

Eligibility for Curricular Practical Training (CPT) and Frequently Asked Questions

Immigration criteria and eligibility for CPT-

• Work Hours-

- CPT may be authorized for part-time (20 hours or less) or full-time employment (more than 20 hours).
- Employment is limited to part-time/20 hours or less during the fall and spring semesters.
- Students authorized for CPT through a Cooperative Education Program (Co-op) for alternating work/study can work full-time during the fall or spring semester if it is their scheduled work term.

• Course Enrollment-

- Students pursuing CPT during a regular academic term must be enrolled full-time for academic credit (12 hours for undergraduate and 9 hours for graduate students) to maintain F-1 status. Co-op enrollment counts as full-time for F-1 maintenance of status.
- Students authorized for CPT based on an alternating Co-op schedule are required to enroll full-time in coursework in the semester following the period of authorized CPT/Co-op.
- During the summer semester full-time enrollment in coursework is traditionally not required for an F-1 student, unless it is the semester following an alternating Co-op work semester.

• Future Employment Authorization-

- Students who have been authorized for a cumulative period of one year or more of full-time curricular practical training are ineligible to receive the optional practical training employment benefit. Part-time curricular practical training does not have an effect on a student's eligibility for optional practical training.

Q. What types of Curricular Practical Training (CPT) are available at UAH?

A. UAH sponsored Cooperative Education Programs will count for CPT. Other than cooperative education (co-op), opportunities for Curricular Practical Training at UAH are based on the academic requirements of a particular degree program. Students are expected to work directly with the UAH Cooperative Education Office and not seek employment through employers that do not have co-op agreements with UAH to facilitate CPT. When a student arranges employment outside of the co-op office they may be eligible to use their Optional Practical Training work authorization benefit.

Q. How do I know if I am eligible for Co-op?

A. The Cooperative Education Office is located in Madison Hall and maintains an excellent website at <http://www.uah.edu/coop>. You should carefully read the information provided on their website and contact their office with questions. The Cooperative Education Office will determine if you are eligible to participate in the coop program at UAH.

Q. I have been offered an "internship" with a company. What options do I have for employment authorization?

A. The immigration laws state that for an F-1 student to be eligible for CPT authorization, the work must be an *"integral part of an established curriculum"*. If your academic program has an internship class that is an elective or a required component for degree completion then ask your academic advisor to put the internship class on your Program of Study and complete the CPT request form. If there is no academic requirement for an internship in your program then you will have to consider applying for Optional Practical Training work authorization.

Q. What does "integral part of an established curriculum" mean?

A. For an internship or practicum to be considered to be an "integral part of an established curriculum" it must be an elective class that counts toward degree requirements or required of all students in the program. The course must be listed as a degree requirement in the *UAH Catalog* and included on an individual's Program of Study. The internship will carry academic credit, have an assigned course number, be listed in the *UAH Schedule of Classes* and have a faculty member assigned (by UAH) to teach the course.

Q. Why can my friends at other universities get authorized for CPT but I am not eligible at UAH?

A. Universities are allowed to set their own academic policies and graduation requirements. Consider the fact that your degree program at UAH may require (or may not require) a course as the same degree program at your friend's university. The same type of policy variance could be the basis for your friend's ability to be authorized for CPT.

Q. How can I find out more information about off-campus work authorization options for F-1 students?

A. International Student Advisors offer regular (8 or more per semester) employment workshops where we discuss in detail the immigration regulations related to F-1 student employment off-campus. Please speak with an advisor for the current schedule.