**Information for Academic Units: Sunset of Cooperative Education**

**8 CFR 214.2(f)(i).** *Curricular practical training*. An F-1 student may be authorized by the DSO to participate in a curricular practical training program that is an integral part of an established curriculum. Curricular practical training is defined to be alternative work/study, internship, cooperative education, or any other type of required internship or practicum that is offered by sponsoring employers through cooperative agreements with the school. Students who have received one year or more of full time curricular practical training are ineligible for post-completion academic training. Exceptions to the one academic year requirement are provided for students enrolled in graduate studies that require immediate participation in curricular practical training. A request for authorization for curricular practical training must be made to the DSO. A student may begin curricular practical training only after receiving his or her Form I-20 with the DSO endorsement.

NOTE: USCIS and ICE have made clear that for the employment to be “integral to an established curriculum” it must be either (a) a required component of an academic program, or (b) undertaken for academic credit (preferably, but not necessarily, counted toward degree requirements).

For this reason, the Office of International Programs and Services and University Career Services will be working together to sunset the cooperative education program as of the end of the summer 2020 academic term (8/8/2020).

Academic units can establish credit-bearing internship courses to meet the same student need. Information about deadlines for catalog changes can be found at <https://registrar.gmu.edu/facultystaff/catalog-revisions/> . Publication date for the 2020-2021 catalog is April 3, 2020. The deadline for submission to Grad or Undergrad Council is early February.

* Cooperative education is a program administered in University Career Services. Participation in co-op has, up until now, been a simple way for international students to receive employment authorization for off-campus internships.
* Many F-1 students seek opportunities to work off-campus during their degree programs. The availability of such employment is a key factor in recruiting and retaining students from many parts of the world.
* Based on recent guidance from ICE and USCIS as well as consultation with Mason’s Office of General Counsel, it is clear that to qualify for CPT employment authorization, the employment must be undertaken for credit (as an internship or practicum course) or must be a required part of the degree program. The co-op program does not qualify; therefore it is being eliminated.
* Process for co-op sunset:
  + Fall 2019: notify schools and colleges of the change (meet with associate deans)
  + December 2019: notify students that summer 2020 will be the last co-op term
  + Late 2019: academic units create internship courses
  + February 2020: undergrad/grad council course approval deadline for 2020-21 catalog
  + August 2020: cooperative education ends
  + Fall 2020: students enroll for credit-bearing internship courses and request employment authorization for Curricular Practical Training
* Even when enrolled in an internship course, international students must request and receive employment authorization in writing before beginning any type of off-campus work. OIPS issues the employment authorization for internships.
* Internship/CPT opportunities are an essential part of the University’s goal of producing career-ready graduates who know how to apply the concepts they’ve learned in the classroom as they move to the professional settings for which they have been prepared.