CURRICULAR PRACTICAL TRAINING (CPT)

WHAT IS CURRICULAR PRACTICAL TRAINING?

Curricular Practical Training (CPT) is defined to be alternative work/study, internship, cooperative education or any other type of required internship or practicum that is offered by sponsoring employers through cooperative agreements with the school.

CPT is a work authorization that allows F-1 students to gain practical **off-campus experience**, paid or unpaid, **directly related to your field of study before completion of the program of study listed in the Form I-20.**

CPT is a benefit of maintaining your F-1 visa and is not a separate visa category nor does require "sponsorship" from an employer. CPT is authorized by a Designated School Official (DSO) at OISS.

CPT ELIGIBILITY:

- ☐ Be in **active F-1 status and have completed at least two full-time academic semesters** (one academic year)*

  **Exceptions include: 1)graduate students whose program requires immediate participation in an internship; 2)students who completed two full-time academic semesters while in another valid nonimmigrant status and are now in valid F-1 status through in-country change of status; 3)transfer students who completed one academic year at another institution; 4) per the College of Music, no program requires immediate practical training.*

- ☐ Have a **practical training opportunity that is directly related to the major of study listed on your I-20** (See Section 3 in the Applying for CPT Section for more details)
- ☐ Be **enrolled in a course that is an integral part of an established curriculum** (unless CPT is *required*). You must remain enrolled in the course with which you've applied for CPT.
- ☐ **Make normal progress toward degree completion**. The primary purpose of the F-1 visa is academics and any CPT must be secondary. CPT should not interfere with, or cause delay, in timely degree completion.
- ☐ **CPT will not be granted to**: English Language (ELC) students; students who have finished their major requirements; students who have defended; students who are delaying completion of their studies; and students applying for CPT based on a minor.

PAID VS. UNPAID:

CPT can be either paid or unpaid.

Practical training is defined as any type of service for which a benefit is received. Therefore, even if you will not be paid, you should obtain CPT authorization.

There is a difference between engaging in an unpaid practical training and volunteering. Volunteering is defined as activities that are charitable or humanitarian in nature. True volunteering would not require CPT authorization.

Please check with your OISS advisor before participating in any volunteer opportunities to avoid violating your F-1 status.

PART-TIME VS. FULL-TIME:

CPT can be either part-time (no more than 20 hours per week) or full-time (more than 20 hours per week). There is no cap for full-time hours.

If you accrue 12 months or more of full-time CPT you will forfeit your eligibility for Optional Practical Training (OPT) at that degree level. Part-time CPT does not negatively affect your OPT eligibility.

OISS will only authorize full-time CPT for one academic semester for the duration of a student's academic program. Academic semesters include Fall and Spring, and Summer if Summer will be your final semester.

INTEGRAL VS. REQUIRED:

☐ **Required CPT:** This applies to students whose **degree program requires them to complete an internship or practicum in order to receive their degree**. Proof of requirement must be included with your CPT application.

Per the College of Music, no program requires immediate practical training.

☐ **Integral CPT:** You will need to work with your Academic Advisor as they will be required to note the appropriate course number on the CPT authorization request. OISS will be verifying your enrollment in the course.

An Integral part of the student's established curriculum in the context of a Curricular Practical Training (CPT) course means that the practical training opportunity is directly related to the student's academic program. Specifically:

- **Counts Toward Degree Requirements or Electives:** The course must be credited toward fulfilling the student's degree requirements or elective credits, indicating that it is an established component of their academic curriculum.
- **Aligned with Field of Study:** The course and the experience must be relevant to and considered part of the student's academic discipline or field of study.
- **Includes Various Course Types:** The CPT course can be a research course, internship course, independent study, course that is aligned provided it is integrated into the student's academic plan.

In essence, this requirement ensures that the practical training is not extracurricular or optional but a recognized and necessary part of the student's educational program, contributing to their academic progress and degree completion.

CPT DATES:

CPT is approved on a semester-by-semester basis. Students must complete all required steps and reapply for each semester in which they wish to participate in CPT. For details on CPT start and end dates for each semester, please refer to the MSU Academic Calendar and the table below.

SEMESTER APPLYING	Fall	Winter Break	Spring	Summer
COURSE ENROLLMENT	Fall course	Spring course	Spring course	Summer *OR* upcoming Fall course
START DATE	First day of classes	After last day of Fall final exams	After last day of Fall final exams	After last day of Spring final exams
END DATE	Last day of Fall final exams	Part-time CPT: can continue through end of Spring semester Full-time CPT: day before Spring semester begins	Last day of Spring final exams	Summer course: Last day of final exams in Summer Fall course: Day before Fall semester begins

CAN I WORK ON-CAMPUS AND PARTICIPATE IN CPT SIMULTANEOUSLY?

CPT is counted separately from on-campus employment and may not impact on-campus employment work hours. If you have on-campus employment and want to apply for CPT, please first contact your Academic/Faculty Advisor or Supervisor. Remember that it is your responsibility to ensure that academic progress remains your primary objective.

APPLYING FOR CPT:

☐ **Step 1: Discuss your practical training plans with your Academic/Graduate Advisor, agree on the type of CPT to be requested (integral vs. required), and provide the necessary information to complete their section of the application.**

☐ **Step 2: Obtain a practical training letter from the organization or entity providing you with practical training. For reference, please review:**

- Template Offer Letter for **Music Students**
- Template Offer Letter for **All Other Students**

The practical training letter must include:

- ☐ Be on letterhead
- ☐ Position title
- ☐ Wage/salary/remuneration
  - If unpaid, the letter should specify this
- ☐ Address of where the work will be performed
  - In the case of remote or hybrid work, the letter should specify the location(s) where work will be performed
- ☐ How many hours you will work per week
- ☐ Start and end dates
  - CPT is only authorized one semester at a time
- ☐ A detailed description of your position, list of duties, tasks, and/or goals that show how the practical training relates to your major of study as listed on your I-20
- ☐ Signature of your employer

A standard offer letter may not include the required information. It is your responsibility to ensure that you provide a letter that includes all required details. If your letter is missing any of the required information, your CPT application may be denied.

☐ **Step 3: Log in to the MyOISS portal and submit the Curricular Practical Training eForm.**

You will be required to upload your practical training offer letter and your most recent I-94.

Have your passport on hand. You will be required to enter the expiration date of your passport. (Passport should be valid for at least 6 months into the future)

☐ **Step 4: OISS will review your eForm within 8-10 business days**

You should submit your CPT application at least 2 weeks before your start date. If you submit your application later than that, we cannot guarantee that you will be authorized to work by your requested start date. You must have an I-20 with CPT recommendation in order to begin your practical training. Working without authorization is a serious violation of your F-1 status.

If all requirements are met, your OISS advisor will approve your CPT application and create your CPT I-20. You will receive an email once your CPT I-20 is ready. Incomplete applications may cause your CPT application to be denied or delayed.

Be sure to print, sign and date your I-20. You are responsible for keeping all of your I-20s.