

Applying for Curricular Practical Training (CPT)

(Paid Internships for Academic Credit)

What is Curricular Practical Training?

Curricular Practical Training (CPT) is one form of off-campus employment available to international students in F-1 status. CPT is available to GGU students who plan to participate in a **paid** internship. Paid internships are those in which a student receives any form of compensation for work provided. An internship could be considered paid if the employer covers transportation, provides benefits such as health insurance, pays a salary or stipend, or offers some type of compensation.

In order for a paid internship to qualify as CPT, it must be an integral part of your curriculum that meets the following requirements:

- The work must be related to your major field of study.
- You must receive academic credit for the internship experience.
- The internship class must be stated in the School Bulletin for your degree.

In addition, the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (US CIS) states, “CPT is available to F-1 students who have been lawfully enrolled on a full-time basis in a US CIS approved college, university, conservatory, or seminary for one full academic year.”

When is a student eligible to participate in CPT?

- You must be in lawful F-1 status.
- You must have been a full-time student for at least one academic year (two consecutive terms).
- Example: Fall 05 and Spring 06
- You must be academically eligible to take an internship course.
- You must register and enroll in an internship course offered through your academic department.

How do I get started?

Attend an Internship Orientation to learn about the Internship program and obtain an Internship Program handout. Log in to your account at GGUCareers.com to view the orientation schedule and reserve your place. You can also select the Online Internship Orientation link on your GGUCareers welcome page to access complete internship program information and forms at any time.

Note: Students in the MS Taxation Full Time Day program should consult their program handbook for internship information and forms. All internship questions should be directed to the Director of the Day Tax Program.

How do I get authorization for Curricular Practical Training?

Once you have found an internship and received approval from your academic department, you will need to make an appointment with your assigned international student counselor. Due to the detailed nature of this process, an appointment is required. The authorization takes very little time, but requires that you have the appropriate documentation. Plan to bring all of the following to your appointment:

- A completed Internship Registration Form, signed by your department chair/program director
- An original letter from your employer. Please see the attached sample letter for the specific information required in the letter.
- An original letter from your department chair/program director. Please see the attached sample letter for the specific information required in the letter.
- Your I-20
- Your Passport and I-94 Arrival/Departure Card

When your international student advisor has authorized your CPT and signed the Internship Registration Form, take the Internship Registration Form and copy of the employer letter to the internship program manager in Career Services who will register you for the internship.

Part-Time vs. Full-Time Curricular Practical Training

Depending on your program of study, you may be allowed the option of working part time (up to 20 hours per week) or full time (20 or more hours per week). You should meet with your faculty advisor to determine what is available and what is ideal for your particular situation.

CAUTION: Be careful when assessing the workload of your internship. Since you must be enrolled full time in order to fulfill your F-1 status requirements (unless it is a vacation term), it is important not to take on too much of a workload. Don't put yourself in academic jeopardy!

Social Security and Other Taxes

In general:

- F-1 students who have been in the US less than five years are exempt from Social Security (FICA) taxes.
- Your earnings may be subject to applicable federal, state and local taxes.
- Students must file a tax return on or before April 15 of each year, which will determine if any of the withheld taxes can be refunded.
- For more information, please visit the IAA website at: http://www.ggu.edu/student_services/international_admissions_advising/tax_information_and_resources

Please Note!

- You may NOT work before or after the dates stated on your I-20.
- An appointment is required for CPT processing, so please plan ahead.

Frequently Asked Questions

How long may I participate in my internship?

A student may participate in a paid internship for up to 16 weeks.

What is the difference between a paid and an unpaid internship?

An unpaid internship is one in which you receive NO compensation whatsoever from your employer. The main benefits you gain from an unpaid internship are academic credit and experience working in your field of study. If you will receive compensation for your employment it is considered paid and it requires that you be approved for CPT.

What types of compensation are considered payment?

Almost any type of compensation is considered payment. This could include a salary, bonus pay, stipend, travel, reimbursement of expenses, or benefits such as health insurance. We strongly encourage you to discuss this with your international counselor. We can discuss the various types of compensation and advise you if it may be considered paid employment by US CIS.

I want to do an UNPAID Internship for credit. How does that work?

The US CIS does not require GGU to report student participation in unpaid internships. If you would like to receive course credit for an UNPAID internship, simply follow the procedures provided in the Internship Program handout referenced on page 1 of this document

This is my first semester as a GGU student. Am I eligible to work off-campus under curricular practical training now?

Most students are not eligible for an internship during their first term at GGU. You must have been a full-time student for at least one academic year and you must meet the academic requirements established by your department.

If I use curricular practical training, does that mean that I take time away from optional practical training (OPT) when I graduate?

For most students at GGU, participation in CPT will not take away from the time they have to participate in optional practical training. Curricular practical training does not take away any time from optional practical training unless you have completed 12 months of full-time curricular practical training. Golden Gate University does not have degree programs that require 12 months of CPT so; this would not be possible if you complete your studies here.

May I work full-time at an internship and take classes at the same time?

Yes, but you must discuss this with your faculty advisor and receive approval.

**Curricular Practical Training
Sample Letter from Student's Employer**

{Date}

To Whom It May Concern:

This letter is written to support the application for **{part- or full-time, number of hours per week}** curricular practical training of {student's name}.

{student's name} is a {job title} and will be working for {name of company} beginning on **{specific date employment begins}**. We expect to continue to employ {student} through **{specific date employment ends}**. This period of employment corresponds to the time allowable for {student's name} curricular practical training period and is needed for {student's name} to complete the training we provide. {student's name} duties will include: {description of duties relating the task to be performed}.

{company name} therefore requests that the application of {student's name} curricular practical training be granted.

Sincerely,

{signature of company officer}

{name and title of company officer}

Components of Sample Letter from Prospective Employer

Paragraph 1: This paragraph should introduce the letter and state its purpose. Any work over 20 hours per week is considered full-time. The letter should clearly state the number of hours per week that you will be employed.

Paragraph 2: State the occupation of the student trainee and the date that his/her employment with your company will begin and end. You should also give a detailed description of the duties of the student's occupation, relating these duties to the student's current major field of study.

Presentation: The letter must be on company letterhead.

**Curricular Practical Training
Sample Letter from Academic Dean/Program Director**

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{Date}

To Whom It May Concern:

This letter is written to support the application for **{part- or full-time, number of hours per week}** curricular practical training of {student's name}. {student's name} will receive a(n) **{degree and major}** from Golden Gate University at the end of **{expected graduation date}**.

{student's name} is applying for permission to accept curricular practical training for a period of **{length of curricular practical training period¹}**. {student's name} would like to gain valuable experience in American methods of {major} and has secured an offer of employment from {name of company} as a {student's job title} from **{specific date employment begins}** to **{specific date employment ends}**. {Student's name} has met all of the academic requirements for an internship. The opportunity will allow {student's name} to receive **{number of units²}** of credit toward his/her degree program at Golden Gate University.

{student's name} has proven to be a serious and committed student at Golden Gate University and is working very hard for his/her degree. {student's name} dedication to hard work and study will make this experience rewarding and educational, and will be of particular value to him/her when he/she returns home to continue his/her career.

I therefore hope that you will grant {student's name} request for curricular practical training

Sincerely,

{signature of Department Chair/Program Director}

{name and title of Department Chair/Program Director}

Please note: This letter must verify the student's degree program, area of specialization, and date of completion. As the academic dean/program director you must state that to the best of your knowledge, the proposed employment involves training that is directly related to the student's major field of study. Also, you should recommend that the student be granted curricular practical training because either it is a required part of the degree program or because the student will register and enroll in an internship course offered through your academic department.

¹ Please note that curricular practical training should be no longer than the length of one trimester at Golden Gate University (approximately 16 weeks).

²The student must register for an internship course and get academic credit toward his/her degree program in order for the employment to qualify as curricular practical training.