Policy for Computer Science Graduate Students
Seeking Curricular Practical Training (CPT)

Introduction

Curricular Practical Training (CPT) is a program that allows international students the opportunity to obtain work experience that is beneficial to their education. Students receive academic credit for their work experience although the credit cannot be included on the graduate degree plan and does not count towards the credits required for the degree which is being pursued. The use of CPT is subject to two important rules:

1. The experience needs to be one that advances the student's training in the field in which the student is pursuing a degree.

2. CPT is not to delay the student's graduation unnecessarily.

CPT is a separate program from Optional Practical Training (OPT) which can be used before or after graduation, and which does not involve academic credit.

Many Computer Science graduate students pursue CPT opportunities for three reasons:

* CPT can provide good experience in the workplace.

* The time spent in CPT, if less than 12 months of full time work, does not count against a student's OPT time limit.

* Financial support is often unavailable, especially during the summer, and CPT internships can pay normal wages.

This policy is designed to establish eligibility criteria for CPT and rules for its use to be consistent with the federal guidelines.

Eligibility

A student becomes eligible for CPT after two semesters of graduate coursework. To be eligible for CPT, the student also must be in good academic standing (i.e., not on probation), and the student must have the agreement of a faculty member to serve as the CPT advisor. Other government or university-mandated eligibility requirements may also apply.

M.S. students who have completed a semester of academic-year CPT (Fall or Spring) are ineligible for a second academic-year semester. They may still undertake Summer CPT up to the government/university limit.

CPT Approval

A graduate student wishing to undertake a CPT experience must first obtain the permission of a faculty member to register for CPT as one of their students. The CPT advisor and student must agree on what kind of final report (required for academic credit) will be submitted to the advisor by the student. Once permission has been received and plans for the final report agreed upon, the student must submit a CPT request form. Among the required elements of that form are:
* Details of the work experience including the name of the company, location and dates of employment (as well as its benefit to the student’s education). A copy of the letter of employment is suggested, if available.

* Indication of when the CPT credit will be taken (normally the same semester as CPT, though Summer CPT credit may be taken in the following Fall).

The request will first go to the departmental graduate Coordinator for verification that the CPT opportunity meets reasonable academic goals and that it avoids unnecessary delay in the student’s academic progress towards a degree. Once it has been approved at the departmental level, it will go to the faculty member for approval and then to Liz Freppert who will email the permission number to the student.

Interaction with Financial Support

Students taking Academic Year CPT may not hold concurrent TA or RA appointments.

Students with full-time Summer CPT may not hold concurrent TA or RA appointments.

Exceptions, Appeals, and Petitions

Any requests for exceptions to this policy, or appeals of decisions rendered under this policy, shall be made to the Director of Graduate Studies (DGS). In the case of decisions made initially by the DGS, appeals shall be decided by the Head of the Department of Computer Science and Engineering.