

Curricular Practical Training

Introduction

Because of the University's three-track system and emphasis on internships, International Services has adopted a strict compliance approach to the federal regulations governing work authorization for internships.

Regulatory Foundation

8 CFR 214.2(f)(10)

(10) Practical training. Practical training may be authorized to an F-1 student who has been lawfully enrolled on a full -time basis, in an approved SEVP-certified college, university, conservatory, or seminary for one full academic year. This paragraph (f)(10) also includes students who, during their course of study, were enrolled in a study abroad program, if the student had spent at least one full academic term enrolled in a full course of study in the United States prior to studying abroad. A student may be authorized 12 months of practical training, and becomes eligible for another 12 months of practical training when they change to a higher educational level. Students in English language training programs are ineligible for practical training. An eligible student may request employment authorization for practical training in a position that is directly related to their major area of study. There are two types of practical training available:

8 CFR 214.2(f)(10)(i)

- (i) *Curricular practical training.* An F-1 student may be authorized by the DSO to participate in a curricular practical training program that is an integral part of an established curriculum. Curricular practical training 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. Students who have received one year or more of full time curricular practical training are ineligible for post-completion academic training. Exceptions to the one academic year requirement are provided for students enrolled in graduate studies that require immediate participation in curricular practical training. A request for authorization for curricular practical training must be made to the DSO. A student may begin curricular practical training only after receiving their Form I-20 or successor form with the DSO endorsement. To grant authorization for a student to engage in curricular practical training, a DSO will update the student's record in SEVIS as being authorized for curricular practical training that is directly related to the student's major area of study. The DSO will indicate whether the training is full-time or part-time, the employer and location, and the employment start and end date. The DSO must sign, date, and return the Form I-20 or successor form to the student prior to the student's commencement of employment indicating that curricular practical training has been approved.¹

¹ [https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-8/part-214/section-214.2#p-214.2\(f\)\(10\)](https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-8/part-214/section-214.2#p-214.2(f)(10))

Broadcast Message: Reminder of Liability for DSOs Regarding CPT Authorization

To: PDSOs and DSOs at SEVP-certified schools

Date: August 12, 2026

BCM Number: 2608-01

General Information

The Student and Exchange Visitor Program (SEVP) reminds all designated school officials (DSOs) of their responsibilities regarding curricular practical training (CPT) authorization as well as increased program oversight concerning the proper use of CPT. SEVP has observed a rise in CPT authorizations that do not meet regulatory requirements, specifically those not constituting an **integral** part of an established curriculum. As a result, the program is increasing its scrutiny of CPT approvals to ensure compliance with federal regulations. Please carefully read and review the following information:

- **CPT must be integral to the curriculum:** DSOs can only authorize CPT when the training is an integral part of an established curriculum and is directly related to the student's major area of study. CPT cannot be authorized solely for the purpose of employment or for experiences that are not required or otherwise formally recognized as part of the academic program.

SEVP reserves the right to request documentation and other evidence from DSOs to identify whether CPT is indeed a core and essential part of the student's studies, without which, they would be unable to complete their degree. While SEVP recognizes that the school, not the U.S. government, defines what is and is not required to complete a degree, SEVP is also committed to identifying and investigating schools that attempt to undermine or purposely bypass federal regulations or oversight.

DSOs are reminded that F nonimmigrant students are, by their own attestation under penalty of perjury, here in the United States "*solely for the purpose of pursuing a full program of study.*" If SEVP suspects that school officials are abusing CPT to create work opportunities rather than academic studies, they may be subject to additional scrutiny and action from SEVP and Homeland Security Investigations (HSI), to include potential withdrawal of the school's SEVP certification.

- **DSO certification and legal responsibility:** When you sign or re-sign the Form I-20, "Certificate of Eligibility for Nonimmigrant Student Status," to authorize CPT, **you are certifying under penalty of perjury** that all information is true and correct to the best of your knowledge. This includes confirming that CPT is required or otherwise integral to the student's curriculum.

Potential liability: Improper CPT authorization, such as for non-integral purposes, may subject both the institution and individual DSO to administrative or legal consequences. This includes withdrawal of SEVP certification and potential penalties for providing false information or misrepresenting the nature of the training. **Actions requested:** After reviewing the above information, DSOs should:

1. Carefully review all CPT requests and your institution's current academic requirements across all fields of study.
2. Ensure that CPT is only authorized when it is truly integral to the program. Only authorize CPT if its absence would make the attainment of a degree an impossibility and if the work associated with CPT is required for *all* students pursuing that degree.
3. Maintain thorough records supporting the curricular necessity of each CPT authorization.

Broadcast Message: Guidance for Designated School Officials regarding Curricular Practical Training

To: PDSOs and DSOs at SEVP-certified Schools

Date: August 24, 2026

BCM Number: 2608-02

General Information

On August 12, 2026, the Student and Exchange Visitor Program (SEVP) issued Broadcast Message 2608-01. This broadcast informed all Designated School Officials (DSOs) that SEVP has observed a rise in Curricular Practical Training (CPT) authorizations that appear to violate regulatory requirements which permit CPT only where the training is an integral part of an established curriculum. Accurate and timely reporting by schools and students allows SEVP to manage the Student and Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS), a critical tool in SEVP's mission to protect national security and ensure the integrity of the nation's educational and cultural exchange programs. Failure to comply with SEVP regulations may result in an institution losing certification to enroll foreign students.

The guidance below provides additional information on how CPT operates as an integral and required part of an educational experience.

1. How is CPT defined in regulation?

A foreign student may be authorized by a DSO to participate in a CPT program that is an integral part of an established curriculum. Curricular practical training is defined as 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.

2. How is CPT different from Optional Practical Training?

Optional Practical Training (OPT) is training that is not an integral part of a student's established curriculum. OPT is not intended to fulfill requirements of a student's program of study and successful program completion does not require participation in OPT; it is optional. In contrast, CPT fulfills an integral element of an established curriculum and successful completion is contingent on participation in CPT. As defined by Merriam-Webster, "integral" means "essential to completeness" as in, "an integral part of the curriculum."

3. Can CPT be offered as a part of an elective course?

In any instance where an elective course is optional, making the CPT optional, the integral and required aspects of CPT would not be met. CPT is an integral part of an established curriculum, and the practical training is required for *all students* participating in that curriculum, regardless of citizenship.

4. Because CPT is allowed only where the training is an integral part of an established curriculum, does that mean that all students enrolled in the established curriculum must participate in and complete practical training?

Yes. Unlike OPT, participation in CPT is not optional for any student participating in an established curriculum that the school has determined requires CPT as an integral part of the educational experience. This means that all students - foreign and American - are required to participate in practical training if they are enrolled in an established curriculum where practical

training is integral. While auditing and investigating schools to ensure compliance, SEVP has noted that some institutions have described CPT as if it is optional practical training and not integral, despite clear regulatory requirements. SEVP has also discovered that some institutions have not required all students enrolled in the same established curriculum to participate in practical training, despite clear regulatory requirements that CPT is permitted only where the practical training is an integral part of an established curriculum. Prior [broadcast messages](#) have clearly made this distinction between CPT and OPT and reminded DSOs of the integral and required elements of CPT.

5. Are foreign students required to proactively request CPT authorization from their DSO?

Yes. Foreign students must make an official request for authorization for CPT to their DSO so that the school can confirm that the student is participating in an established curriculum where practical training is integral, make a determination that the training is directly related to the student's major area of study, and update the student's SEVIS record to ensure that DHS can conduct proper oversight as required under federal law. A DSO's failure to maintain these verification and record-keeping requirements may face significant SEVP sanctions. 8 C.F.R. §§ 214.2(f)(10)(i); 214.3(l)(2); 214.4(a)(2).

6. Must all CPT be conducted by sponsoring employers that have established cooperative agreements with the school?

Yes. Schools should only enter into cooperative agreements with legitimate, bona fide employers who are able to provide a quality practical training experience to students.

CPT students should have access to practical training managed by an employer who has entered into a cooperative agreement with a school where it is agreed the employer will sponsor the school's students for specific training such as an alternative work/study, internship, cooperative education or any other type of required internship or practicum that is specific to the student's major area of study. Students are not expected to obtain EADs for this training, which is an integral and required part of the curriculum.

Curricular Practical Training Authorization at BYU-Idaho

The purpose of CPT is to allow students to fulfill graduation requirements of their program of study. It cannot be used as a substitute for the financial support pledged by the student's sponsor. BYU-Idaho International Services has adopted the following rules to ensure that CPT is only used for the curricular purposes intended by government regulations:

1. Students must submit an internship request in I-Plan for review by academic department faculty/internship office, and International Services. This ensures that an agreement exists between the employer and the University to provide practical curricular experience.
2. Students must provide a signed job offer letter from the employer on company letterhead that states the dates of the internship, hours per week, and job duties.
3. Students must register for the appropriate class (usually internship) and receive course credit for the practical experience.
4. CPT is only approved for one semester based on BYU-Idaho's academic calendar. It may begin and/or end during breaks between semesters but cannot include days from two different semesters.

5. Students can only work between the dates listed on form I-20 and must have their CPT I-20 in hand before starting the internship.
6. CPT may only be considered for courses that are required of all students in the major for graduation. Once the course has been completed, CPT cannot be issued to repeat the course because it is no longer required.
7. Full-time internships (more than 20 hours per week) can only be authorized as CPT for semesters when students are not required to be fully enrolled. They can no longer count as full enrollment.
8. Students who change majors must take classes in the new major for at least 2 full semesters before becoming eligible again for CPT. Exceptions may be considered for closely related majors that share required courses.