

## Curricular Practical Training

### Academic Advisor – Frequently Asked Questions

**What is Curricular Practical Training?** Curricular Practical Training is an immigration benefit that is available for international students (undergraduate and graduate) in F-1 status. It is not the actual internship, but the training authorization the student applies for when they have an eligible academic internship opportunity.

**What restrictions are there for CPT?** For a student to be eligible for CPT, the following requirements must be met:

- The student must be in valid F-1 status
- The student must have been enrolled continuously for one academic year, while maintaining academic status.
- The academic internship be reviewed by the academic advisor and be deemed integral to the curriculum/program of study that the student is pursuing.

**How is an internship deemed integral to the curriculum?** Academic advisors/departments have three different ways to show that an internship is integral to the curriculum. The internship must be at least one of the following:

- 1) [Documented requirement for graduation.](#)
- 2) [Requirement for research/skills for an approved dissertation/thesis](#)
- 3) [Tied to enrollment in an experiential learning course with documented academic goals and strong documentation explaining how the internship experience is considered integral to the curriculum.](#)

**What type of information should advisors provide to document the reasons above?**

- **Documented Requirement for Graduation:** This option can be checked when the internship is a requirement for every student in that program to graduate. This requirement must be documented in the catalog/bulletin.
  - *Does the student need to be enrolled in a concurrent course for this reason?* ISSS does not require concurrent enrollment, so it depends upon department requirements.
  - *If our department requires concurrent enrollment for the training, should we note this on the CPT form?* Yes, please! If your department requires the concurrent enrollment, we need to know that.

- *Our department does have a required training component, but is it only for one quarter. Can we use this reason after the first quarter of training in that case?* No. Once the training requirement for your program has been met, this reason cannot be used.
- **Internship Necessary for Research/Training for Thesis/Dissertation:** This option can be chosen when a student has an **APPROVED** thesis/dissertation and they need to complete research/work off campus to gain research/training necessary to complete their approved thesis/dissertation.
  - *Does the student need to be enrolled in a concurrent course for this reason?* No, ISSS does not require concurrent enrollment in an experiential learning course for thesis/dissertation research.
  - *How many times or how long can a student use this reason?* As long as you, the advisor, and the student feel it is needed to complete the required research/training. Students should be aware that 12 months of full time (21 hours or more per week) of CPT makes them ineligible for OPT (Post-completion work authorization).
  - *Can a student use this reason if they do not yet have an approved thesis or dissertation?* No, this reason can only be used if the student has an approved thesis or dissertation topic.
- **Required to earn credit in an experiential learning course:** Students need to be enrolled in the experiential learning course approved by their department. Independent Study Courses cannot be used for this reason. The Department is responsible for determining the number of credits.
  - *Is concurrent enrollment required for this reason?* Yes, concurrent enrollment in the appropriate experiential learning course for your department is required.
  - *Why am I being asked to provide such detail on how this is integral to the curriculum?* The U.S government permits CPT only when the internship is integral to the established curriculum. When an internship is not a documented requirement for the degree, the government relies upon the academic department and advisor to provide detailed information on how the internship is integral.
  - *Is it acceptable for the student to establish their own goals and complete this form?* No. Although the student can work with their advisor to establish goals, this needs to be a supervised training where the advisor is familiar with the training and has established learning goals and deliverables.
  - *Can the same academic requirements/goals be used for each student?* No. The requirements and goals established are unique to the student's position at the off-campus site, so they cannot be the same for each student. However, the description of how internships are deemed integral to the curriculum can be the same for all students in a program.

*Can our department use zero credit internships?* Yes, but please be aware that use of zero credit enrollment for an optional internship is extremely hard to prove as curricular, so it does cause a red flag for the government. ISSS will need especially strong evidence from the academic advisor on how an optional, zero credit experience is not just beneficial but integral to the curriculum.

- *What if the training counts towards an elective requirement?* Great! Please note that under the question asking how the training is integral.
- *Why do I need to fill this form out every quarter for my student's continuing training?* Because the training is required to earn experiential learning credit, ISSS can only approve on a term by term basis. Additionally, as this reason is the hardest to connect to "integral nature," it also means it is the most reviewed by the government for red flags. This is especially true when students do extended, full-time internships.