

Curricular Practical Training (CPT)

What is CPT?

CPT is a form of work authorization available for eligible F-1 students before their program end date. CPT is offered through the Work Integrated Learning Course (WIL).

- CPT authorization must be obtained for each internship before any work or training is permitted to start.
- CPT can be either full-time (more than 20 hours per week) or part-time (20 hours or less per week).
- CPT can be either paid or unpaid.
- CPT is employer, location, full/part-time, and date specific. The employer's name, address and the precise start and end dates must be authorized by your DSO in advance.

CPT eligibility requirements:

Students may participate in an internship course once they have completed one academic year (9 months) of full-time study in the United States on an active SEVIS record. The internship courses are meant to give students practical experience which is related to the academic degree program to which they have been admitted. International students must apply for work authorization before they are legally allowed to start work (paid or unpaid).

If an interested student would like to participate in CPT, they must meet the requirements stated below:

- Must have enrolled and successfully completed one year of full-time academic study in the United States on an active SEVIS record
- Must be maintaining Satisfactory Academic Performance
- Must have met the eligibility requirements as listed on the CPT application form and guidelines
- Must register and pay for one of the approved internship courses enroll full time for the quarter (unless approved for a vacation term)
- Must have academic approval for their CPT Application
- Must submit completed CPT Application, recently dated offer letter and job description to DSO for processing (allow 5- 10 business days)

How does CPT affect optional practical training (OPT) eligibility?

If an F-1 student exceeds 12 months of full-time CPT (more than 20 hours per week at a degree level—master’s or doctorate), they will lose their eligibility for OPT at that degree level.

- Part-time CPT (20 hours per week or less) does not accrue towards 12 month limit.
- When counting CPT days, every day between the start and end date of CPT counts (including the start and end dates). The days that you are counting are the days that you had authorization, not the days you worked. This means even if it was a weekend, holiday, vacation etc., it still counts if you had CPT authorization.
- It is the responsibility of the student to track how much CPT time has been used per degree level.
- Students completing more than 364 days of full-time CPT at a degree level do not violate their F-1 status but this does trigger the loss of OPT eligibility for that degree level.
- Sofia University does not keep track and communicate whether or not students will be exceeding the 12 month mark when students are requesting CPT authorization. Students must keep this in mind when selecting dates if approaching 12 months of full time CPT.

Application process

Student must obtain offer letter from prospective employer stating terms of employment, including details of

- Employment start and end dates
- Full-time or part-time employment (part-time is a maximum of 20 hours per week)
- Location of employment
- Employer must acknowledge in the offer letter they are hiring the candidate to earn practical experience that relates to their program of study

Student must obtain and complete our Curricular Practical Training (CPT) Application Form and Cooperative Agreement (Fill Student Information Section and carefully review CPT regulations and Sofia institutional policies). Your employer will need to sign the Cooperative Agreement.

Submit employer offer letter, job description, and CPT Application and Cooperative Agreement, to the DSO at least 2 weeks before the anticipated start date.

An academic advisor will review and approve the job description as being related to the program of study. If approved, the DSO will issue a new I-20 with CPT authorization.