ARCH 524 Professional Practicum allows international students to gain practical work experience in their field of study. In addition it is the intention of this course to encourage international students to explore similarities and differences between professional practices in their home countries and in the United States. The course provides a theoretical platform for such comparative studies and to better comprehend emerging practices at home and abroad. Students who register for the course must have an internship agreement with a firm in their field of study. (See attached guidelines for specific requirements)

**Introduction and Purposes:**

1. To provide documentation of actual working experience to date including past and current activities.

2. To require a strategic evaluation of the breadth of your experience, which will help you decide and plan for your career advancement in the field.

3. To become familiar with the priorities and procedures of the NCARB AXP process, or your related field, that will potentially allow you to qualify for professional registration here in the US if that is a current or future goal.

4. To provide the school with a clear perspective on the work experience and current internship experience of foreign students in our degree programs.

**Students will attend a counseling session with the instructor at the beginning of the semester** in which objectives and course requirements are discussed. A “comparative practices” paper will be required. There are no regular course meetings except for mentoring and at the final exam.

**Course Requirements and Grades.**

Only international students who have upper division standing and graduate students may register for this course. Students must have F-1 Student status for at least one year and apply for CPT (see attached Guidelines for full requirements)

Students are required to **report every month** on their status, work hours, and specific work assignments during the semester for reports due at the last Friday of each month for, September, October, November and December in the fall and January, February, March, and April in the spring term. These reports are series of **one page** time sheet calendar summaries which can be submitted electronically and identifies the specific tasks and hours spent for that month. Each student is to use the categories identified in the AXP process explained in the course material below to identify the type of work experience for each day of work with a summary time sheet which identifies each day worked during the time-period and the time for that day as well as a summary total for each month. Days when no work was done should be shown with every day of the month identified.

Students must prepare an illustrated report on the subject of comparative professional practice experience, with regard to professional organization and the instruments of practice including a comparison your work experience projects from your United States experience and from your home country. This paper is due at the university scheduled Final Examination to be submitted in person in a shared discussion with the class with both a hard copy for the faculty advisor and in electronic format. A first draft of the report is due at mid-term at the end of the 8th week of the semester.

Students will receive a CR/NC grade for this one unit course based on completion of the course requirements and submittal of a satisfactory course paper. Failure to complete any component of the course requirements may result in a NC grade for the course.

**Course Readings:**

All students will become familiar with AXP Guidelines provided to serve as a model for the scope and content of their report on their personal work history and follow the categories in the work status hours and time sheets due each month. [Note internships in related fields of study may have alternative model guidelines for identification of experience in the required time sheets which may be used instead of AXP Guidelines.]

This course follows all protocols and requirements of USC School of Architecture and the University for all course offerings including but not limited to policies on Student Disabilities, Academic Integrity, and Religious Observances, See university academic policies for more detailed information

Attachments:

[**https://www.ncarb.org/sites/default/files/AXP-Guidelines.pdf**](https://www.ncarb.org/sites/default/files/AXP-Guidelines.pdf)

**Subject: ARCH-524 - Clarifications of CPT Guidelines: \* Please to confirm that these requirements are current as they are subject to change.**

F1 Student Employment

<https://ois.usc.edu/employment/employment-f1/>

Curricular Practical Training (CPT)

<https://ois.usc.edu/employment/employment-f1/cpt/>

Curricular Practical Training (CPT) is work authorization that allows F-1 international students to participate in paid off-campus academic internships during their degree program. The purpose of CPT is academic, not just for employment purposes, and the internship must be considered an integral part of a student’s degree program. Students must have a specific job/internship offer to apply. If the internship is an unpaid or volunteer position, CPT is not required. Students CANNOT accept any kind of compensation for work performed in an unpaid internship.

**F-1 Student Status Requirement\* Students must have been in F-1 student status for at least one academic year before they can apply for CPT** and must have properly maintained F-1 status each semester. The only exception to this rule applies to those students who are in degree programs that require an internship or practicum hours to fulfill degree requirements. **Hours of Employment:\***

* Work hours are limited to 20 hours per week (part-time) during fall and spring semesters and 40 hours per week (full-time) during the summer semesters.
* Total hours worked in any semester for the combined TOTAL of on- and off-campus work cannot exceed 40 hours per week (including graduate assistantship positions) for full-time employment.
* During summers, students may be registered for CPT unit(s) only and still be able to maintain student status. The [Reduced Course Load (RCL)](http://sait.usc.edu/ois/intl-students/maintaining-status/full-time.aspx) request form is not required in this case.
* Students can work full-time in their **final** semester, with department approval, but they must have part-time enrollment, defined as:
	+ *Undergraduate*: 6 or less units
	+ *Graduate students:* 4 or less units total or one final class. If one final class, the total combined units, including the CPT credit, cannot be more than 5 units (Ex. 4-unit class + 1 unit of GRSC 596).
* Also, CPT may be approved full-time when students are registered only for thesis or dissertation units (such as 594/794).
* Program extensions will not be granted only for the purpose of working with CPT.

Any international student who would like to obtain an internship/job must be registered for our ARCH-524 to satisfy the Curricular Practical Training (CPT) work authorization.  For graduate students, only 2 units of 524 can apply toward their degree program of study.  If they work more than 2 semesters (including summer) those units are extra/outside of the degree count.  For undergraduate students there are no degree restrictions on credit count.\*

During the last semester of study, international students may apply for OPT.  Optional Practical Training (OPT) is a benefit given to F-1 students who are completing a Bachelor's or graduate degree in the United States. Its purpose is to provide an opportunity to gain employment experience in a student’s field of study.  OPT is approved by the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS).

Eligibility requirements for OPT:\*

1. Maintain F-1 student status for a minimum of one academic year and be posted at degree level. OPT is based on being posted for at least a fall and a spring semester. In the majority of cases, summers do not count.
2. A student who uses a year or more of **full-time** Curricular Practical Training is not eligible for OPT. Part-time periods of CPT do not count toward this total.

You cannot work legally until the following two conditions are satisfied:

1. You receive your EAD card in the mail
2. Your work date on the EAD card has begun

The entire application process, from time of submission to OIS for your OPT I-20 to receipt of the Employment Authorization Document (EAD card) **can take 2 - 3 months**, so plan accordingly.

**\* Please confirm that these requirements are current as they are subject to change**.