

HERE IS YOUR **CPT APPLICATION PACKET**

What is Curricular Practical Training (CPT)?

“...Curricular practical training is defined to be alternate work/study, internship, cooperative education, or any other type of required internship or _____ which is offered by sponsoring employers through cooperative agreements with the school.” [8 CFR 214.2(f)(10)(i)]

Curricular Practical Training is *not* a means of simply gaining employment eligibility or a stepping stone to be able to work until Optional Practical Training begins.

Who is eligible for CPT?

Students who are in F-1 status and have been enrolled full-time at the University of Arkansas at Little Rock for at least one full academic year (unless the internship is *required* by the program of study) are eligible for Curricular Practical Training before completion of all semester hours required for the degree. CPT can be done during the regular academic year or during the summer or winter break.

Who is not eligible for CPT?

Students are *not* eligible for CPT:

1. After completion of all semester hours required for a degree. There are *only four exceptions*:
 - a. an unusual opportunity of **short duration**, such as a weekend performance in a symphony orchestra or one-day participation in a workshop or research study; *OR*
 - b. the internship is **required** by the program of study as documented by information published in the UI General Catalog, department catalogs, etc.; *OR*
 - c. the internship will contribute **directly** to the student's thesis or dissertation (ex.: data gained through internship is used in thesis); *OR*
 - d. the student is a **PhD candidate who is ABD** and who is registered for PhD Continuous Registration, in which case may be eligible for a maximum of 12 months of CPT following completion of all required semester hours but prior to submitting the first deposit of the thesis in the Graduate College.
2. After graduation or completion of a course of study.
3. While enrolled for a Professional Improvement or Non-Degree course of study.
4. After resuming studies following a period of OPT, unless the established curriculum requires immediate participation in CPT or a new degree program is begun.
5. Anyone who has fallen out of status for any reason, including not maintaining full-time registration or working without proper authorization.

When can I apply?

You are eligible to *apply* up to 90 days before the end of your first year of study. The actual CPT employment cannot *begin* until the first academic year is complete. You **CANNOT** begin to work *before* you obtain your CPT authorization from the OIS or continue to work *after* your authorization expires or you graduate. If you do, you will be engaged in unlawful

employment (i.e., you will be “working illegally”) and thus you will no longer be maintaining your F-1 status (i.e., you will be an “illegal alien”).

Do I need to present a job offer letter to an OIS adviser in order to apply?

Yes. Only students in the College of Engineering and the MBA program are not required to submit a job offer letter, providing they have applied for Cooperative Education in the appropriate office. All others must submit an offer letter as follows:

The employer’s job offer letter must include all of the following information:

- be on **letterhead** which contains your employer’s **name and address**
- specify your **job title** and briefly **describe the work** you will do
- specify the **EXACT starting and ending dates** of employment and the **number of hours** per week you will work
- *If you do not have the job offer letter, or it does not include all of the above information, we will ask you to obtain a new offer letter and will not be able to authorize the CPT until all required information is received.*

What else do I need in order for an OIS adviser to authorize CPT?

Before an OIS adviser can authorize your CPT, you must also obtain (*and bring to your appointment, along with your I-20*) **EITHER A or B:**

A. official verification that such employment is required of all students in your department in order to graduate (example: a copy of a General Catalog entry),

OR

B. evidence of registration for Cooperative Education (instructions can be found in the next section)

Application Instructions for All Students:

1. Apply for Cooperative Education:
 - Online – go to the website of the Cooperative Education.
<http://www.ualr.edu/coopeduc/studentlinks.asp>
 - In Person go to :
UALR Office of Cooperative Education
Ross Hall 417
501-569-3584 / 501-569-3588 (Fax)
2. Fill out the Student Eligibility for CPT Verification form, available in this packet
3. Have your academic adviser fill out the Academic Adviser Eligibility for CPT Verification form
4. Make an appointment with an OIS adviser (by phoning 683-7566)
5. Bring to the appointment:
 - Your job offer letter, including all required information as mentioned above
 - The completed Student Eligibility verification form
 - The completed Academic Adviser Eligibility for CPT Verification form
 - Evidence the internship is required, if applicable
 - Your passport
 - Your Form I-94 (the white card)

Do I need to apply to the USCIS for CPT authorization?

No. You do not need to apply to the USCIS. In fact, only the OIS can authorize CPT for eligible University of Arkansas at Little Rock students.

When can I begin my CPT employment?

You may begin working immediately after you receive your I-20 authorizing you for CPT from the OIS, and as soon as the start date requested on the I-20 arrives. **DO NOT** begin your

employment before you receive the CPT authorization from OIS, or you will be working illegally!

What if I want to do CPT for more than one semester?

The OIS will require you to renew your CPT application each semester. This means you must plan in advance to come in and renew your authorization before your current semester's authorization expires, if you wish to continue working.

Do I have to be registered when I am participating in CPT?

Yes, you must always be registered as a student at the University of Arkansas at Little Rock. If you are participating in part-time CPT, you must maintain full-time enrollment (12 s.h. for undergraduates or 9 s.h. for graduate students, or 6 s.h. for grad students with assistantships of 25%-time or greater). If you are participating in full-time CPT (more than 20 hours/week), **graduate students** must either be registered for Cooperative Education or at least 0 s.h. of independent study credit through your academic department. **Undergraduate students** must still be registered for 12 s.h. while doing full-time CPT.

What is the difference between Optional Practical Training (OPT) and CPT?

OPT permits employment *after* completion of a course of study. You don't need a job offer to apply for OPT. There is no time limit to CPT, while full-time OPT is limited to one year.

If I do CPT, can I still do OPT later?

Yes, as long as you do not engage in *full-time CPT (that is, more than 20 hours/week) for an entire year*. Part-time CPT (20 hours or less per week) has no impact on subsequent eligibility for OPT, even if you work for more than a year.

Can I change employers if I have CPT authorization? Can I work full-time instead of part-time, or vice-versa?

Yes, but only with prior authorization. If you change employers, or if you change from part-time to full-time employment, you **MUST** re-apply for a new CPT authorization. You cannot make the change until you have obtained a new CPT authorization, or you will be working without authorization (i.e., "working illegally"). If you change from full-time to part-time employment, you *should* let OIS know so that your employment will not affect your eligibility for OPT (see previous question).

Am I eligible for CPT if I am or ever have been a part-time student?

If you have ever been enrolled as a part-time student, you must have an OIS "Full-Time Equivalency Form" on file for the semester(s) you were under-enrolled. Otherwise, CPT cannot be authorized. Students undertaking part-time CPT are required to be enrolled full time or to have a current OIS "Full-Time Equivalency Form" on file.

Can I travel outside the USA if I have been authorized for CPT?

Yes. In order to re-enter the U.S. after you are authorized for CPT, you must have an I-20 signed by an adviser preferably within the last six months, a valid F-1 visa, and a valid passport.

If I am authorized for CPT employment and I decide not to use it, can I file another CPT application later?

Yes, as long as you maintain your F-1 status and have not completed your course of study. You should, however, ask the OIS to notify the USCIS of the cancellation of your CPT as soon as you know you will not use the entire period authorized.

Student Eligibility for CPT Verification Form

1. CPT is only for the purpose of participating in **legitimate internships** in a student's area of study. It is **not a means of gaining employment** eligibility.
2. Students are required to **register with Cooperative Education** or be registered to receive credit for the internship before being eligible to receive CPT authorization from the OIS.
3. Students who have maintained full-time enrollment as required by federal immigration regulations (12 s.h. for undergrads, 9 s.h. for grads, and 6 s.h. for grads with assistantships) and who have **completed all semester hours required** for the degree are **NOT eligible for CPT**. There are **ONLY four exceptions** to this rule:
 - a. an unusual opportunity of **short duration**, such as a weekend performance in a symphony orchestra or one-day participation in a workshop or research study; *OR*
 - b. the internship is **required** by the program of study as documented by information published in the UI General Catalog, department catalogs, etc.; *OR*
 - c. the internship will contribute **directly** to the student's thesis or dissertation (ex.: data gained through internship is used in thesis); *OR*
 - d. the student is a **PhD candidate who is ABD** and who is registered for PhD Continuous Registration, in which case he/she will be allowed a **maximum of 12 months** of CPT eligibility following completion of all required semester hours but **prior to submitting the first deposit of the thesis in the Graduate College**.
4. It is not acceptable for students in advanced stages of a degree to **delay making progress** by not registering full-time without prior permission from the OIS. If a student is eligible to take a full-time load as defined in #3 above, the student **MUST** do so or risks violating U.S. immigration policy. The only exceptions for students to be enrolled less than full-time are those exceptions that appear on the OIS "**Part-Time Enrollment Authorization Form**."
5. If any information is **misrepresented** on this form, the OIS will not be held responsible and any resulting violations of immigration regulations will be solely the student's responsibility. Some potential results of a violation can include ineligibility for benefits of F-1 status including Optional Practical Training, having to apply to the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Service for reinstatement to F-1 status, denial of future requests to change to another non-immigrant status, or possible deportation proceedings at the U.S. Immigration and Citizenship Enforcement branch of the Department of Homeland Security.

Academic Adviser CPT Eligibility Verification Form

To the Academic Adviser:

Please provide the information requested below, which will assist in determining whether this student is eligible for Curricular Practical Training authorization as provided by U.S. immigration law.

1. CPT provides work authorization for employment that is an **"integral" part of a student's curriculum** and which must be **related to his/her major**.
2. CPT is only for the purpose of participating in **legitimate internships** in a student's area of study. It is **not a means of gaining employment** eligibility.
3. Students who have maintained full-time enrollment as required by federal immigration regulations (12 s.h. for undergrads, 9 s.h. for grads, and 6 s.h. for grads with assistantships) and who have **completed all semester hours required** for the degree are **NOT eligible for CPT**. There are **ONLY four exceptions** to this rule:
 - a. an unusual opportunity of **short duration**, such as a weekend performance in a symphony orchestra or one-day participation in a workshop or research study; *OR*
 - b. the internship is **required** by the program of study as documented by information published in the UI General Catalog, department catalogs, etc.; *OR*
 - c. the internship will contribute **directly** to the student's thesis or dissertation (ex.: data gained through internship is used in thesis); *OR*
 - d. the student is a **PhD candidate who is ABD** and who is registered for PhD Continuous Registration, in which case will be allowed a **maximum of 12 months** of CPT eligibility following completion of all required semester hours but **prior to submitting the first deposit of the thesis in the Graduate College**.
4. CPT **must not delay** the student's completion of studies or completion of semester hours required for the degree.

TAX INFORMATION TO SHARE WITH YOUR EMPLOYER

December 2005

Employers may legally hire students in F-1 or J-1 visa status for academically-related employment when they receive either Curricular Practical Training (CPT), Optional Practical Training (OPT), or Academic Training (AT).

TYPES OF EMPLOYMENT AUTHORIZATION

CPT	In most cases, international students in F-1 status pursuing degrees at The UALR are eligible for internships or other types of work experience in their fields of study. This permission is granted by the OIS and submitted to SEVIS, the immigration service's informational database.
OPT	Following graduation or completion of coursework, most students in F-1 status are eligible to accept up to 12 months of employment for "optional practical training" experience. This authorization is granted by U.S. Citizenship & Immigration Services. OPT is an extension of F-1 status that allows for a period of work.
AT	J-1 students are eligible for academic training, either during the course of study or directly after graduation. The authorization is granted by the OIS and submitted to SEVIS.

VERIFYING EMPLOYMENT ELIGIBILITY

Employers must ensure that all students have the proper work authorization.

CPT	A SEVIS I-20 issued by The UALR with the employment authorization (employer name, address, dates of validity) listed on Page 3.
OPT	An Employment Authorization Document issued by U.S. CIS, also known as I-688B. Note the expiration date of employment listed on the small, laminated card. OPT is NOT renewable.
AT	A SEVIS Form DS-2019 authorized for Academic Training and an accompanying letter, signed by Responsible Officer of the J Exchange Visitor Program at The UALR.

TAXES

Students who have been in the U.S. less than 5 years (and are therefore nonresidents for tax purposes) and who are on practical training off-campus are not subject to any FICA (social security) and Medicare withholdings. The mechanism for the exemptions are found under Internal Revenue Code 3121 (b)(19) and is available to persons in F-1, J-1, M-1 and Q immigration status. It is a blanket exemption with the only qualification being that the person be a nonresident for tax purposes and that the work is authorized (CPT, OPT, AT). IRS Publication 519 is a good resource, specifically pages 44 and 45.

Though F-1 and J-1 students working off campus are exempt from FICA, they are subject to the higher federal (and state) withholding for nonresident aliens.

Since it is cumbersome to request a refund of taxes withheld in error, OIS would like to ask employers to make a determination of the student's tax status prior to withholding. In most cases, the student will be a nonresident alien and therefore not subject to the taxes mentioned above.

COMPLETING THE I-9

The employer should mark in Section 1 that he/she is “an alien authorized to work until” (date of expiration of work authorization). The admissions number is the 11 digit number given on both his/her I-20 or DS-2019 and the I-94 entry document.

For student on Optional Practical Training, the employer can use the I-688B to complete List A on the I-9. The document title is “Employment Authorization Document”, issuing authority is CIS, document number and expiration can both be found on the front of the card.

For further information, see the U.S. Department of Justice Handbook for Employers, Publication M-274 available at

http://uscis.gov/graphics/lawsregs/handbook/hand_emp.pdf. Page 33 and 34 address practical training.

STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES

It is the responsibility of the student to insure that the job he/she takes on practical training is related to the degree he/she is seeking or has completed at The UALR. The student is also responsible for maintaining contact with The UALR, as the institution is still responsible for the student’s legal status in the U.S. Under federal immigration law, student’s have 10 days to report a change of name or address to the UALR.

We welcome questions about the employment of University of Arkansas at Little Rock students. Please do not hesitate to contact us if we can be of any assistance to you.

Office of International Students and Scholars

The University of Arkansas at Little Rock

Stabler Hall #105

2801 S University Ave

Little Rock, AR 72204

Phone: 501-683-7566

Fax: 501-683-7567

Email: abhughes@ualr.edu

Web: <http://www.ualr.edu/international>

Office of International Services
University of Arkansas at Little Rock
Stabler Hall 105 2801 S. University Ave
Little Rock, AR 72204

Phone: 501-683-7566
Fax: 501-683-7567

Student Request for CPT

Student Name: _____

Student T Number: _____

Email: _____

Major Area of Study: _____

Degree (BA, MA, PhD, etc.): _____

When do you expect to graduate? _____

List any previous authorizations for CPT (start/end date and number of hours/week):

I have read the information presented in the CPT Application Packet and in items 1-5 above. I certify that the information presented by me in this application is complete and correct to the best of my knowledge. I understand that it is my responsibility to register for Cooperative Education or receive credit for the internship. I am aware that once I have completed all _____ hours required for my degree, I am no longer eligible for CPT, and I attest that I have not/ _____ not take any actions to delay my graduation or delay completion of my required semester hours without appropriate authorization. I understand that if I request part-time CPT during the fall or spring semesters (20 hours/week or less) I must register for a full-time courseload. I understand if I request full-time CPT during the fall or spring semesters (more than 20 hours/week), I attest that the full-time employment will not impede or delay the progress _____ my academic program.

For PhD candidates who are ABD: I understand that I am allowed a maximum of 12 months CPT eligibility following completion of my required semester hours, that I must be registered for PhD Continuous Registration as well as Cooperative Education that I must continue to make normal progress on my dissertation, and I attest that I am not delaying my graduation by participating in this Curricular Practical Training

Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

Academic Adviser for CPT

Student Name: _____

As of the end of the current semester, how many semester hours will the student have completed? _____

How many semester hours are **required** for a student to earn this degree? _____

After this current semester, how many semester hours is the student required to take before eligible to earn the degree (not counting continuous/Post-Comp registration or independent study/research credit beyond the number of semester hours required)? _____

Is this internship related to the student's area of study and an integral part of the program of study?

? YES

? NO

Is this internship **required** by the program of study in which the student is involved, as demonstrated by publication in a UALR General Catalog or other departmental document?

? YES (*must attach evidence such as printout from General Catalog*)

? NO

Will research conducted during the internship, or data gathered during the internship, be used in the student's thesis/dissertation?

? YES (*please attach brief letter explaining how will be used in the dissertation/thesis*)

? NO

If PhD candidate, has student filed first draft of thesis with Graduate College?

? YES

? NO

Faculty Name: _____

Email: _____

Signature: _____ **Date:** _____