

## Prologue:

- 99% of international students at Northwest Missouri State University are present on an F-1 visa. This visa class grants employment authorization by the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) through two entities 1) United States Citizenship and Immigration Service (USCIS) and 2) United States Immigration and Customs Enforcement (USICE).
- Curricular Practical Training (CPT) is a method through which international students gain authorization to work off campus in a job that satisfies the requirements for an internship in their field of study. The off campus work is authorized through USICE with the help of Northwest's Designated School Official (DSO), using the Student Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS).
- Students must present a job offer letter to you so you may authorize the employment as eligible for internship credit. If the job offer meets the department's requirement for internship credit, a faculty member or advisor overseeing the internship course must prepare a letter stating the job is part of the student's academic requirements; the other document is the previously mentioned letter from the employer stating the parameters of the internship/job experience.
- There are several caveats to the authorization:
  - USICE dictates students must be previously enrolled full time (Grad 9 hours/semester; Undergrad 12 hours) for one regular academic year (or 2 consecutive semesters- i.e. Spring and then Fall).
  - **The International Affairs Director has designated the Fall and Spring trimesters as traditional academic periods when students must be present and enrolled full time. This allows students the freedom of an extended traditional summer trimester to do an internship or return to their home country. However, they can not "take a semester off" in Fall or Spring to do an internship. They must be enrolled as per stated immigration regulations and must adhere to the physical presence requirement (see maintaining status or contact the Director of International Affairs.**
  - SEVIS will block CPT authorization if the student has not been attending class for one full academic year.
  - Students are allowed 364 days of full time CPT authorization. If they exceed this, they will eliminate their eligibility for post graduation training authorization (Optional Practical Training).
- In order to authorize CPT, the DSO requires a letter from the employer and one from the academic advisor. As the student's advisor, you will be the second step of their process to gain this work authorization.

## Steps to aid students:

1. The student must find and secure an internship.
  - a. If hired, the employer will produce a letter outlining the experience. The letter of employment will generally state:
    - i. Place of employment
    - ii. Hours per week of work
    - iii. Duration of employment
    - iv. Nature of employment
    - v. Wage rate
2. The student will meet with the academic advisor to enroll in an internship or independent study credit. Your responsibility will be determining whether that experience will satisfy the requirements of the proposed credit.
  - a. The student will then enroll in an internship credit bearing class.
  - b. Next, create a letter stating the student will perform this internship or job for fulfillment of the internship or independent study requirements (see Sample here) You may e-mail [JFOOT@nwmissouri.edu](mailto:JFOOT@nwmissouri.edu) if you have questions).
3. In the final phase, the student makes an appointment to see the DSO (Kathleen Baudino) to receive CPT authorization. Please remember Fall and Spring internships are limited to 20 hours of employment per week and students must be physically present for traditionally delivered classes on campus during the semester in question.
  - a. The student will take the two supporting documents to the DSO to request a CPT authorized I-20.
  - b. CPT authorized I-20 will be ready in one business day.
4. With authorization, the student can begin the internship or independent study work requirement.