 **EASTERN CONNECTICUT STATE UNIVERSITY**

Office of Continuing Studies and Enhanced Learning

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**CURRICULAR PRACTICAL TRAINING (CPT) GUIDELINES & CHECKLIST**

Immigration permits lawful F-­‐1 students the opportunity to gain practical work experience during their degree program and in their major field of study. This experience is called Curricular Practical Training (CPT). By law, CPT must be approved by the Designated School Official (DSO -­‐ Immigration Specialist in the CSEL) and be an integral part of the student’s curriculum. To be considered an integral part of the curriculum, the CPT will show as a registered course for an internship course through the student’s academic department, depending on the type of employment.

Curricular Practical Training (CPT) authorization is required of all students who need to participate in any training activity required by the academic program and offered as part of the established curriculum (e.g. paid and unpaid internships, practicum, fieldwork, clinical placements). Under certain circumstances, sponsored training/employment offered as part of a cooperative agreement between Eastern Connecticut State University and an outside organization may also qualify for CPT authorization (e.g. off-campus work paid by ECSU). Students with academic training requirements must see an International Advisor to determine CPT eligibility and to discuss application procedures.

International Advisors are the only authority to assess student eligibility for CPT. Academic recommendation for a particular training opportunity does NOT guarantee eligibility for CPT authorization. If you are not eligible for CPT and still want to pursue the identified training opportunity, you may be required to apply for pre-completion Optional Practical Training (OPT). OPT processing time can take several months; therefore meet with an ISSS International Advisor well in advance to discuss your training opportunity.

Before accepting any training offer or registering for courses, please make an appointment to discuss your academic training opportunity with an International Student Advisor. The checklist below will offer guidance in requesting Curricular Practical Training.

**Eligibility Requirements:**

1. ***Training must meet one of the following criteria:***
   1. Degree requirement for all students in program;
   2. Credit-bearing internship/field placement counting towards meeting degree requirements-must appear in your academic program’s published curriculum and appear on plan of study;
   3. Cooperative agreement between ECSU and outside organization;
   4. Work paid by Eastern that takes place at an off-campus location
   5. Related to your major field of study (see an International Advisor with questions).
   6. Short-term and training/internship in nature: regular/permanent positions do not qualify for CPT authorization.
2. ***You must have:***

• valid F-­‐1 status.

• been lawfully enrolled full-­‐time for at least one academic year (two semesters with full-time enrollment).

• at least one course remaining to complete your degree program.

**Paperwork to be submitted to the DSO:**

• Official letter of Employment:

o on company letterhead and signed by a company official with the name and address of the training site.

o stating a brief job description showing relation to your current major and the experience is an internship or is training in nature.

o stating dates of employment: beginning and ending.

o stating the number of hours per week: full-­‐ or part-­‐time.

o stating the pay rate per hour.

• CPT Application Form (fully completed including all dates and appropriate signatures); academic advisor must recommend and demonstrate that the training is integral to the degree program (*See Academic Advisor CPT Eligibility Confirmation form*).

• Proof of registration of Internship Course (copy of course schedule).

**Authorization:**

• A new Form I-­‐20 will be issued to you authorizing your CPT.

**Process:**

• Please submit your documents to the Front Desk in the Office of Continuing Studies and Enhanced Learning for processing. **You will be contacted within 2 weeks for a signature and to pick up your new I-­‐20**.

**THINGS TO KEEP IN MIND:**

No coursework is required in conjunction with full-­‐time CPT. Part time coursework may be taken. If CPT is part time, additional coursework will be required. Immigration permits full time CPT of less than one year. Use of one year or more eliminates eligibility for Optional Practical Training (OPT, post-completion year of work authorization). CPT authorization by the DSO is required prior to commencement of employment.

Before you commit to the training opportunity, you must confirm your eligibility with an International Advisor. Your CPT must be authorized by an International Advisor, and you must receive your CPT-approved Form I-20 BEFORE you may begin your training, and before you file the Form I-9 with your training site (if paid internship). Processing may take up to two weeks. Failure to obtain CPT authorization prior to the training start date may be a violation of your F-1 status. CPT authorization start dates cannot be back-dated.

Please also note that we cannot extend your CPT authorization. In the event that your internship site would like to extend your placement, you must make a new CPT application, which is subject to review for eligibility.

**Part-Time CPT vs. Full-Time CPT**: Training for 20 hours or less per week is considered “part-time” CPT. You must be careful to limit your work to no more than 20 hours per week. If approved, part-time CPT is noted on Page 3 of your updated SEVIS I-20 form.

Training for more than 20 hours per week is considered “full-time” CPT. If approved, full-time CPT is noted on Page 3 of your updated SEVIS I-20 form.

The student is responsible for maintaining a full-time course load while on CPT during academic semesters (fall and spring). During the academic semester, the student is restricted to 20 hours per week of any authorized employment/training opportunity outside of full-time course work that is part of the degree program’s established curriculum. Training that is part of the full-time course load of the academic program’s established curriculum does NOT count against the 20 hour/week rule.

There is no limit on the length of time you may participate in full-time CPT as long as training meets CPT eligibility requirements and you receive CPT authorization accordingly in a timely fashion. If you participate in “full-time” CPT for 12 months or more, you will not be eligible for OPT.