

Curricular Practical Training for F-1 Students

What is Curricular Practical Training?

The Immigration Service defines "curricular practical training" as employment which is an integral or important part of your curriculum, including: "...alternate work/study, internship, cooperative education, or any other type of required internship or practicum which is offered by sponsoring employers through cooperative agreements with the school." At the University of Bridgeport, the terms "co-op", "internship", and "field experience" are used to describe opportunities for Curricular Practical Training.

What Jobs Qualify?

To be considered Curricular Practical Training, the work must be related to your current major field of study AND must also be an integral or important part of your studies. Your academic department must determine if the job qualifies for Curricular Practical Training.

A. Employment which is required by your degree program always meets the requirements for Curricular Practical Training, regardless of whether or not you receive academic credit for your work.

B. Employment which is not required by your degree program may meet the requirements for Curricular Practical Training if you receive academic credit for the employment experience and if it is an important part of your studies.

How do I Qualify?

Employment Which Is a Required Part of Your Degree Program.

If (1) you are a graduate student, and (2) you are maintaining lawful F-1 status and you have been in F-1 status for one-full academic year, or your program **requires** your participation in Curricular Practical Training prior to satisfying the one-full academic year requirement (3) the proposed employment is a required part of your studies, and (4) you meet all academic criteria set by your academic department,

Undergraduate students must have completed two semesters of full-time study in order to be eligible for any form of Curricular Practical Training.

Employment Which Is Not a Required Part of Your Degree Program. In order to be eligible to apply for permission to work in a job that is not a required part of your study program, you must:

- (1) be in lawful F-1 status and
- (2) have been a full-time F-1 student for at least one full academic year and
- (3) meet all academic criteria set by your academic department
- (4) the job must be related to your field of studies.

How Many Hours per Week May I Work?

Your academic department must approve your request for Curricular Practical Training including how many hours per week you are approved for work. Part-Time Training. Employment for 20 hours or less per week while you are also enrolled full time is considered "part time" Curricular Practical Training. The employment authorization written on the back of your Form I-20 will specify permission to engage in "part time" training and you must be careful to limit your work to no more than 20 hours per week. There is no limit on the number of semesters that you may participate in part-time Curricular Practical Training, but you must be simultaneously enrolled full-time in order to maintain lawful F-1 status.

Full-Time Training. Employment for more than 20 hours per week is considered "full time" Curricular Practical Training and the employment authorization on your Form I-20 will specify permission to participate in "full time" training. There is no limit on the number of semesters that you may participate in full time Curricular Practical Training, but if you participate for twelve months or more, you will not be eligible for Optional Practical Training (see next paragraph).

How Long May I Participate In Curricular P.T.?

Your academic department may have limits on the number of credits of Curricular Practical Training that you may register for. Each academic department, not the International Office, makes this decision. However, if you participate in twelve months or more of "full time" Curricular Practical Training, you lose eligibility to apply for twelve months of Optional Practical Training. Participation in "part time" Curricular Practical Training does not effect your eligibility for Optional Practical Training.

For more information about CPT, please contact your International Studies program.

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