannot engage in CPT work authorization if they are on Filing Fee Status.
- Students who engage in 12 months or more of full-time CPT before graduation will not be eligible to apply for Post-Completion Optional Practical Training (OPT).
Graduate Students who are not ATC and whose degree program does not have a mandatory internship requirement

- During the academic year (Fall, Winter, and Spring), students cannot be approved to work more than 20 hours per week via CPT.
- During Summer, there are no limits to the number of hours students can work via CPT.
- During Summer, students engaging in CPT must register for at least one unit of an individual studies course during one Summer Session.
- Students who drop or do not complete their individual studies course will have their CPT work authorization revoked and F-1 status terminated.

Graduate Students who are ATC or whose degree program has a mandatory internship requirement

- During any academic term (Fall, Winter, Spring, or Summer) students can be approved to work over 20 hours per week via CPT. Whether CPT needs to be approved as part-time or full-time depends on the following:
  - 50% on-campus and no more than 20 hours per week off-campus = part-time CPT work authorization
  - 50% on-campus and more than 20 hours per week off-campus = full-time CPT work authorization
  - More than 50% on-campus employment = full-time CPT work authorization
- Students graduating during Summer must enroll in an independent studies course during one Summer Session to be approved to engage in CPT, even if they are ATC or in a degree program that has a mandatory internship requirement.