

## **Curricular Practical Training (CPT)**

Subject-Catalog number: CPT 100

Number of credits/units: 1 (does not count towards full-time status or 120 units for graduation)

Grade Basis: Credit/No Credit

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CPT allows International Students on F1 Visas to pursue a paid or unpaid off-campus internship or training opportunity in the US. However, in order to fall into the CPT category, the internship must be an educational experience directly relevant to the student's course of studies or career objectives.

It is very important that you do not start your internship until your new I-20 document has been issued! This document clearly states the dates for which your internship has been approved. Do not change your dates of employment after the document has been issued or you are not in compliance.

### **Academic Requirements**

1. Students must be at least second year students in good academic standing (2.0 GPA)
2. Students must be enrolled full-time during the semester, not counting the 1 CPT unit.
3. Students are expected to complete the agreed-upon hours at their employer.
4. During the internship, students must provide weekly updates.
5. When the internship is completed, students submit a 2-page (ca. 1,000 words) final report reflecting on the experience.

### **Job Responsibilities and Tasks**

The employer will provide you with a list of job responsibilities and tasks probably on your acceptance letter. It is helpful if you briefly explain how your time will be spent on these different tasks. Employers will probably keep this vague, but it is in your own interest to have clear understanding what you will be spending the majority of your time on. You did not get hired to perform some menial task all day.

### **Learning Objectives**

CPT is meant to be 'an integral part of an established curriculum' (USCIS.com); which means that the student has to explain why/how this training/internship is critical to their academic or career development. If you cannot convince ICE that this is important to your education, you do not get approval.

Start this section by clearly stating why this internship experience is critical to your academic pathway at SUA and your overall career goals (but the emphasis must be on education). Then match the job responsibilities and learning objectives to classes you have taken and your education goals if you can. Ideally, you want to highlight about three learning objectives (the form

allows up to 4,000 characters). Be as detailed and specific as you possibly can. Depending on what you plan on learning during this internship, what you learned before, and how this fits into your overall life, is going to vary hugely from one person to another. So clearly there is going to be a wide variety of ways of writing learning objectives. I am providing examples here, to help you get started.

For example, if you want to pursue a career in economics and your main job responsibility for your internship at a financial institution is to edit and analyze a variety of financial data, your learning objective could be:

- \* To develop new data analysis skills as well as to learn the real-world application of different data analysis techniques learned through courses like Regression Analysis (SBS340), Statistics (MATH101), Public Economics (ECON320), Financial Economics (ECON310), Genomics, and Bioinformatics (BIO302), and Geographic Information System (GEOG350) at SUA.

If you want to pursue a career in computer science or analytics, and just landed an internship with the main task of helping with a variety of programming projects, your learning goal could be:

- \* To improve proficiency in the Python programming language learned through SUA courses like Network Science (MATH198), Statistics (MATH101), and Advanced GIS (GEOG400) by completing system automation and data analytics tasks using various python modules and libraries.

Again, there has to be an explanation why this learning objective is important to your overall career goals and you should tie it to your academics.

In general, learning objectives can be for academic learning, career development, skills development, or personal development. The best way to write learning goals is to be S.M.A.R.T. SMART stands for Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Results-focused, and Time-focused. Learning objectives typically fall into four different categories:

- 1) Academic learning: The student applies and tests knowledge learned in the classroom to the workplace.
  - a. Examples: 1. Learn and understand the methods involved in researching legislation for committee assignments. 2. Analyze political theories used in campaign planning. 3. Apply the principles of accounting to tax preparation.
  - b. By the middle of my internship, I will list the 40 common medications I observe being used by referring to patients' charts, then research their chemical composition, and record this data in my database.
- 2) Career development: The student advances knowledge of the qualifications and duties of a position and can explore their interest in a field.
  - a. 1. Develop the communication skills needed to respond to constituents' letters. 2. Learn to administer and interpret personality inventories. 3. Learn and understand the logistics and components of event planning by creating a how-to manual for a regional event.
  - b. By the end of the internship, I will have interviewed a professional who has been in the hospitality industry at least four years and ask them about typical career paths, job duties, professional associations, and ways to advance one's career in this industry.

- 3) Skill development: The individual gains an understanding of the skills and knowledge required for success in the workplace., (for more ideas see <https://uncw.edu/career/documents/internshiplearningobjectivesbasedonskills.pdf>)
- a. By December 15th, I will be able to troubleshoot office software, including Microsoft Word and Excel, over the telephone with less than 3% error rate.
  - b. By March 15th, I will develop, distribute, gather, evaluate, and report on a customer survey related to my organization's marketing.
  - c. By the middle of my internship, I will have taught a group of ten children ball throwing athletic skills. The children will demonstrate their skills by achieving at least a minimum score which I will determine as a proficiency level.
- 4) Personal development: The student develops decision making and critical thinking skills, self-confidence, interpersonal skills, working effectively with others, professional meeting/email/telephone etiquette, networking, written communication, relationships with supervisors, time management, organization, decision making, etc.
- a. 1. Determine if working for an accounting firm is an appropriate career goal for me. 2. Develop my potential as a facilitator in group counseling. 3. Familiarize myself with trade groups and associations and learn their code of ethics and read trade periodicals.
  - b. I will develop four different responsive conversation techniques and briefly describe each in my log. I will record reactions of customers to these techniques and report by May 28.

Think of what you want to accomplish in the internship and how it relates to the above categories. Come up with specific goals, how you will accomplish them, when you will learn, why you want to learn this, and ways to measure that you learned it.

Strong Learning Objectives include Strategies to achieve them. For examples, see the last page of this syllabus.

## **Weekly Updates**

Students must submit brief weekly updates to professor Calef. Each update should include one to three remarkable experiences you had that week. This can include interesting things you learned, interactions with coworkers or supervisors at the workplace, or anything else you think might be relevant or interesting about this internship (it doesn't always have to be positive). This weekly check in provides insight into the workplace and relevance of the internship to the student's personal and professional growth. Weekly updates are due by Sunday midnight for the previous week and can be combined with the preceding or following week when the student didn't work the entire week.

## **Final Report**

The final report is due one week after the internship has ended and must address how this internship served the primary learning objectives and career goals. Some questions to reflect on are: Did the student learn the things they set out to learn (as set out in your learning objectives)? If not, why? Did the student perform the expected responsibilities and tasks? How could the

internship experience be improved? Would the student recommend this particular internship to other students and why or why not? Were there any problems or concerns with the employer? Did the internship change the student's view on this career field?