



CPT vs OPT

Curricular Practical Training (CPT)		Optional Practical Training (OPT)		
What is it?	Allows F-1 students to engage in paid off-campus internship/employment, which is integral to program completion.	Allows any eligible F-1 students to engage in internship/employment within major area of study, in most cases upon program completion*.		
Eligibility	Full-time enrollment under lawful F-1 status for one full academic year prior to training.			
	Grad students whose program requires immediate participation in training are exempt from the one-year requirement above.	Grad students who have completed all required courses are eligible to start OPT. (Pre or post-completion OPT.)		
	Requires a job offer. (Employer-specific authorization.)	Does not require a job offer.		
	12+ months of full-time CPT makes students ineligible for OPT at the same educational level.			
Duration of Training (per degree level)	No maximum but should be limited to less than 12 months of full-time to be eligible for OPT.	Maximum of 12 months full-time. Pre-completion OPT will count against the 12-month limit for post-completion OPT.		
Granted by	Office of International Students CPT I-20 issued.	U.S. Citizenship & Immigration Services; Employment Authorization Document issued.		
How to Apply	Meet with Dean Atkins to start the process.	Participate in the OPT workshop provided by OIS.		
Application Fee	\$0.	\$340.		
Processing Times	About one week.		Can take up to 3+ months.	
Employment Status	Part-time CPT	Full-time CPT	Pre-completion OPT	Post-completion OPT
	<20 hours/week.	>20 hours/week.	Can be part-time or full-time. (Part-time authorization will be deducted from the 12-month limit at one-half the full-time rate.) (Definitions of part-time/full-time same as for CPT.)	Full-time only.
Enrollment Requirements	Requires full-time enrollment during academic year.	⌚ Minimum credits determined by the department. ⌚ Part-time okay for immigration purposes.	Enrollment not required for immigration purposes.	⌚ Enrollment not required. ⌚ Should be limited to part-time if enrolled.
Role of Academic Department	⌚ Determine whether CPT is an “integral” part of program. (⌚ Determine enrollment requirements. (i.e. internship course, research credits) ⌚ Recommend CPT.		Verify completion of all required courses for program.	Verify expected program completion date.
Role of OIS	⌚ Verify eligibility. ⌚ Determine whether CPT is appropriate. (Decisions made on a case-by-case basis for grad students whose programs don't require internship.) ⌚ Authorize CPT in SEVIS.		⌚ Verify eligibility. ⌚ Recommend OPT in SEVIS.	