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CURRICULAR PRACTICAL TRAINING PROGRAM FOR F-1 STUDENTS

Practical training prior to completion of studies in the student's field of study is permitted under both Optional Practical Training and Curricular Practical Training regulations. This handout summarizes the definition and procedures for **CURRICULAR PRACTICAL TRAINING (CPT).** CPT is work authorization issued by the ISS for a student to work in his/her field of study before completion of program. CPT may be part time (up to 20 hours/week) or full-time (more than 20 hours/week). There is no limitation on part-time CPT, but full-time CPT of 12 months or more will result in the student losing eligibility for post-completion Optional Practical training (OPT). The ISS is responsible for approving eligibility for CPT. However, it is the student's responsibility to comply with all F-1 immigration regulations and to consult with an ISS advisor whenever the employment situation changes.

Summary of Eligibility / Criteria

CPT may be a requirement or an elective but in either case must be integral to the student's curriculum. Undergraduate students must have been in the U.S. in F-1 status for at least 9 months, have declared a major, and be in good academic standing. If a graduate program requires its students to engage in training prior to the completion of one full academic year, an F-1 student may begin curricular practical training before he or she has been enrolled for one year. This exception only applies to students enrolled in graduate studies, where the early participation is required by the graduate program.

CPT may be approved by ISS if the student's situation meets one of the following criteria:

1. Required CPT: A compulsory internship/field practicum to fulfill degree requirements.

2. Elective CPT: Relates to an internship or practicum course within the field of study. This work permission is typically limited to the semester the student is enrolled in a course requiring the employment.

3. UH Cooperative Education is offered through CDSE (Center for Career Development and Student Employment).
Requirements include:

a. Completion of at least 30 credits, including transfer credits. (not applicable to graduate students)
b. Cumulative GPA: 2.0 for undergraduates, 3.0 for graduates (or higher as required by the employer)
c. Commitment to work for two consecutive semesters. The student must have at least two semesters remaining before degree completion.
d. Meet with a Co-op counselor to review your Co-op options and application procedures.
e. Application requires signatures of both the academic department and the SECEO Coop Counselor.

Documents required to process CPT requests:

For required CPT:

- Documentation of the requirement of practical training from academic advisor on department's letterhead
- Letter/job offer from prospective employer on company's letterhead
- Unofficial UH transcript printed from your MyUH Account

For elective CPT:

- Documentation of the requirement of off-campus employment (Course syllabus and/or letter from academic advisor on department's letterhead)
- Letter/job offer from prospective employer on company's letterhead
- Unofficial UH transcript printed from your MyUH Account

For COOP CPT:

- COOP advisor endorsement
- Unofficial UH transcript printed from your MyUH Account

Employer Letter must include:

1) Company letterhead
2) Place of employment
3) Job title and position # (for on-campus employment based on overload approval)
4) Number of work hours/ week
5) Start & End Dates of employment
6) Brief description of work
7) Signature from the supervisor

Note: Hours and dates of employment should replicate what is written on CPT application.

*** Always attach UNOFFICIAL UH TRANSCRIPT printed by SEMESTER from your MyUH account!!**

Employment Eligibility Verification

When you work, you and your employer must complete a form entitled "Employment Eligibility Verification" (BCIS Form I-9). This form must be updated every time you receive a renewal of work permission.

Social Security and Other Taxes

In general, F-1 students who have been in the U.S. less than five years and are enrolled in a degree program while working are exempt from Social Security (F.I.C.A) taxes. However, your earnings are subject to federal, state, and local income taxes. Students must file a tax return on or before April 15 each year, which will determine if any withheld taxes can be refunded.

Application and Approval Procedures

1. Student obtains a written job offer from prospective employer (*NOT required for coop)

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2. Student completes CPT application and obtains signature from academic advisor, TIM advisor and/or COOP counselor.

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3. Student brings job offer letter, CPT application, unofficial transcript form MyUH portal, (class syllabus if applicable) and any other relevant attachments (*see CPT application) to ISS.

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4. DSO (Designated School Official) in ISS generates new SEVIS I-20 (pg 3) with CPT permit and returns it to the student within 5 business days.

NOTE:
DSO Endorsements are specific to EMPLOYER and DATES of EMPLOYMENT. CPT authorizations must record periods of part-time and full-time employment. Students should not begin work prior to receiving authorization. Renewals are possible, within regulatory limitations.

Other types of work Permission

F-1 students not eligible for CPT may be eligible for Optional Practical Training, or other types of work permission. Further information is available at the ISS.

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