



Student Assembly

Resolution 2: Clarifying Practical Training Options for International Students

Abstract: This resolution calls on Cornell International Services to promptly clarify the current availability of Curricular Practical Training (CPT), including course-based CPT, and to publish clear guidance on alternative pathways, including pre-completion Optional Practical Training (OPT), through which international students may lawfully pursue internships.

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Sponsored by:

Reviewed by:

Type of Action: Sense-of-the-Body

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Current Status: Second Reading Calendar

Whereas, international students at Cornell rely on practical training opportunities, including internships and research experiences, to apply their academic training, develop professional skills, and pursue career opportunities in the United States,

Whereas, Curricular Practical Training (CPT) has historically served as an important mechanism through which F-1 students at Cornell may obtain authorization for off-campus internships and employment directly related to their academic programs,

Whereas, Cornell International Services currently states that a student may qualify for CPT where the student has a curricular requirement consisting of a “degree, course, or dissertation requirement” for the internship or employment, and further states that full-time summer CPT may be associated with a related course taken in the following fall,¹

Whereas, on August 12, 2026, the Student and Exchange Visitor Program (SEVP) issued Broadcast Message BCM 2608-01, *Reminder of Liability for DSOs Regarding CPT Authorization*, announcing increased oversight of CPT authorizations and directing Designated School Officials (DSOs) to ensure that CPT constitutes an integral and essential component of an established curriculum,²

¹ <https://international.globallearning.cornell.edu/employment-and-taxes/f-1-cpt>

² <https://www.ice.gov/doclib/sevis/pdf/bcm260801.pdf>



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Whereas, on August 24, 2026, SEVP issued follow-up Broadcast Message BCM 2608-02, *Guidance for Designated School Officials regarding Curricular Practical Training*, reaffirming that CPT must be an integral and required part of an established curriculum that applies to all students in the same program and clarifying that an elective course or optional practical training does not satisfy that standard,³

Whereas, BCM 2608-02 substantially narrows the circumstances in which course-credit CPT may be authorized, directly calling into question CPT historically approved on the basis of elective internship courses, independent studies, field studies, or comparable course-credit arrangements,

Whereas, Cornell's publicly available CPT guidance has not, as of the introduction of this resolution, explained how BCM 2608-01 and BCM 2608-02 affect Cornell's authorization practices, while its existing guidance continues to state that employment required to earn credit for a specific class may qualify for CPT and that full-time summer CPT may be paired with a related course taken the following fall,⁴

Whereas, Cornell's current CPT guidance recognizes degree-required internships, thesis or dissertation requirements, employment required to earn credit for a specific class, and established co-op programs as distinct curricular bases for CPT, and the new SEVP standard may affect these categories differently,⁵

Whereas, this distinction is directly relevant across Cornell's colleges and schools: the ILR Credit Internship Program awards academic credit for approved internships, Cornell Engineering offers an established co-operative education experience that students elect to join, and Brooks School engaged-learning requirements vary by curriculum year and may be satisfied through different forms of engaged coursework or experience,^{6,7,8}

Whereas, peer institutions have already changed their policies in response to the two SEVP messages, including UC Berkeley's indefinite suspension of Course Credit CPT and the University of Southern California's limitation of CPT to practical training that is a degree requirement for graduation,^{9,10}

³ https://www.ice.gov/doclib/sevis/pdf/bcm_260802.pdf

⁴ <https://international.globallearning.cornell.edu/employment-and-taxes/f-1-cpt>

⁵ <https://international.globallearning.cornell.edu/employment-and-taxes/f-1-cpt>

⁶ <https://www.ilr.cornell.edu/current-students/credit-internships>

⁷ <https://www.duffield.cornell.edu/career-center/undergraduate-career-resources/engineering-co-operative-education-experience-co-op/>

⁸ <https://www.publicpolicy.cornell.edu/current-students/undergraduates/experiential-learning/engaged-learning/>

⁹ <https://internationaloffice.berkeley.edu/students/employment/cpt>

¹⁰ <https://ois.usc.edu/important-update-regarding-curricular-practical-training/>



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Whereas, internship recruiting for the following summer begins months in advance, and uncertainty about work authorization can affect international students' ability to apply for positions, accept offers, accurately communicate work eligibility to employers, decide whether to pursue pre-completion OPT, and make timely backup plans for opportunities outside the United States,

Whereas, F-1 students may also be eligible for pre-completion Optional Practical Training (OPT), which provides a distinct mechanism for employment authorization before graduation and does not depend on an internship constituting a curricular requirement,¹¹

Whereas, Cornell International Services currently states that students may use OPT before graduation, including full-time during summer and winter breaks and part-time while school is in session, while time used for pre-completion OPT is deducted from the student's available twelve months of OPT at that degree level,¹²

Whereas, unlike CPT authorization, which is processed through Cornell, OPT requires an application for employment authorization to U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services and therefore requires substantially greater advance planning by students,¹³

Whereas, Cornell has an obligation to provide international students with timely and accessible information necessary to maintain lawful immigration status and to make informed academic and professional decisions,

Be it therefore resolved, the Student Assembly urges Cornell International Services to promptly publish a clear statement explaining Cornell's current interpretation and implementation of SEVP Broadcast Messages BCM 2608-01 and BCM 2608-02,

Be it further resolved, this statement should specifically explain how Cornell will apply the new standard to each curricular basis currently described in its guidance, including degree-required internships, thesis or dissertation requirements, employment required for course credit, established co-op programs, independent studies, field studies, and comparable experiential-learning arrangements, and should identify any categories of CPT that Cornell will no longer authorize or for which its standards have changed,

Be it further resolved, Cornell International Services should clearly communicate any changes in CPT policy to all potentially affected international students through its website, direct email

¹¹ <https://international.globallearning.cornell.edu/employment-and-taxes/f-1-opt>

¹² <https://international.globallearning.cornell.edu/employment-and-taxes/f-1-opt>

¹³ <https://international.globallearning.cornell.edu/employment-and-taxes/f-1-opt>



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communication, and other appropriate channels rather than requiring individual students to independently determine whether previously published guidance remains applicable,

Be it further resolved, if course-based CPT or other previously available forms of CPT are no longer available or become materially restricted, Cornell International Services should promptly publish comprehensive guidance on lawful alternative pathways through which international students may pursue internships and other practical training opportunities,

Be it further resolved, such guidance should include, where applicable, detailed information regarding pre-completion OPT, including eligibility requirements, application timelines, USCIS processing requirements, employment restrictions, the effect of pre-completion OPT on the student's remaining post-completion OPT authorization, and recommendations regarding how far in advance students should apply,

Be it further resolved, Cornell International Services should establish procedures and advising resources that allow students considering pre-completion OPT or other alternatives to receive timely support sufficiently in advance of common internship recruiting and start dates,

Be it further resolved, Cornell International Services should coordinate, where appropriate, with Cornell Career Services, college-level career offices, academic departments, and other relevant offices so that students and employers receive consistent information regarding the work-authorization options available to Cornell international students,

Be it finally resolved, the Student Assembly affirms that changes in federal immigration guidance should not unnecessarily prevent Cornell international students from accessing educational and professional opportunities for which lawful alternative authorization remains available, and urges the University to act proactively to preserve access to such opportunities within the bounds of federal law.

Respectfully Submitted,

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