CPT and OPT

The Basics
What is CPT?

- Curricular Practical Training
- CPT is an integral part of the established curriculum which allows students to engage in training that is required or optional. These include internships, externships, co-ops, or practicums.
- CPT is done DURING your degree program (before you graduate)
- You are still an F-1 student while on CPT
CPT Regulations

- The work experience is an “integral part of the established curriculum”
  - It is required of all students
    OR
  - It is optional. If it is optional, then you MUST register for a course that corresponds to the internship/training in the same semester.

- The work is offered through a cooperative agreement between the University and the employer.
  - A job offer letter meets this requirement.
CPT Regulations, continued

- CPT is only authorized for a specific employer, location, and dates.
- It can be part-time (20 hours or less) or full-time (over 20 hours).
- 12 months or more of full-time CPT will make you ineligible for OPT.
- Part-time CPT does not impact eligibility for OPT.
- You must maintain full-time enrollment while on CPT. What is considered F/T enrollment during CPT varies by program.
Graduate Assistants

- You cannot do CPT if you have a Graduate Assistantship.
- If your GA contract does not cover summer, then you may do CPT in summer.
Eligibility for CPT

- You have been enrolled in your program full-time for one academic year (Fall and Spring)
- You are in good academic standing
- You are maintaining valid F-1 status
Applying for CPT

- Discuss the internship/training opportunity with your academic advisor or internship coordinator in your department.
- Obtain an offer letter from the employer that lists location, dates, and job description.
- Complete the CPT application and have advisor or internship coordinator sign.
- Submit the signed CPT application and job offer letter to our office.
- A CPT I-20 must be issued prior to beginning employment.
- CPT follows the semester dates.
Optional Practical Training (OPT)
What is OPT

- “Temporary employment for practical training directly related to the student’s major area of study”
- A student is eligible for 12 months of OPT at each level of study
- Must complete our application to get an OPT I-20. Short OPT appointment is recommended
- Must apply to US Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) and receive EAD card (Employment Authorization Document) before starting work
- Application takes 2-3 months for USCIS to process
- You are still an F-1 student while on OPT
Types of OPT

- **Pre-Completion** – while a currently enrolled student
  - Full-time during summer vacation, if continuing in the Fall
  - Part-time (20 hours per week) during Fall or Spring. Must be enrolled full-time
  - Reduces the amount of post-completion OPT that will be available

- **Post-Completion**
  - Must work full-time, minimum 20 hours per week
  - Usually done after graduation
  - Thesis/dissertation students are eligible if completed all coursework and are only working on thesis/dissertation
  - Must end Graduate Assistantship contract before start of OPT
Eligibility for OPT

- Enrolled full-time for one academic year (Fall and Spring)
- Maintaining valid F-1 status
- Students in ELI (English Language Institute) not eligible
- No job offer needed
How to apply for OPT

- Download our application packet from our website www.uakron.edu/international/forms/index.dot
- Make an appointment with us and obtain OPT I-20
- Apply to USCIS as early as you can (but no earlier than 90 days before the end date on your I-20 and no later than 60 days after this date)
- Application Fee $410
- Maintain your F-1 status by following the OPT requirements. See our “Guide for Post Completion OPT” www.uakron.edu/international/forms/index.dot
24-month STEM Extension


- Must file application within last 90 days of post-completion OPT.
- Must be a paid job or job offer
- Employer must be enrolled in E-Verify
STEM Extension - Resources

- STEM OPT packet and application: www.uakron.edu/international/forms/index.dot

- Study in the States https://studyinthestates.dhs.gov/stem-opt-hub

- USCIS https://www.uscis.gov/working-united-states/students-and-exchange-visitors/students-and-employment/stem-opt
Who to contact about CPT/OPT

- **Main Contact:**
  - Emily Aronson, Assistant Director, Immigration, Buchtel Hall, Room 207

- **Alternate Contact:**
  - Tracy McCune, Director, Immigration, Buchtel Hall, Room 207

**Location:** International Center
Buchtel Hall, Room 207
Phone: (330) 972-6349

[immigration@uakron.edu](mailto:immigration@uakron.edu)