

## CURRICULAR PRACTICAL TRAINING (CPT) GUIDELINES GRADUATE STUDENTS

Curricular Practical Training (CPT) is a form of work authorization that allows F-1 students to engage in an off-campus academic internship or employment (paid or unpaid) that is directly related to their field of study and is a required or integral part of their academic curriculum, as stated in the University catalog.

### Eligibility Requirements

- Must have completed one academic year in valid F-1 status.
  - Graduate students can waive this requirement if one of the following applies:
    - Students who have maintained valid F-1 status at another institution will be given credit for the one academic year of valid F-1 status if they transferred their SEVIS record to UCLA.
    - Students whose degree program has a mandatory internship requirement that every student must complete to earn the degree may request CPT authorization before completing one year of valid F-1 status. UCLA graduate degree programs with a mandatory internship requirement include: Business Analytics (MSBA), Clinical Psychology, Environmental Science, Financial Engineering (MFE), LLM - Experiential Component track, Full-time MBA, MFA (Producer's Program, Animation), Nursing, Public Health (MPH), Public Policy (MPP), Urban and Regional Planning (MURP), and Social Welfare (MSW). Please consult with your department for additional requirements.
- Must have obtained an internship/ employment offer that is directly related to their major.
  - For guidance on how to find an internship, prepare your resume, or practice for job interviews, contact the [UCLA Career Center](#).
- Must either be enrolled in an independent studies course or have obtained a departmental support letter to waive the CPT course enrollment requirement.
  - Graduate students whose degree program does not have a mandatory internship requirement and who have not Advanced to Candidacy (ATC) before the start of their off-campus employment must enroll in an independent studies course (typically a 596 course) during the academic term their off-campus internship/job will take place.
  - Graduate students who have Advanced to Candidacy (ATC) before the start of their off-campus employment can waive the CPT course enrollment requirement by submitting a departmental support letter signed by their Student Affairs Officer indicating the student has Advanced to Candidacy and their off-campus internship/employment is an integral part of their dissertation, thesis, or capstone project.
  - Graduate students whose degree program has a mandatory internship requirement can waive the CPT course enrollment requirement by submitting a departmental support letter signed by their Student Affairs Officer confirming that their degree program has a required internship component and that the student's off-campus employment fulfills the internship requirement. *Full-time MBA students do not need to submit a support letter to waive their CPT course enrollment requirement.*

## **CPT Work Restrictions**

### All Graduate Students

- Employment must be directly related to a student's major.
- CPT work authorization can only be granted one quarter at a time. Students must apply for CPT authorization each quarter they wish to engage in off-campus employment.
- Students cannot begin working off-campus (including orientations or training) until after they have received CPT approval from DCISS. It takes DCISS 5 business days to approve a CPT request.
- Graduate students engaging in CPT during the academic year (Fall, Winter, and Spring) must maintain full-time enrollment (i.e., 8-12 units).
- Graduate students cannot engage in CPT authorization if they are on Filing Fee Status.
- Students who engage in 12 months or more of full-time CPT before graduation will not be eligible to apply for Post-Completion Optional Practical Training (OPT).

### Graduate Students who have **not Advanced to Candidacy (ATC)** and whose degree program **does not have a mandatory internship requirement**

- Students are only eligible for part-time CPT authorization during the academic year (Fall, Winter, and Spring) and cannot be approved to work more than 20 hours per week with CPT authorization.
- During Summer, there are no limits to the number of hours students can work with CPT authorization.
- During Summer, students engaging in CPT must enroll in at least one unit of an individual studies course during one Summer Session.
- Students who drop or do not complete their individual studies course will have their CPT authorization revoked and F-1 status terminated.

### Graduate Students who **have Advanced to Candidacy (ATC)** or whose degree program **has a mandatory internship requirement**

- Students can be approved to work over 20 hours per week via CPT during any academic term (Fall, Winter, Spring, or Summer). Whether CPT needs to be approved as part-time or full-time depends on the following:
  - 50% on-campus and no more than 20 hours per week off-campus = part-time CPT authorization
  - 50% on-campus and more than 20 hours per week off-campus = full-time CPT authorization
  - More than 50% on-campus employment = full-time CPT authorization
- Students graduating during Summer but also requesting CPT authorization for Summer Quarter must enroll in an independent studies course during one Summer Session to be approved for CPT, even if they have advanced to candidacy or are in a degree program that has a mandatory internship requirement.