

# CPT Academic Options Guide

Curricular Practical Training (CPT) is defined to be alternative work/study, internship, cooperative education, or any other type of required internship or practicum that is offered by sponsoring employers through cooperative agreements with the school [8 CFR 214.2(f)(10)(i)]. The Student and Exchange Visitor Program (SEVP) has provided the following guidance in the past on the curricular requirement for CPT: “In practical terms, ‘integral part of an established curriculum’ means an opportunity must be required by the curriculum or, if not required, the student must receive credit for the training” [SEVP Online DSO Training].

International Student & Scholar Services (ISSS) interprets “an integral part of an established curriculum” as the practical training is related to the major and bound to the curriculum through approved course enrollments or cooperative agreements between the university and the employer. Unpaid internships would also fall under the umbrella of CPT.

Students can use one of the following options to meet the curricular requirement and gain approval for CPT. The information and examples below are not meant to cover every possible scenario for which CPT could be approved. This document is meant to serve as a general guide to understand the academic requirements for CPT.

If your situation is not covered by the information below or you are unsure of whether or not CPT is necessary to participate in a professional experience, please [schedule an advising appointment](#) or [participate in walk-in hours](#) to discuss your options in more detail.

CPT Option	Explanation	Examples
Practical Training Experience is required for a student's degree	<p>Practical training experience or employment is <b>required for degree</b> completion</p> <p><b>'Required for the degree'</b> means the requirement must be documented as such in an official university publication or catalog.</p> <p>Enrollment in credit is <b>not</b> necessarily required because the requirement is part of the student's official program requirement, not necessarily course completion</p>	<p>A student's degree program requires that students work as a Teaching or Research Assistant during the final semester of the program. This is a requirement of all students and is formally documented in the program's Student Handbook.</p> <p>A student's degree program requires all students gain practical experience through part-time employment in their field of study in the metro area. This requirement is listed in the program requirements as cited on the university website for students in this major.</p>

(Additional three options continued on the next pages)

## CPT Academic Options Guide (*continued*)

CPT Option	Explanation	Examples
<p>Practical Training Experience is required to earn internship/practicum/independent study credit for which a student will be registered</p>	<p>Internship, practicum, independent study credit is specifically linked to the student's academic department or School/College (ex. Computer Science internship course)</p> <p>Enrollment in credit is required and may or may not be counted towards the degree requirements</p>	<p>A student's degree program requires participation in a (paid or unpaid) internship in the final semester in a company/organization off-campus directly related to a student's field of study. The academic department has an internship course credit and will count this towards the student's total degree requirements.</p> <p>A student's degree program does <b>not</b> require students to do an internship in order to graduate, but does offer the option to enroll in internship credit. Students would only be eligible for CPT and enrollment in internship credits before completion of all requirements of the degree program (i.e. a student cannot only enroll in elective internship credit in the final semester if they have finished all other degree requirements for graduation).</p>
<p>Practical Training Experience will provide research that is necessary for a student's thesis or dissertation.</p>	<p>Students enrolled in thesis or dissertation credit <i>might</i> be eligible to be approved for CPT in connection with this credit if the off-campus work is directly related to research goals/objectives</p> <p>Enrollment in thesis or dissertation credit alone does <b>not</b> automatically mean that a student would be approved for CPT.</p>	<p>A student is enrolled in dissertation credit and is working on research necessary for the completion of the dissertation through off-site employment in the student's field of study. The employment at the company is specifically required to complete the student's dissertation research – it is NOT simply related to the general field of study or dissertation topic.</p>

(Additional option continued on the next page)

## CPT Academic Options Guide (*continued*)

CPT Option	Explanation	Examples
Practical Training Experience will yield a project for a particular course that is required by the student's degree program	Students enrolled in a course that is required by their program in order to graduate.	A student is enrolled in a course that requires a final project as part of the grade. The goals/learning objectives of the final project can be achieved directly through the responsibilities/duties of a position off-campus that a student has been offered in their field of study.