

What is CPT?

Curricular Practical Training (CPT) is work authorization for F-1 students, allowing them to gain hands-on experience through internships, co-ops, or practicums that directly relate to their degree program. CPT provides students the opportunity to apply classroom learning to a professional setting in the U.S. For J-1 visa holders, the equivalent work authorization is called Academic Training (AT).

Who Approves CPT?

CPT must be authorized by a Designated School Official (DSO) in International Programs & Services (IPS). Students cannot begin work until they have received CPT authorization, which appears on page 2 of their Form I-20. Processing may take up to 10 business days, so early planning is essential. Authorization is granted per semester and is tied to enrollment in a specific course.

What are the Eligibility Criteria?

A DSO may authorize CPT for an F-1 student enrolled at a SEVP-certified school if the student:

- Has been lawfully enrolled on a full-time basis for at least one full academic year.
 - Note: An exception applies to graduate students whose programs require earlier training.
- Is not studying English as a second language.
- Has secured a qualifying training position.

Note: CPT can be authorized on either a part-time or full-time basis in line with school policies. When school is in session, the student must maintain a full course of study even while engaged in CPT.

Advisor Responsibilities

Academic and career advisors play a key role in CPT approval. You are asked to:

1. Review the student's offer letter.
 2. Confirm the position is directly related to the student's major.
 3. Guide the student on proper CPT course enrollment.
 4. Support completion of the CPT Application, which is sent via the student's MyGlobalMU portal to the faculty/advisor by email once the student submits the form.
 5. Certify that the experience is integral to the academic program when completing the verification.
-

Information Request of the Advisor on the CPT Application

When completing the secondary approver form of the CPT Application, you will provide:

- Department and course number for CPT enrollment.
 - Update on program requirements and degree progress.
 - Confirmation that the work directly relates to the student's major.
 - Certification that the course is integral to the academic program.
 - CPT Application Form Language:
 - "I certify that I have read the job offer letter and consider the above employment to be an integral part of the student's curriculum. I have read the CPT information available at the Office of International Programs and Services website. I understand that CPT must have a valid purpose in the student's program of study; it is not meant to be a convenient employment opportunity and may not delay completion of the academic program."
-

Special Considerations

- Independent/Directed Study: Must include a written plan of study and generally be 3 credits or fewer, unless the student has an approved reduced course load for dissertation/thesis work.
 - No Relevant CPT Course? If there is no appropriate course, the student may apply for pre-completion OPT instead.
 - Relation to Major: CPT must relate to the student's major as listed on their I-20. Work tied only to a minor or certificate does not qualify.
 - Unpaid Roles: CPT authorization is recommended for all internships, whether they are paid or unpaid.
 - Volunteer Activities that do not need CPT
 - Volunteer work with a nonprofit organization.
 - Assisting at a food bank or similar charitable organization.
 - Civic Engagement that does not need CPT
 - Positions with state or local government agencies, provided they serve a civic purpose.
 - Unpaid Internships with "For-Profit" Companies that do not need CPT
 - The training offered is similar to what would be provided in an academic setting and is distinct from regular employee work.
 - The internship is designed primarily for the intern's benefit.
 - The internship does not replace/complete work completed by regular staff and works under close supervision.
 - The employer gains no immediate benefit from the intern's work; in fact, standard operations may occasionally be slowed by the training.
 - There is no promise of a job once the internship ends.
 - Both the intern and employer clearly understand that the internship is unpaid.
-

How CPT Differs from OPT

- **Curricular Practical Training (CPT):** Authorized by IPS, tied to enrollment in a course, and may be full- or part-time during studies.
 - **Optional Practical Training (OPT):** Authorized by USCIS, not tied to a course, and typically used after graduation.
-

Final Notes

- CPT cannot delay a student's degree completion.
 - The student is responsible for following immigration rules and timelines.
 - IPS staff are not immigration officers and cannot guarantee future immigration benefits, but will guide to help students maintain their status.
-

Questions to Identify an International Student

- Are you a U.S. citizen or a Permanent Resident?
 - If 'No'
 - "Are you on a visa hosted by Millersville University? (An F or J visa).
 - If 'Yes'
 - "Reach out to your Designated School Official (DSO) or Responsible Officer (RO) at the International Programs & Services Office for authorization."
 - Please have them email international.services@millersville.edu
-

For further questions, please refer students to IPS advising or the CPT information on the IPS website.

<https://www.millersville.edu/internationalprograms/international-students/working-in-the-us/employment-options.php>