

Guidelines and Procedures Curricular Practical Training (CPT) Graduate and Professional Students Only

At the University of Houston, four types of CPT have been approved for F-1 international students. This document will define each type of CPT and will provide procedures and guidelines for engaging in each type of experience.

Option 1: CPT as Cooperative Education (COOP):

1. CPT/COOP is only allowed for students who can demonstrate that the experience is “an integral part of an established curriculum.” This is restricted to employment that is required for the academic curriculum for all students in the program. The student will not receive course credit hours. In order to be eligible, the student must be approved for a professional/industry experience track, which is available in some academic programs.
2. Students may take CPT/COOP on either a part-time or a full-time basis, but specific restrictions apply. Consequently, the procedures for part-time and full-time CPT will be described separately.
 - A. **Part-time CPT/COOP (20 hours or less assignment per week):**
 - 1) Students may engage in part-time CPT during any academic term, as long as the experience has been certified as relevant to the degree objective (see procedures listed below in item 3).
 - During the long terms (fall and spring), students **must** be enrolled in a full course of study (a minimum of 9 hours).
 - The only exception to this rule is for students who are in their last term; these students may enroll in as few as three (3) hours.
 - During the summer terms, students do not have to enroll in any courses except the CPT/COOP course. There are only two exception to this rule:
 - We do not recommend that any student engage in CPT/COOP during his/her first term. If approved for CPT/COOP in a summer term which is also the student’s first term, the student must enroll in at least six (6) hours.
 - During the student’s final term, the student must enroll in at least three (3) hours.
 - 2) **Please NOTE: Students enrolled full-time who engage in part-time CPT (20 hours assignment per week) may not work for the university at the same time.** In other words, most students must choose between working in a COOP position and working for the university regardless of fall, spring, or summer term. The only exception is if the two positions, both of campus and off campus combined, will total 20 hours per week or less.
 - 3) CPT/COOP course requirements:
 - Students register for the COOP course.
 - Students are be evaluated through a formal process including a supervisor’s evaluation as well as a faculty member’s evaluation from

the student's home department.

- Course grade will be posted when all requirements are completed.
- 4) To enroll in a CPT/COOP course, complete the following steps:
- Visit the ISSS office to have your eligibility for CPT determined, to receive instructions regarding immigration regulations, and to pick up the [F-1 Graduate Student CPT Application Form](#).
 - Have your Form approved by your academic department.
 - Approved signatures are required from the academic advisor, the department chair, and the college dean.
 - A copy of the letter offering the CPT position to the student must be attached to the form.
 - Register for the CPT/COOP course
 - Return the Form to ISSS for authorization

B. Full-time CPT/COOP (more than 20 hours assignment per week):

- 1) Students may only engage in full-time CPT when they are not full-time students. This means that full-time CPT may only occur:
- During the summer term when the student is either not enrolled or only enrolled in a reduced course load (less than 6 credit hours), or
 - During a student's final term, but only if the student is approved for a reduced course load.
 - If a student is employed by the university during their final semester, they are still limited to 20 hours per week in an on-campus position. Students may obtain additional employment off campus while they are eligible for full-time CPT, but the total hours of all approved work positions must not exceed 40 hours per week.
- 2) As with the part-time CPT/COOP, the experience must be certified as relevant to the degree objective.
- 3) CPT/COOP course requirements:
- Students register for the COOP course.
 - Students are be evaluated through a formal process including a supervisor's evaluation as well as a faculty member's evaluation from the student's home department.
 - Course grade will be posted when all requirements are completed.
- 4) To enroll in a CPT/COOP course must complete the following steps:
- Visit the ISSS office to have your eligibility for CPT determined, to receive instructions regarding immigration regulations, and to pick up the [F-1 Graduate Student CPT Application Form](#).
 - Have your Form approved by your academic department.
 - Approved signatures are required from the academic advisor, the department chair, and the college dean.
 - A copy of the letter offering the CPT position to the student must be attached to the form.
 - Register for the CPT/COOP course.
 - Return the Form to ISSS for authorization.

Option 2: CPT as practicum/internship:

1. This type of CPT is a practicum/internship required for all students enrolled in a particular program (e.g., HRM, clinical psychology, educational psychology) and requires that all students enroll in a practicum/internship course on their class schedule.
2. Students taking a practicum/internship CPT may hold a graduate assistantship position if they are recommended by their departments, and if they meet the eligibility requirements.
3. Practicum/Internship CPT may be taken during any academic term, as determined by the academic departments. If a student is enrolled full-time, including a three-credit practicum/internship course, they may request full-time CPT eligibility as they are in the classroom less than full-time. Contact ISSS for assistance.
4. Students who need to enroll in a practicum/internship course must complete the following steps:
 - Visit the ISSS office to have your eligibility for CPT determined, to receive instructions regarding immigration regulations, and to pick up the [F-1 Graduate Student CPT Application Form](#).
 - Have your Form approved by your academic advisor.
 - Register for the practicum/internship course
 - Return the Form to ISSS for authorization.

Option 3: CPT for course credit; not required by academic curriculum:

1. This type of CPT is for students in programs which do not require all students to participate in an off-campus internship/practicum, but which offer particular for-credit (elective) courses that include off-campus CPT as part of the required curriculum for that course.
2. Students taking a non-required course credit CPT may not also hold a graduate assistantship position while participating in this type of CPT unless the total number of hours assigned each week between both positions totals 20 hours or less.
3. Non-required course credit CPT may be taken during any academic term, as determined by the academic departments. If a student is enrolled full-time, including a three-credit practicum/internship course, they may request full-time CPT eligibility as they are in the classroom less than full-time. Contact ISSS for assistance.
4. Students who choose to enroll in a non-required elective course which requires CPT must complete the following steps:
 - Visit the ISSS office to have your eligibility for CPT determined, to receive instructions regarding immigration regulations, and to pick up the [F-1 Graduate Student CPT Application Form](#).
 - Have your Form approved by your academic advisor.
 - Register for the practicum/internship course
 - Return the Form to ISSS for authorization.

Option 4: CPT as Dissertation or Thesis Research:

1. Sometimes dissertation and/or thesis research can involve gathering data at a particular corporation's research and development facilities. When the student must be an employee of the corporation to gain access to these facilities and their data, the student may engage in CPT. Thus, this type of CPT is for students who must be employed at sites not affiliated

- with the university in order to collect data for a dissertation or thesis project.
2. Students enrolled in this type of CPT usually engage in the dissertation or thesis/data collection on a part-time basis.
 3. Students taking a dissertation or thesis/data collection CPT may hold graduate assistantship positions if they are recommended by their departments and if they meet the eligibility requirements.
 4. Dissertation or thesis/data collection CPT may be taken during any academic term, as determined by the academic department.
 5. To enroll in a CPT/dissertation/thesis must complete the following steps:
 - Visit the ISSS office to have your eligibility for CPT determined, to receive instructions regarding immigration regulations, and to pick up the [F-1 Graduate Student CPT Application Form](#).
 - Have your Form approved by your academic department.
 - Approved signatures are required from the academic advisor, the department chair, and the college dean.
 - A contract between the student and dissertation/thesis chair must be attached to the Form (use the General Petition as you do now for non-structured courses.)
 - Register for dissertation or thesis hours
 - Return the Form to ISSS for authorization.