

# Department of Homeland Security changes Curricular Practical Training guidelines for international students

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The University of Connecticut International Student and Scholar Services can no longer authorize Curricular Practical Training unless it is strictly required for all students to graduate in an academic program, according to recent guidelines from the Department of Homeland Security.

Curricular Practical Training is an F-1 visa benefit that allows students to participate in off-campus internships, work, clinical placement or other experiential learning that is a required part of an academic program and directly related to an academic major according to the international student services website.

Students received an email from International Student Services about the news on Aug. 31. UConn said they have been processing applications based on this new guidance.

“UConn is in compliance with the Student and Exchange Visitor Program (SEVP) memos and is processing CPT applications according to their guidance,” UConn spokesperson Stephanie Reitz said.

The Student and Exchange Visitor Program is increasing scrutiny around curricular practical training after they said there has been a rise in authorizations that do not meet regulatory requirements. School officials who are

suspected of undermining or bypassing them may be subject to legal consequences and withdrawal of visitor program certification.

One student, Antigoni Konstantinou, a Ph.D. candidate in UConn’s materials science program, spent the past summer at GE Vernova’s Advanced Research Center in Niskayuna, New York, through curricular practical training that wasn’t a graduation requirement for her program.

If she hadn’t had opportunities like this program, Konstantinou said she wouldn’t have come to UConn for a Ph.D. During the training, she got the opportunity to network and deepen the experience in her field.

“I met people who were mechanical engineers, physicists, chemists, so that helped me see how I [could] benefit the company,” Konstantinou said. “I would like people to get the experience I got and validate themselves and feel that they know things and believe in themselves.”

“The University is working to evaluate which of the many different scenarios in which students will engage in an internship are eligible for CPT. We are not processing CPT applications for now, unless it is a required internship or practicum and students and advisors can point us to where this requirement is published,” wrote Director of International Student Services Arthur Galiant in a Daily Digest

post.

The Department of Homeland Security is also eliminating the Duration of Status policy, which allows international and exchanged students are allowed to stay in the country for the length of their academic program instead of a fixed date.

On July 17, President Donald Trump’s administration announced the rule “Establishing a Fixed Time Period of Admission and an Extension of Stay Procedure for Nonimmigrant Academic Students, Exchange Visitors, and Representatives of Foreign Information Media.”

According to the rule, students with F and J visas would only be allowed to study in America for four years, no matter how long their academic program would take. If students needed more time, they would have to fill out an extension-of-stay request.

According to a press release, the administration’s goal in publishing this rule is to restore integrity to the nation’s immigration system, combat rampant visa abuse and strengthen national security.

The U.S. District Court for the District of Massachusetts sent out an injunction that postponed the elimination of Duration of Status Final Rule on Sept. 14, the evening before it was set to take effect.

As a result, students can continue to be admitted for the duration

of their status for the time being.

The court granted the preliminary injunction because the Department of Homeland failed to show that there is a rational connection between the Final Rule and its purported objectives of preventing fraud and furthering national security, according to Dennis Saylor IV, Senior Judge at the U.S District court for the District of Massachusetts in the memorandum. She also said they had no evidence that students had committed any fraud or abuse.

“DHS argues that plaintiffs allege only speculative harm. But, the harm is far from speculative; indeed, it is already occurring,” Saylor wrote.

The memorandum states that enrollment is already struggling amongst many American colleges and universities.



**Impacts of the Department of Homeland Security’s new Circular Practical Training is felt around UConn by its international students efficing involvement in off-campus experiential**

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PHOTO 2: FLICKR (DHS SEAL)



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