

# New England Conservatory

## Application for CURRICULAR PRACTICAL TRAINING (CPT) FOR F-1 STUDENTS

In this packet, you will find:

- ❖ An NEC Practical Training Faculty Recommendation
- ❖ Frequently Asked Questions about CPT for Students
- ❖ Frequently Asked Questions about CPT for Employers
- ❖ Sample Cover Letter for Employers

Please read the forms and instructions carefully before filling them out. You must have all the forms prepared to apply for Curricular Practical Training (CPT) in International Student Services.

You must get approval and I-20 endorsement from your Academic/International Advisor *before* you begin working. Applying early is encouraged to allow processing time!

**IF YOU DO NOT GET APPROVAL FOR THE EMPLOYMENT PRIOR TO WORKING YOU ARE IN VIOLATION OF YOUR F1 VISA STATUS.**

**Remember: Your application must be complete before it can be processed. Make sure that you have the following:**

- A completed CPT Faculty Recommendation
- An offer letter from your employer

Questions about your application may be addressed to:

Laura Messina, Academic and International Student Advisor ([laura.messina@necmusic.edu](mailto:laura.messina@necmusic.edu))  
Yukii Ntumba, Academic and International Student Advisor ([yukii.ntumba@necmusic.edu](mailto:yukii.ntumba@necmusic.edu))

Working before you have received CPT authorization or without authorization from your Academic/International Advisor is a violation of your F-1 visa status and will jeopardize your immigration status in the U.S.

**Curricular Practical Training FAQs for F-1 Students**

## What is Curricular Practical Training (CPT)?

- Curricular Practical Training is a work authorization you receive as a benefit of your F-1 Student Visa for employment integral to your studio. A DSO at NEC will process your work authorization through the SEVIS system and your new work approval will show on your new I-20. You may show your employer your new I-20 as proof that you are allowed to work through CPT.

## How do I qualify for CPT?

- In order to use CPT as an undergraduate student, you must have been in F-1 status and in good academic standing at NEC for 9 consecutive months (2 semesters). If you are a graduate student, you are eligible for CPT immediately as long as you are currently in F-1 status and good academic status. CPT at NEC is part of your studio instruction. You must be enrolled for studio instruction and your studio teacher must approve of the job.

## How do I get CPT?

- Obtain a written off-campus job offer, print or e-mail.
- Request your studio teacher to complete the Faculty Recommendation in this packet or e-mail your advisor with approval.
- Take both the written off-campus job offer and the signed Faculty Recommendation to your Academic/International Advisor BEFORE the job starts.
- Your advisor will update your NEC I-20 with the CPT authorization.

## What kinds of jobs can I use CPT for?

- You can use CPT for any sustained, part-time (up to 20 hours a week and full-time during school breaks) music-related job opportunity that is offered to you that is integral to the enrichment of your program.

## How much can I work using CPT?

- There is no limit on how many jobs you may take using Curricular Practical Training!
- You may have multiple employers; however, Federal Regulations state that you must have separate CPT authorization for every job you obtain. **You must apply for CPT for every single employer and job.**
- You may not work more than 20 hours a week total while classes are in session.
- CPT work authorization is granted by the semester. If your job runs longer than one semester, you must apply **again** next semester.

## When can I start working? When should I apply for CPT?

- You are encouraged to pick up and complete an application as soon as you are aware you have been offered a job opportunity. **The International Student Services will NOT process incomplete applications for any reason.** Generally, allow for a week to process your application. WE CANNOT BACKDATE CPT.
- Once your employment is authorized, you may begin working.

## I got this great gig with a local symphony and they said they wanted me to start that day! I've been working there for a week now, but I haven't applied for CPT. Can I still apply?

- Working without authorization from NEC is working illegally. It is a very **SERIOUS** violation of your F-1 visa status and NEC is responsible to report all F-1 violations to USCIS. F-1 visa holders who have worked illegally will jeopardize their immigration status in the US and are **not** eligible for reinstatement. It is important that you apply for CPT for every work opportunity you receive BEFORE you start work.



# Curricular Practical Training FAQs for Employers of International Students

## **Are international students allowed to work? What is Practical Training?**

- ✓ A student who has an F-1 visa **is** allowed to work under certain conditions and with approval from the sponsoring school and U.S. Immigration Services using work permission called Practical Training. Practical Training can be Curricular (used while in school) or Optional (often used after graduation).

## **Can I hire a student full-time while they are in school?**

- ✓ Students may only work a maximum of 20 hours per week while they are in school. They may work full-time during school break when classes are not in session. CPT is given one-semester at a time only.

## **What is an I-20 form?**

- ✓ The I-20 form is a form issued by New England Conservatory. It is created using a government web-based tracking system called SEVIS (Student Exchange Visitor Information Service) that is used by schools that admit foreign students. This form is very important as it makes them eligible for their F-1 visa and it also allows the student to travel outside of the U.S. and work legally while in school.

## **What do I have to do before the student is legal to work?**

- ✓ It is easy to hire an international student! However, as the employer you should address an employment offer letter to the student on company letterhead, which states the position and nature of the job offered to the student, the beginning and ending dates of the position, and how many hours a week the student will be working. A sample letter with suggested language is included in this packet. An employment letter may be accepted via fax or e-mail as long as it has a valid signature. It is ultimately the student's responsibility to make certain that he or she is not working illegally.

## **How can I tell if a student is authorized to work?**

- ✓ Once the student has received work authorization, it will be present on the 2<sup>nd</sup> page of the student's I-20 form. Only current employment is printed on the I-20.

# Sample Letter for Employment Offer under CPT

Date \_\_\_\_\_

International Student Advisor  
New England Conservatory  
290 Huntington Avenue  
Boston, MA 02115  
FAX: 617.585.1315

Dear International Student Advisor,

\_\_\_\_\_ has been offered \_\_\_\_\_  
(Name of Student) (Title of Position)

at or by \_\_\_\_\_.  
(Name of Company or Individual Employer)

\_\_\_\_\_ will be employed \_\_\_\_ hours per week.  
(Name of Student) (Number of)

I/We agree that this position is offered in cooperation with the school to provide employment/training with the purpose of achieving curricular objectives.

(Provide BRIEF job description here).

The period of employment will be from \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_.

This student will be employed at the following address:

Company/Venue name:  
Street Address:  
City, State, Zip:

Sincerely,

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Name and title of employer/supervisor)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Signature)