

Curricular Practical Training (CPT)

Curricular Practical Training (CPT) is an employment option for F-1 students engaged in an academic program for which work is considered an integral part of their studies.

CPT authorization allows you to accept compensated employment in your field of study for which you will receive academic credit from NOVA. Please note that "compensation" includes any form of payment (cash, check, stipend, etc.), or money for food, transportation (such as metro tickets), or other expenses. If you are going to receive *any* type of compensation you must have work authorization to avoid engaging in illegal employment. You must meet with an international student advisor in the Office of International Student Services or on your campus in order to obtain authorization for CPT.

Eligibility Requirements

To be eligible for CPT, you must fit **all** of the following criteria:

- be in F-1 status
- be enrolled and studying in a degree program
- have complete one academic year of full time study (2 semesters, not including summer)
- have completed at least one semester of degree studies at NOVA

Reminder: United States law requires you to obtain written authorization before starting any type of compensated employment. Beginning work without authorization from the US Citizenship and Immigration Service (USCIS) or NOVA's Office of International Student Services is a serious violation of your F-1 status.

Frequently Asked Questions

What are the academic requirements?

You must receive academic credit which counts toward your required credits for graduation.

Who approves my work authorization?

NOVA's Office of International Student Services or an international student advisor on your campus.

What document will I receive to show my work authorization?

You will be issued a new I-20 with the CPT work authorization on the third page.

How long does it take to get the approval?

Please allow 10 business days for the office to process your application. *Note that you are not authorized to begin working until the CPT start date on page 3 of your I-20.*

Can I work full-time or part-time?

Either. In your application you will need to specify "part-time" (20 hours per week or less) or "full-time" (over 20 hours per week), and this will be indicated on your new CPT I-20.

Is there a limit to how long I can do CPT?

- The immigration regulations do not limit the number of semesters you can be authorized for CPT, however the credits you earn must count toward completion of your degree.
- If you are authorized for a total of 12 or more cumulative months of full-time CPT you will lose your eligibility for OPT. (Note that this does *not* apply to *part-time* CPT).

Do I need a Social Security number to do CPT?

If you will be paid, yes. If you do not have a Social Security number yet, you may apply for a Social Security number after receiving an offer of employment or internship. Please visit the Social Security section of our website for information on how to apply.