

F-1 students are eligible for **on-campus employment** which is limited to no more than 20 hours per week while classes are in session and full-time (more than 20 hours/week) **ONLY** during official school breaks (winter break, spring break, summer vacation).

To **volunteer** the position must be a legitimate, advertised volunteer position, and cannot receive any compensation including financial.

## CPT

Curricular Practical Training (CPT) is an off-campus employment option available to F-1 students when the training experience is considered to be an integral part of the established curriculum and directly related to the student's major area of study.

"Training" is used here to refer to paid or unpaid internships or employment. According to Immigration regulations, CPT may be an internship, practicum, or other work experience that is required for the degree program (as defined in the course catalog) or for which academic course credit is awarded.

### TO BE ELIGIBLE FOR CPT, YOU MUST

Have maintained legal F-1 status for at least 9 consecutive months (exception: if the graduate program requires training before completion of one academic year, consult an ISSS Adviser); be enrolled in a course that carries academic credit (if not a requirement of the degree program); hold a job/training offer related to your major area of study; CPT is contingent upon a solid offer (for details, see CPT Guide to Employer)

Graduate students engaging in research as part of the thesis or dissertation must prove that the CPT request involves innovative technology available only at the particular corporation/research facility or that the CPT request is for completing data collection essential for completion of the thesis or dissertation.

### HOURS & LIMITATIONS

- Part-time CPT is authorized for up to 20 hours per week
- Full-time CPT is authorization for 20 hours per week or more (anything beyond 20 hours per week is permissible)
- CPT is authorized to correspond with Vanderbilt University's academic calendar
- Note: If you are authorized for 12 months or more of full-time CPT, you will not be eligible for Optional Practical Training

## OPT

Optional Practical Training (OPT) is an employment option available to F-1 students when the employment is directly related to the major area of study. To be eligible for OPT; you must have maintained legal F-1 status for at least 9 consecutive months or one full academic year. You must not have used full-time CPT for 12 months or more. You must not have already completed your degree.

ISSS facilitates the OPT application process, but final authorization is processed by Immigration. It is the student's responsibility to ensure that the application is submitted at least two weeks in advance of the program completion date. While you are on OPT you are still considered an F-1 Vanderbilt Student, and therefore must continue to report to ISSS.

### HOURS & LIMITATIONS

- Job offer is not necessary to apply and will not expedite the OPT process.
- Employment on OPT must be directly related to your major area of study and commensurate with your educational level
- Total OPT time per degree level is 12 months; the 12-month allotment per degree level may be divided into various segments
  - A B.A. student who completes 3 months OPT during one summer is eligible for 9 months remaining after program ends
  - If the same student then begins an M.S. degree in the U.S., he is eligible for a new 12 months of OPT. Any leftover (unused) OPT time from the previous degree level does not carry over to the new degree level. OPT time is not cumulative.
- Part-time OPT is authorized for up to 20 hours per week; Part-time OPT is deducted from the 12-month limit at 50%
- OPT may be used while school is in session, prior to course completion, provided that it does not exceed 20 hours per week
- OPT may be used full-time only during official annual summer vacation or after all course work is completed for degree
- OPT after program completion is granted for full-time use only
- OPT start date must fall within 60 days of program completion (this is not necessarily the same date as graduation day)
- On full-time OPT, you may enroll in classes that are "incidental" to the employment; Do not begin a new degree program on OPT.