

## **PRACTICAL TRAINING FOR INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS**

As a general rule, international students on F-1 visas cannot automatically work off campus. However, an international student can apply for Practical Training (PT) through the International Student and Scholar Services office, and work off campus part- time or full-time under that program. To pursue PT, a student, in consultation with his or her advisor, must develop a training program that fits his or her academic program and follows the practical training policy given below.

In addition, the current CS Practical Training Chairman has developed some revised Practical Training Guidelines that further clarify some of these issues and that request some additional information from that listed below.

In general, there are two types of Practical Training (PT): Optional Practical Training (OPT) and Curricular Practical Training (CPT). In both cases, students should note that PT employment is a privilege and not a **right**; meaning, neither the advisor's recommendation nor the authorization are automatic. Furthermore, if the request is for Curricular Practical Training (CPT), the advisor and the department must be assured that the work is an integral part of the academic program and not simply an "excuse" to work.

### **(A) Optional Practical Training (OPT)**

Optional Practical Training (OPT) may be authorized in the field of study either before or after completion of studies and is limited to a total of 12 months full-time employment. When authorized before completion of studies, a student is limited to employment not exceeding 20 hours per week during the semester; employment during breaks and vacation periods may be full-time. In both cases, OPT must be recommended by the student's advisor, by the CS Practical Training Chairman, and by the International Student and Scholar Services office; approval is granted by the immigration service center in Nebraska (this takes between 60 and 120 days).

For a student who wants to sign up for OPT, the procedure is as follows:

1. The student should discuss PT with his or her advisor, and if the advisor approves, fill out and sign the department's Optional Practical Training form. The student and advisor should also fill out the Optional Practical Training Recommendation form from the International Student and Scholar Services office. The dates and information on these forms should be consistent.
2. These forms must then be submitted to the CS Practical Training Chairman, who is currently the **only** person authorized to sign the Recommendation form, and who then transmits the paperwork to the International Student and Scholar Services office.
3. If the request is for OPT before completing studies and if the applicant has previously undertaken Curricular Practical Training, the department will not normally authorize OPT unless the student has scheduled a thesis or dissertation defense and the advisor certifies that the required work has been completed.

### **(B) Curricular Practical Training (OPT)**

CPT is intended for internships in the student's field of study before graduation and may be full-time or part-time. Although there is technically no limit for part-time CPT, subsequent authorizations **beyond one semester** must show how continued practical training adds, and not duplicates, skills needed for the academic program. Please note that full-time employment

for less than 12 months in the aggregate still allows the student to apply for OPT (one year full-time employment) after completion of studies; full-time employment in CPT that meets or exceeds the 12 month-total invalidates the possibility for OPT after completion of studies.

Curricular Practical Training (CPT) must be recommended by the student's advisor, by the CS Practical Training Chairman, and must be approved by the International Student and Scholar Services office.

A student on CPT is generally approved for part-time employment during an academic semester (full-time employment only in rare cases), with the allowance to work full-time during breaks (including summer break). However, CS students on CPT during the academic year must remain **full-time** students during that period.

When applying for CPT, please note that CPT must be an integral part of the student's curriculum. On the CPT form, available from the International Student and Scholar Services office, there are three possible reasons for requesting CPT. The third choice does not apply in the CS program, as we do not have those official programs. The second choice is only appropriate if the advisor feels that it is necessary for the student to work for that employer in order to complete the thesis (e.g., the employer has certain research facilities needed by the student).

The first choice, and the one most appropriate in the CS program, says "the employment is designed and structured to enhance the student's educational program, endorsed by this department, directly related to the student's field of study, and monitored to ensure academic relevance." This means that the student's advisor must agree and support the application, perhaps as a practical application of theory learned in the classroom. Furthermore, the employment must be monitored to ensure academic relevance, usually by the student signing up for a research course in connection with the employment, and reporting on that research to the advisor. (One consequence of this reporting is that the department will generally not grant CPT for a period longer than one semester.) Finally, the student must generally remain a full-time student during this period, at least during the academic year.

Therefore the advisor **might** choose to recommend a student for a part-time job in Hudson during the spring semester while the student remains a full-time student at KSU, but the advisor would almost certainly not recommend a full-time job at Hudson during that same period (nor would such a request be granted by the department or the International Student and Scholar Services office). Furthermore, the student must remain a full-time student at KSU during that spring semester, and must sign up for a research course chosen in consultation with their advisor, for which the student will receive a grade.

For a student who wants to sign up for CPT, the procedure is as follows:

1. The student should discuss PT with his or her advisor, and if the advisor approves, fill out and sign the department's Curricular Practical Training form, and the student and advisor should also fill out the Curricular Practical Training Recommendation form from the International Student and Scholar Services office. The dates and information on these forms should be consistent.
2. These forms must then be submitted to the CS Practical Training Chairman, who is currently the **only** person authorized to sign the Recommendation form, and who then transmits the paperwork to the International Student and Scholar Services office.

In summary, the "standard" CPT approved by the CS Program:

- ▶ must have the support of the student's advisor
- ▶ must have **academic relevance**, and must be **formally monitored** in conjunction with some academic course
- ▶ is for **part-time** employment during the academic year (with the student remaining a **full-time** student), or full-time employment during the summer
- ▶ is approved for only one semester at a time

Also, students receiving PT of any kind are not also eligible to receive either a Teaching Assistantship or a Part-Time Instructorship during the time the PT is granted