To: Academic Advisors and Faculty of International Students  

From: Brisa Zubia, Interim Director/PDSO/RO  

Re: F-1 Curricular Practical Training  

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An F-1 visa holding student needs to receive employment authorization before participating in paid or unpaid employment. Curricular Practical Training (CPT) enables F-1 student to gain off-campus employment authorization in the U.S. for intern, extern, research assistant, etc., as long as curricular credit requirements are met. A request for CPT authorization must be made to a Designated School Official (DSO) through OIIIL, not a government agency. There is no application fee. A student needs to have completed one full academic year before being eligible for CPT, and may begin employment only after receiving a new I-20 with CPT approved.

CPT employment, paid or unpaid, must relate to the student’s major and they must take a required independent or other approved course to satisfy the curricular credit requirement. CPT is not authorized for minors or concentrations. Failure to register and complete the required course will jeopardize the student’s status. CPT is not required for employment at Carleton during their enrollment or breaks. Exchange students and those who will not be enrolled at Carleton the following term are not eligible for CPT.

A student must register for an independent reading (290 or 390), study (291 or 391), research (292 or 392), or other course approved by the department that requires an internship/externship, research project, or other curricular experience. All CPT students must register for a minimum of 1 credit.

Employment completed during the summer, winter, or spring break, requires course registration in the following fall, winter, or spring term. CPT may be authorized during Carleton’s academic terms but student must register for the required course each term and employment authorization is for only one term at a time.

To qualify for CPT authorization a student must meet the following conditions:

1. Maintain valid immigration status before applying for CPT.
2. Enroll full-time in a degree program for a full academic year (10 consecutive months).
3. Have a job offer that their academic department verifies is practical work experience in their major.
4. Some majors may limit the number of internships and thus CPT course; student NEEDS to check with their department. If a student has surpassed the maximum number of CPT internships, they may be eligible for Pre-Completion OPT.

If you have further questions, please feel free to contact myself or Liz Cody, the International Student Program Coordinator at ecody@carleton.edu.