

# CURRICULAR PRACTICAL TRAINING

Middlebury Institute of International Studies at Monterey  
International Student & Scholar Services

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# ABOUT CURRICULAR PRACTICAL TRAINING (CPT)

# UNDERSTANDING CPT (I)

## **What is CPT?**

Curricular Practical Training (CPT) is defined in the U.S. Code of Federal Regulations as:

“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.”

# UNDERSTANDING CPT (2)

## What do the regulations mean?

- Student must be eligible for CPT
- Opportunity must be directly related to student's major
- Student must be
  - enrolled in a credit-bearing course that requires or accepts practical training
  - or*
  - in a program that requires a practical training experience (at MIIS, all these programs also have a required course)

# CPT ELIGIBILITY (I)

- Be in valid F-1 status.
- Have been in full-time academic status for one full academic year (two semesters).
  - Exception: If a master's degree program **REQUIRES** a practicum/internship of all students in that program to earn the degree then it may be possible to grant CPT in the first two semesters.\*
- The training is an integral part of the school's established curriculum:
  - Earn academic credit towards the degree program for the opportunity; **OR**
  - The degree program requires a practicum/internship to earn the degree.\*
- Employment relates directly to the major area of study.

## CPT ELIGIBILITY (2)

- CPT is not authorized for freelance/contractor work or for self-employment. (These are sometimes presented as 1099 employment.)
- If you are applying for Experiential Learning Funding, you may also need to apply for CPT.
- CPT will always be approved for the shortest of the following:
  - Length of practical training experience
  - Length of Middlebury course
  - Length of semester
- If the opportunity crosses multiple terms/semesters, you need to submit a separate application for each semester.

## ARE CPT & OPT THE SAME?

### **NO**

- Curricular Practical Training (CPT) is only available while you are a student
- Optional Practical Training (OPT) is available after you graduate
  - Pre-completion OPT is available before graduation but rarely used. Contact ISSS for more information.
- Neither one is guaranteed or required. They are both benefits of the F-1 status.
- One year (12 months) of full-time (2080+ hours) CPT eliminates a student's OPT eligibility.

# WHEN DO YOU NEED CPT? WHEN DON'T YOU?

## **Needed**

- You are in the U.S.
- Off-campus work, volunteer, internship, or practical training opportunity
- Paid or unpaid
- The opportunity is related to your major area of study

## **Not Needed**

- On-campus work (student employment, paid by Middlebury)
- You are outside of the U.S.
- True volunteer opportunities (example: handing out food to houseless folks)

## A NOTE ABOUT INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

**CPT is NOT needed if the internship is with certain International Organizations. This requires a separate type of work authorization.**

- This is a type of work authorization issued to F-1 students who have been offered an internship in the U.S. with a recognized International Organization.
- F-1 students can apply for this type of off-campus work authorization at any point during their program of study (do not need to wait a full year).
- F-1 students must maintain their F-1 status for the duration of the position.
- Student needs to have a written offer letter from an approved international organization.
- This type of off-campus work authorization is approved by USCIS.
- Student will work with ISSS office to obtain an I-20 with off-campus recommendation and then submit application to USCIS.
- Student needs to have an EAD card prior to starting the internship.
- Must be an internship with a [qualified international organization](#) (22 USC 288 as established by 59 Stat. 669, International Organization Immunities Act).

# SPECIAL SITUATIONS

CPT across multiple terms

Multiple CPT authorizations at once

CPT outside of Monterey

## CPT ACROSS MULTIPLE TERMS

- Possible
- Apply for CPT for each semester
- Cannot work during the breaks between semesters/approvals

## MULTIPLE CPT AUTHORIZATIONS AT ONCE

- Possible
- Separate application for each internship/experience
- Combined hours cannot exceed 20/wk if you are only eligible for part-time CPT

## CPT OUTSIDE OF MONTEREY

### IF DURING A VACATION PERIOD

- No problem!

### IF DURING FALL OR SPRING SEMESTER

- May be possible for PSS
- Must be in the final semester of your program
- Generally, must have no other required courses
- Contact ISSS early if you are considering this option

# APPLYING FOR CPT

# I. CHOOSE THE CORRECT APPLICATION PROCESS

## **Degree Coursework**

- “CPT Application”
- Used when you have an off-campus internship/practical training experience as part of a degree program course that requires participation in an off-campus training experience. Courses include, but are not limited to:
  - Professional Service Semester (PSS)
  - TILM Practicum

## **Fieldwork**

- “Fieldwork Enrollment Application”
- Used when you have an off-campus internship/practical training experience but no qualifying course (most common in summer & J-term)

## 2. COLLECT THE REQUIRED DOCUMENTS

- A letter from the company or organization with details about the internship/fieldwork position
  - Letter guidelines and template on the [Apply for CPT](#) page, “Internship/Fieldwork Supplemental Letter Guidelines”
- CPT Recommendation Form completed by your course instructor
  - For CPT Application only
  - Course instructor permission is built into the Fieldwork application
- Unofficial transcript, most current version
  - For the CPT Application, this must show that you are registered in the course you will use for CPT

### 3. SUBMIT THE APPLICATION & WAIT

- Submit either the [CPT Application](#) or the [Fieldwork Enrollment Application](#)
- Processing time is typically 1-2 weeks. Common delay reasons:
  - Incomplete application
  - Supplemental letter and application information disagree
- You must wait for CPT approval before you can begin working
- Apply early!
  - Fieldwork: Typically begins accepting applications 1.5 months before J-term or summer term
  - CPT Application: Once you are registered for the course and have a completed CPT recommendation form

## 4. IF APPROVED...

- ISSS will email you with your updated I-20
  - Note: Fieldwork students will receive an email from the course instructor adding them to the course before ISSS will proceed with the I-20 update
- You can work for the dates shown on page 2 of your I-20
  - ISSS cannot use a date in the past. We can only approve current or future dates.
  - If your opportunity will end sooner or later than you are approved for, contact ISSS as soon as possible!
- If you will be paid, you must have a Social Security Number (SSN). Provide it to your employer, along with a copy of your updated I-20



# RESOURCES

## USEFUL LINKS

[CPT Information](#)

[CPT Application Process Details](#)

[CPT Forms & Resources](#) (including this presentation)

[Schedule for CPT Information and Q&A Sessions](#)

[Social Security Number \(SSN\) Eligibility & Application Information](#)

[U.S. Tax Information](#)

# QUESTIONS?



**Email:**  
[iss@middlebury.edu](mailto:iss@middlebury.edu)



**Appointment:**  
<https://calendly.com/middleburyiss>



**Phone:** 831-647-3586



**Hours:** M-F  
8:30 AM-5 PM (PT)

Contact ISSS for all your CPT questions. Information from friends (especially at other schools), the internet, or AI is not a replacement for ISSS advice!