Curricular Practical Training (CPT): Frequently Asked Questions
Students in F-1 Status

Reminder:
All students must attend a CPT workshop presented by the International Students and Scholars Office (ISSO) before ISSO can process a CPT request.

What is CPT?
- Period of practical training directly that is:
  - Related to your current level and major field of study
  - An academic component of your degree program

What is the general eligibility criteria for CPT?
- Students enrolled in a Bachelor’s, Master’s, or Doctoral degree program
- Students who have been enrolled full time for one academic year
- Students making normal progress toward completing their degree

When is a student eligible for CPT?
- Students who have not completed their degree requirements
- Graduate students who receive a conditional pass on the final oral defense of their creative component, thesis or dissertation
- Students who have completed all requirements for their degree program
  - Graduate students who receive a full pass on the final oral defense of their creative component, thesis or dissertation are allowed to request CPT for the three months following their defense date
  - Graduate students who receive a conditional pass on the final oral defense of their creative component, thesis or dissertation and the CPT is not required to meet the conditions outlined in the Oral Defense Report from the POS Committee
  - Graduate students who have completed all required coursework for a coursework only degree program are allowed to request CPT for the following term (fall, spring or summer)
  - Undergraduate students who have completed all required coursework for the degree program are allowed to request CPT for the following term (fall, spring or summer)

What if I need to request an extension of my I-20 in order to request CPT?
- Graduate students who receive a full pass on the final oral defense of their creative component, thesis or dissertation are allowed to request an extension of three months for purposes of CPT but must also apply for OPT at the same time
- Graduate students who have completed all required coursework for a coursework only degree program are allowed to request an extension for the following term (fall, spring or summer) for purposes of CPT
- Undergraduate students who have completed all required coursework for the degree program are allowed to request an extension for the following term (fall, spring or summer) for purposes of CPT

When is a student not eligible for CPT?
- Students requesting CPT that would occur more than one term after obtaining an extension of the I-20
- Students requesting CPT based solely on a minor
Students who have officially graduated from Iowa State University

When can I use CPT?
- During the fall or spring semester or during the summer session

When can I use CPT after beginning another degree program?
- You are eligible for part-time CPT during the first two semesters of your new program
  - Exception: you may use full-time CPT during your second semester if your new degree program is at a new level in the same major and you did not use post-completion OPT for the previous degree.
- You are allowed a maximum of 364 days of full-time CPT at any one level (bachelor’s, master’s, doctorate) if you have been granted Optional Practical Training (OPT) at that same level
- You are allowed unlimited CPT if no OPT has been granted at the same level on which the CPT will be based. However, note that 365 or more days of full-time CPT at an educational level eliminates eligibility for OPT at that same level.

Are there any time restrictions for full-time CPT?
- Duration: Full-time CPT must last for at least three of the four months of a fall or spring semester
  - If student requests less than three months of full-time CPT, ISSO can authorize it if the student registers full time for the same semester in which the CPT occurs to ensure student is full time for the entire semester. Student may submit a Request for Reduced Course Load if appropriate reason exists for the request.
- Timeframe: CPT may extend beyond the last day of the semester, but must end the day before the next semester begins. Summer begins the first summer session in May.
- Under no circumstances can CPT extend beyond the program completion date listed on the I-20.
- CPT will generally be granted for only one semester at a time: fall, spring, or summer

Are there any time restrictions for part-time CPT?
- Duration: As required by the academic objective and academic requirements
- Timeframe: May extend beyond the semester, but must end the day before the next semester begins. Summer begins the first summer session in May.
- Under no circumstances can CPT extend beyond the program completion date.
- CPT can only be granted for one semester at a time: fall, spring, or summer

Can I request more than one period of CPT?
- Yes, but 365 days of full-time CPT will eliminate eligibility for OPT at that same level following completion of your degree program.

Can I request part-time CPT for work off campus and still work on campus?
- Yes, students are eligible to work up to 20 hours each week on campus and up to 20 hours each week off campus through CPT. However, students must also enroll full time each fall and spring semester and it may not be advisable to attempt over 20 hours of employment while enrolled full time.
Can I request CPT to work more than 20 hours on campus?

- Only students with graduate assistantships are eligible to use CPT to work up to 30 hours on campus and only if the additional employment meets the criteria for CPT. ISSO cannot authorize CPT simply to allow another 10 hours of on-campus employment.

Can I change employers during my CPT?

- Yes, but the new employment must meet the eligibility requirements for CPT.
  - Student must complete a new CPT application

Do I need to register for other courses during my CPT?

- Part-time CPT: CPT registration, combined with other registration for that semester, must equal a full-time course load
  - 12 credits for undergraduate students
  - 9 credits for graduate students
  - Credits as determined by the department as full time for graduate students with a graduate assistantship
- Full-time CPT: Students authorized for full-time CPT on the basis of a course that reports as full time per university policy, need not register for additional hours. Examples of courses that report as full time include:
  - Cooperative education courses (x98)
  - Many internship courses (x97)

What registration is required for the CPT authorization?

When CPT is not required for the degree program, the course must be:

- Specific to CPT
- For credit
- Graded
- During the same semester in which the CPT experience takes place

When CPT is required for the degree program (cannot earn the degree without it):

- No registration is required

What are some sample courses acceptable for the CPT authorization?

- Internship course
- Cooperative education course
- Independent study or special topics course for a shorter, part-time opportunity
- Research hours if the CPT experience is required for completion of the thesis or dissertation (information gained from CPT will be incorporated into the thesis or dissertation)

What if I drop the course on which my CPT is based?

- You must reregister for the course within one week if you want to continue your CPT.
- If you fail to reregister for the course on which your curricular practical training is based, you will be considered in violation of your F-1 status, your CPT will be cancelled, and you must file for reinstatement with U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services.
If you do not want to continue your CPT, you would need to add other courses to make your semester registration full time.

- If other courses are not added, you will be considered in violation of your F-1 status and you must file for reinstatement with U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services.
- Consider that adding classes past the first few weeks of a semester is not always feasible.
- If you never started your CPT, you would need to obtain a letter from the employer which confirms this fact, submit it to ISSO, and then add other courses to make your semester registration full time.
- Consider that adding classes past the first few weeks of a semester is not always feasible.

**Do I need to attend a CPT workshop before this request?**

- Yes, you must register for a CPT workshop by going to the Events link on the ISSO web site (www.isso.iastate.edu)

**When do I submit this request?**

- At least 10 calendar days prior to beginning your CPT experience
- If you do not allow ISSO 10 days to process your request, your CPT start date may be later than the date you requested on your Curricular Practical Training: Student Request form as the start date cannot be a date that is in the past.

**What is the timeline for processing this request?**

- 10 calendar days after there is a check mark in all boxes on the Cystart Curricular Practical Training page.

**What must I submit for this request?**

- *Curricular Practical Training: Student Request e-form*
- *Verification of Academic Status e-form*
- *Verification of Academic Purpose e-form*
- *Director of Graduate Education (DOGE) Support for CPT Request e-form (for graduate students only)*

**Job offer letter which includes:**

- Name and address (street, city, state, zip code) of the institution or company which hired you
- Name and address (street, city, state, zip code) of the institution or company where the CPT will take place, if different than the company which hired you
- Position offered including a brief description of the experience
- Specific employment start (month/day/year) and end dates (month/day/year)
- Number of hours of CPT activity each week

**Documentation providing verification that CPT is for academic purposes (one of the following):**

- CPT *optional* for current degree program: student registered for internship, or cooperative education course.
  - Academic basis detailed on Curricular Practical Training: Academic/Faculty Advisor Recommendation form
  - Attach copy of internship/cooperative education agreement from Career Services Office, if applicable
- CPT *required* for this graduate student per his or her Program of Study
Include copy of Program of Study

- CPT required for completion of thesis, dissertation, or creative component
  - Include explanation from academic/faculty advisor explaining why thesis, dissertation or creative component cannot be completed without the CPT.

- CPT required for all students in this academic program to earn a degree
  - Include section from Iowa State University Catalog which documents this requirement

- CPT required for completion of course requirement for a specific course
  - Include copy of syllabus from course detailing the required CPT experience

**What if I don’t know who the DOGE is for my graduate program?**

- Please refer to the following website for a list of graduate programs. Click on your program to find the name of the DOGE, then consult the ISU Directory for the DOGE’s e-mail address and phone number.

**How do I submit this request?**

- This is an electronic process completed by logging in to Cystart using your ISU NetID and password.
- Start this processing by reviewing the Curricular Practical Training page found ISSO web site (www.isso.iastate.edu):
  - Enrolled Students » Immigration Info & Forms » F-1/F-2 Status » Curricular Practical Training

**Can I submit just one request if I plan do to CPT for more than one semester?**

- Yes, you may submit one request for CPT if it will continue into the following academic term

**Must I register for my CPT course before I submit my CPT request?**

- Yes

**When can I begin my CPT experience?**

- After you receive your new I-20 with the CPT authorization and the start date is current

**How will I know if this request has been approved and my new I-20 is ready?**

- ISSO will send an e-mail to your ISU e-mail address when processing is complete.
- If you do not receive this e-mail within 10 calendar days as noted above, please send an e-mail to isso@iastate.edu to check on your request.

**Do I need to update my address if I will be living at a new address during my CPT?**

- Yes, the F-1 immigration regulations require you to report your local, U.S. address within 10 days of moving to a new address.
- Update your address on AccessPlus to fulfill this requirement