

F-1 Curricular Practical Training

Definition of Curricular Practical Training

Practical training is temporary employment to gain practical experience in the field of study. Curricular practical training is available to F-1 students before completion of the educational objective and is off-campus employment authorized by International Student & Scholar Services to students meeting the eligibility requirements. According to F-1 regulations, curricular practical training (CPT) must be “an integral part of an established curriculum.” At NMSU, an F-1 student can qualify for CPT if the off-campus employment is: (1) a requirement of the degree program; (2) a component of a graduate’s student thesis or dissertation research; or (3) a requirement for academic credits approved by the academic advisor as integral to the degree program.

Eligibility

Curricular practical training is available to F-1 students before completion of the educational objective. The student must have been enrolled on a full-time basis for one full academic year (two semesters) before becoming eligible for CPT. One exception is for graduate students whose programs require immediate curricular training.

CPT can be full-time (over 20 hours per week) or part-time (20 hours or less per week). For part-time CPT, the F-1 must also enroll full-time at NMSU. **Full-time CPT approved by the NMSU Cooperative Education Program is considered full-time enrollment and part-time course registration is optional.**

Procedures

The following items must be submitted to International Student and Scholar Services (ISSS) before a CPT I-20 can be issued.

1. Complete page 1 of the F-1 CPT Request Form.
2. Meet with Academic Advisor to discuss your internship proposal. If your internship meets one of the options on Academic Advisor’s Recommendation Form, bring completed form to ISSS.
3. If you are applying for Co-op or internship position that meets the NMSU requirements, ISSS will sign your CPT Request Form and you will schedule an appointment with the NMSU Cooperative Education and Internship Program. The required paperwork for the Cooperative Education and Internship Program must be completed for the CPT approval process.
4. If your work authorization is based on enrollment in internship credits, bring proof of course registration and letter from employer indicating dates of employment, hours per week, location of employment and job duties to ISSS.
5. All CPT approvals require proof of valid health insurance during the CPT period.

Reminders

If CPT is approved, you will be issued a new I-20 with your CPT employment authorization on page 3. Written authorization from an ISSS DSO on the I-20 is mandatory. Failure to receive CPT authorization prior to the start of your employment is a violation of your F-1 status.

Employment cannot begin prior to the starting date on I-20 or extend past the CPT ending date without authorization.

