



University of
New Haven

UIS Hot Topic

February 10, 2023



Today's Hot Topic: CPT and Course Registration

When I find myself repeating the same advice many times, I know there is a common experience among international students. One of these queries is how Curricular Practical Training (CPT) relates to course registration. USCIS will closely inspect any CPT that appears on the student's SEVIS record when adjudicating applications for OPT, STEM OPT, and H1-B. The CPT policy at the University of New Haven has been carefully vetted and is designed to allow F-1 students to get good practical experience without creating undue risks for their future. Here are some helpful hints regarding CPT and course registration.

1. First, remember that students must always register for a full courseload (minimum 9 credits grad; 12 credits undergrad) and only 3 online/remote credits (one course) can count toward meeting this requirement. The remaining courses must be on-ground.
2. For an internship course to count as on-ground credits it must be on-site and within a reasonable commute of about 100 miles from campus. Remote internships will count as online/remote credits.
3. If a student is in their very last semester and have fewer credits remaining, they may request an authorization from UIS to be allowed to register for less than full-time. The Registrar will require confirmation of this UIS authorization before allowing international students to be part-time. If the student has only 3 credits remaining, these must be on-ground. If only 6 credits remain, only 3 credits may be remote and the other 3 credits must be on-ground. (For an undergrad with 9 credits, at least 6 credits must be on-ground.)
4. If a student is completing all remaining requirements in a summer term, then the summer is no longer optional, but becomes a required term so that semester rules apply. CPT must be less than 20 hours per week during a required term. If the student will be enrolled in the subsequent fall semester, then the summer term is an optional term and would allow flexibility for CPT to be more than 20 hours per week and/or out of state.
5. CPT is curricular. It is not a work permit. Each university's curriculum handles internships in their own way. Here at the University of New Haven, students register for an internship course (number of credits may vary) that appears on the transcript. Then F-1 students must get a CPT authorization on their I-20 to be able to legally do the internship. The dates of the CPT authorization on the I-20 must match the dates of the course on the transcript. This is important so that in the future if the student gets an RFE from USCIS when applying for OPT/STEM or an H1B, they can provide evidence on their transcript that CPT was curricular.
6. CPT does not allow a student to start an OPT employment early. OPT is a work permit. CPT is not, and does not function in the same way. It is not advisable to save the internship course for last as the only remaining 3 credits in a final term, in which case CPT must be less than 20 hours a week and on-site within a reasonable commute of about 100 miles from campus. This usually does not fit what the student was thinking they were going to do.

I know there can be questions about the job market on the other side of graduation, but we never really know what will happen next. I do not advise students to insert extra credits into their schedule in order to manipulate the program end date on their I-20. The costs will likely outweigh any benefit if there were a benefit. It is always better to complete course requirements on schedule, get the degree, and apply for OPT. The job market may be more competitive, but student should work on making themselves more marketable rather than delay OPT. Our Career Development Center has many offerings to help the student be successful in a competitive job market.

Hopefully this information can help you plan your course registration more effectively and avoid pitfalls that occur from misunderstanding how CPT works at the University of New Haven. Please read the full CPT policy on the UIS myCharger pages for eligibility and more detailed information.



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