CPT Frequently Asked Questions

**Q. What is Curricular Practical Training?**
A. Curricular Practical Training is a type of employment that is either required by your curriculum, or is an academically integrated part of a credit-bearing course. This employment may be an internship, co-op education job, a practicum, or any other work experience that is either required for your degree (as defined in the course catalog) or for which academic credit is awarded. ISS authorizes it.

**Q. What are the eligibility criteria for Curricular Practical Training?**
A. All F-1 students who have been in their academic program for at least nine months, and who have maintained their immigration status potentially qualify (exception: graduate students whose curriculum requires immediate participation in curricular practical training). In addition, their curriculum must require employment in order to achieve their degree/program, or they must be registered for a credit bearing course that provides academic integration with the employment.

**Q. Do I have to be registered while on Curricular Practical Training?**
A. You do not have to be registered while on CPT; however, if you are registered as a full time student (both grad or undergrad) or registered in absentia (grad only) you can only work part time. Part time training is 20 hours or less per week.

**Q. Does Curricular Practical Training impact future Optional Practical Training?**
A. If a student qualifies for Curricular Practical Training, s/he may use up to eleven months of full-time Curricular Practical Training, or 23 months of part-time Curricular Practical Training, without it affecting Optional Practical Training. However, if a student uses a total of 12 months or more of full-time Curricular Practical Training, it cancels all Optional Practical Training time.

**Q. What is considered part-time training?**
A. Employment for 20 hours or less per week while you are enrolled for classes is considered part-time curricular practical training. The employment authorization written on the back of your I-20 copy will specify permission to engage in part-time training and you must limit your work to no more than 20 hours per week. You must be simultaneously enrolled as a full-time student in order to maintain lawful F-1 status.

**Q. What is considered full-time training?**
A. Employment for more than 20 hours per week is considered full-time curricular practical training, regardless of whether you are enrolled full-time or part-time for classes. The employment authorization on your I-20 copy will specify permission to participate in full-time training. There is no limitation upon the length of time you may participate in full-time curricular practical training, however if you participate in twelve months or more of curricular practical training you will not be eligible for post-completion practical training.

**Q. Do I have to pay U.S. taxes on my salary?**
A. In general F-1 students who have been in the U.S. for fewer than five years are exempt from social security taxes (also known as F.I.C.A. tax). You should be sure to bring this to the attention of your employer because many employers are not familiar with this provision of the tax laws. Students in F-1 status are subject to all other taxes that may apply, including federal, state and local.

Q. What proof of employment authorization can I give my employer?
A. Your I-20 form authorized for curricular practical training is the document which indicated employment authorization. You should bring your I-20 form, your passport and other personal identification such as driver’s license or student ID to your employer. These documents will allow your employer to complete the Employment Eligibility Verification Form I-9. All employers are required to complete an I-9 form for every employee. You will also need to bring your Social Security Card, or apply for one if you do not have an SSN.