Curricular Practical Training

Office of International Students and Scholars

Welcome to the Curricular Practical Training (CPT) tutorial for Rice F-1 international students! This tutorial is a comprehensive guide to CPT at Rice University. We hope you find it helpful and please contact OISS should you have any further questions.

The topics covered include:

- F-1 Employment Comparison Chart
- Overview – What is CPT?
- Types of CPT, Part-Time vs. Full-Time CPT
- Eligibility Criteria
- Application Process
- Documentation Required for Undergraduates
- Documentation Required for Graduates
- Sample CPT Authorization
- Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

F-1 Employment Comparison Chart

	CPT	Pre Completion OPT	Post Completion OPT
What Is It	Authorization for off-campus internship/training/research, which is required for, or an integral part of, an F-1 student's major field(s) of study *during* their program.	Authorization for internship/training/research, which is related to an F-1 student's major field(s) of study *during* their program.	Authorization for internship/training/research, which is related to an F-1 student's major field(s) of study *after* their program completion.
Eligibility Criteria	• Full-time enrollment in lawful status at SEVIS-approved school for at least one academic year. • Must be an integral part of an established curriculum. • Available only *before* a student completes their degree program.	• Full-time enrollment in lawful status at SEVIS-approved school for at least one academic year. • Must be directly related to major field(s) of study. • Available only *before* a student completes their degree program.	• Full-time enrollment in lawful status at SEVIS-approved school for at least one academic year. • Must be directly related to major field(s) of study. • Available only *after* a student completes their degree program.
Job Offer	• Required as part of the application process.	• Not required for the application process.	• Not required for the application process.
Duration of Training	Authorized on a per–semester basis based on a specific internship/training.	12 months maximum for all OPT.	12 months maximum for all OPT.
Full Time/Part Time	• Part-time (*up to* 20 hours/week) only during the semester. • Full-time (over 20 hours/week) may be authorized over the summer & breaks.	• Part-time (*20 hours/week or fewer*) only during the semester. Deducted at 50% rate from the total of 12 months. • Full-time (over 20 hours/week) may be authorized over the summer & official breaks.	• Full-time (over 20 hours/week). • May work multiple part-time jobs to reach minimum hours/week requirement.
Granted By	CPT I-20 issued by OISS.	OPT I-20 issued by OISS. EAD issued by USCIS.	OPT I-20 issued by OISS. EAD issued by USCIS.
Application Fee	$0	See https://www.uscis.gov/i-765	See https://www.uscis.gov/i-765
Processing Time	1 week.	1 week at OISS, ~90 days at USCIS	1 week at OISS, ~90 days at USCIS

What is CPT?

- Curricular Practical Training (CPT) is **temporary work authorization** given to F-1 students **to receive training** required by a course or program. The training must also be directly related to their **major field of study**. As defined in the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR), CPT is "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" [8 CFR § 214.2(f)(10)(i)]. The regulations also state that CPT must be an **integral** part of an **established curriculum.**

- CPT is available only prior to the completion of your degree program and you must have a job offer at the time of application.

- CPT applies to both *paid and unpaid* positions.

- CPT must be authorized by OISS *before* you start the position.

- CPT is employer specific. Separate authorizations are required for each employer.

- CPT is semester-based. Separate authorizations are required for each semester.

Types of CPT at Rice University

1) CPT required by a **course** as described in courses.rice.edu
2) CPT required by a **degree program** (*e.g. professional masters programs, Bachelor's of Architecture program*)
3) CPT required for research **integral to thesis/dissertation** *(graduate students only)*

Part-Time vs. Full-Time CPT

Part-time CPT: Employment for 20 hours or less per week is considered part-time. Part-time CPT does not affect OPT eligibility. Typically, part-time CPT will be authorized while school is in session.

Full-time CPT: Employment for more than 20 hours per week is considered full-time. Please be aware that 12 months or more of full-time CPT will make you ineligible for Optional Practical Training (OPT). Full-time CPT can be authorized during summer and winter breaks.

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Requirements

To be eligible to apply for CPT, all of the requirements listed below must be met:

✓ You are a student in valid F-1 status.

✓ You have been lawfully enrolled on a full-time basis at a SEVIS approved school for one academic year (2 semesters) prior to applying for CPT.*

✓ You are enrolled in a course/program in which practical training is an integral part of the establish curriculum.

✓ You have a job offer.

Graduate students requiring immediate participation in off-campus work should meet with an OISS advisor for guidance.

How to Apply

1) Review this CPT Tutorial and attend one of the many CPT/OPT workshops held by OISS each semester. *Current workshop schedule is available at http://oiss.rice.edu/studentwork.*

2) Make an appointment to see an OISS advisor if you have follow-up questions. *Contact OISS at 713-348-6095 or email oiss@rice.edu.*

3) Secure all the necessary required documentation *(**see next slides for underground and graduate requirements).*

4) Submit the required documents to OISS **at least one week prior** to the intended start date of the CPT.

5) **Pick up your new I-20** with the CPT authorization **before you start** your training/employment, and review for accuracy.

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1) **Obtain a job offer letter** that meets all of the requirements below:

  ➢ Printed on official company letterhead

  ➢ Brief description of the job

  ➢ Precise start and end dates of position (start date must be in the future and end date should be before end of current semester according to http://registrar.rice.edu/calendars/)

  ➢ Number of hours per week (up to 20 hours/week if part-time)

  ➢ Physical job location (street address, city, state, zip code). If working remotely, employer must indicate address from which you will be working.

2) Complete your portion of the **Undergraduate CPT Application Form.**

3) Have your **course instructor and Major Academic Advisor** complete and **sign** their sections on the Undergraduate CPT Application Form.

4) **Print out supporting documentation for submission**

  ✓ Proof of class registration (not required in the case of a summer CPT that is tied to a fall semester course)

  ✓ Screen shot showing your majors and minors from Esther

  ✓ Description of course from courses.rice.edu

1) Obtain a **job offer letter** that meets all of the requirements below:
   - Printed on official company letterhead
   - Brief description of the job
   - Precise start and end dates of position (start date must be in the future and end date should be before end of current semester according to http://registrar.rice.edu/calendars/)
   - Number of hours per week (up to 20 hours/week if part-time)
   - Physical job location (street address, city, state, zip code). If working remotely, employer must indicate address from which you will be working.

2) Complete your portion of the **Graduate CPT Application Form**

3) Have your **Faculty Advisor** complete and **sign** the Graduate CPT Application Form indicating the type of curricular justification (course requirement*, thesis/dissertation requirement, or program requirement)

4) For course-based CPT, have your **Course Instructor** complete and sign their section on the Graduate CPT Application Form.

5) For course-based CPT, **print out supporting documentation for submission**
   - Proof of class registration (not required in the case of a summer CPT that is tied to a fall semester course)
   - Description of course from courses.rice.edu

CPT Authorization

Department of Homeland Security
U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement

I-20, Certificate of Eligibility for Nonimmigrant Student Status
OMB NO. 1653-0038

SEVIS ID: N00▮▮▮▮▮▮▮ (F-1)   NAME: ▮▮▮▮▮▮▮

EMPLOYMENT AUTHORIZATIONS

CHANGE OF STATUS/CAP-GAP EXTENSION

AUTHORIZED DROP BELOW FULL COURSE OF STUDY

- CPT authorization will print at the top of the second page of your I-20. It will indicate full-time/part-time, the dates, and the employer information.

- Should you need to change employment dates, number of hours, or employer, you **must** contact OISS and secure new CPT authorization ahead of time.

1. As a Rice Student, when would I want to pursue CPT?

When one of the following applies:

a) You are taking a course in your major field of study that requires off-campus employment as part of the completion of the course

b) Off-campus employment is required for your degree completion.

c) Off-campus employment is required to complete research for your thesis or dissertation.

2. Who is eligible for CPT?

Students who meet certain preconditions may be eligible to apply for CPT. Those preconditions include:

a) Student has valid F-1 status.

b) Student has been lawfully enrolled on a full-time basis at a SEVIS approved school for one academic year.

c) Student is being required to pursue practical training/ employment to meet curricular requirements of a course program in his/her major field of study.

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3. When may I apply for CPT?

You may apply for CPT after meeting the preconditions listed in question #2.

4. Why is CPT limited to one's "major field of study"?

U.S. federal regulations mandate laws for students on an F-1 visa under the Department of Homeland Security's (DHS) Student & Exchange Visitor Program (SEVP). The guidance from SEVP recently established that CPT employment must be "directly related to the student's 'major field of study.'"

5. What are the steps to apply for CPT once I know I am eligible to apply?

1. Attend a CPT/OPT workshop and review the PowerPoint tutorial.

2. Obtain a job offer.

3. Have academic advisor and course instructor (when applicable) complete CPT recommendation form.

4. Submit CPT forms with required attachments and copy of your job offer letter to OISS at least 1 week before your job starts.

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6. How long does it take to get CPT approved?

If all the proper documentation is submitted, it takes 1 week.
It will take longer if additional information is requested and needs to be submitted.

7. Who is my Academic Advisor?

For **undergraduate** students, this is either your "Major/Minor Advisor" and/or your "Divisional Advisor" who is contributing to your academic curriculum.

For **graduate** students, this is your faculty advisor.

8. How can I prove verification of enrollment in a course requiring practical training (CPT authorization)?

You should submit:

a) Proof of class registration from your Esther account (not required in the case of summer CPT that is tied to a fall semester course) to verify enrollment, and

b) Official course description from courses.rice.edu to verify that course requires practical training.

9. Can I work full-time on CPT?

Generally speaking, CPT can be authorized for part-time (20 hour per week) during academic terms, and full-time (20+ hours) during summer and school breaks.

10. Is the CPT authorization date and employer specific?

Yes, it is. You can only work for the employer stated on your I-20, and for the dates specified. If you need to change or extend the place or dates, you will need to complete a new CPT form with updated documentation and signatures. You must stop employment and wait for CPT authorization, if you need more time. Working even one day (or hour) without proper CPT authorization would require termination of one's F-1 status.

11. What happens if my CPT continues longer than one semester?

CPT is authorized on a per-semester (i.e. fall, spring and summer) basis. You need to submit a separate CPT form for each job, and each semester.

12. When can I begin working, using my CPT?

The authorization needs to be approved in SEVIS by the OISS advisor.

Please allow one week for OISS processing. If your CPT is approved,

you will be issued a new I-20. Working (even unpaid) off-campus before receiving CPT authorization is a violation of F-1 status and will result in the termination of your visa record in SEVIS.

13. What happens if I get approval for a summer internship but do not take the class associated with the internship in the following Fall semester?

You must take and successfully complete the class in the Fall. If not, you will be terminated from your F-1 visa status for unauthorized work employment. Unfortunately, the consequences of this are very harsh for an F-1 student, including having to return to your home country to apply for a new F-1 visa, and starting your valid F-1 status from the beginning.

14. What if I find a position that is not directly related to my major field – will CPT work for authorization?

No. The law states that "the training is directly related to the student's area of study."

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15. If I just want to volunteer, do I have to apply for CPT?

F-1 students need to be careful about volunteering, to ensure that it is, in fact, not rendering services for an employer. You are strongly recommended to make an appointment to see an OISS advisor to discuss if you need CPT before beginning your volunteering activity.

16. Can I use CPT if I want to start my own business?

No. You need to apply for Pre-Completion Optional Practical Training (OPT) in order to conduct entrepreneurial activities on an F-1 visa. Please refer to the OPT Tutorial at http://oiss.rice.edu/studentwork/

17. Can I have multiple CPTs at one time?

Yes, as long as you are working within the maximum number of hours for F-1 students: 20 hours per week or less during semesters. Total number of hours includes on-campus employment. Each CPT is authorized separately.

18. Can I keep my on-campus job and do CPT at the same time?

Yes, as long as you work within maximum number of hours for F-1 students: 20 hours per week or less during semesters.

19. Do I need CPT for off-campus research opportunities?

Yes. There are rare opportunities that could be considered on-campus work at an off-campus site, but you need to speak to an OISS advisor in advance to secure the proper authorization either way.

20. If I find an unpaid internship, do I need to apply for CPT?

Yes, you do. CPT is authorization for engaging in practical training. It does not matter if it is paid or unpaid work.

21. Does CPT affect OPT?

It can. If you work full-time CPT for 12 months or more, you will no longer be eligible for OPT. No amount of part-time CPT affects OPT.