



Hope COLLEGE

CENTER FOR GLOBAL ENGAGEMENT

What is Curricular Practical Training (CPT)?

“...Curricular practical training is defined to be alternate work/study, internship, cooperative education, or any other type of required internship or practicum which is offered by sponsoring employers through cooperative agreements with the school.” [8 CFR 214.2(f)(10)(i)]

Curricular Practical Training is *not* a means of simply gaining employment eligibility or a stepping stone to be able to work until Optional Practical Training begins.

Eligibility

Who is eligible for CPT?

Students who are in F-1 status and have been enrolled full-time at Hope College for at least one full academic year in the current degree program (unless the internship is *required* by the program of study) are eligible for Curricular Practical Training before completion of all semester hours required for the degree. CPT can be done during the regular academic year or during the summer or winter break.

Who is not eligible for CPT?

1. Students who have received a program extension to [extend the end date on the I-20](#); the DSO advisor will need to discuss the nature of your program extension to determine whether CPT will further delay your completion of studies.
2. After completion of all semester hours required for a degree. There are *only two exceptions*:
 - a. an unusual opportunity of **short duration**, such as a weekend performance in a symphony orchestra or one-day participation in a workshop or research study; *OR*
 - b. the internship is **required** by the program of study as documented by information published in the Hope College Catalog, department catalogs, etc.
3. For new majors added recently – Fried Center for Global Engagement requires a student to have declared and been pursuing a major for at least one full semester AND have taken at least 16 credit hours of coursework toward that major
4. After graduation or completion of a course of study.
5. Based on a course of study for a Minor degree.
6. After applying for [OPT](#) (Go to our website to learn more about Off-Campus Employment).
7. While participating in Concurrent Enrollment.
8. Anyone who has [fallen out of status](#) for any reason, including not maintaining full-time registration or working without proper authorization.

Note: Fried Center for Global Engagement reserves the right to review and deny CPT applications, particularly if staff feel the student is trying to delay graduation.



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Frequently Asked Questions

When can I apply and when can I begin CPT?

You are eligible to *apply* up to 90 days before the end of your first year of study. The actual CPT employment cannot *begin* until the first academic year is complete. You **CANNOT** begin to work *before* you obtain your CPT authorization from Fried Center for Global Engagement or continue to work *after* your authorization expires or you graduate. If you do, you will be engaged in unlawful employment (i.e., you will be “working illegally”). Generally, it is best to apply for CPT authorization 1-4 weeks prior to the start of employment. When you apply, you must be able to demonstrate you will continue to work towards your degree. Therefore, you should be able to demonstrate you are registered and continuing to make academic progress for the academic term in which you will on CPT. For example, if you are applying during the fall semester for CPT with a Spring semester start date, you should be registered in classes for the Spring semester. The only exception to this policy is for CPT taking place in the summer, during which enrollment is generally not required for international students.

Do I need to apply to the USCIS for CPT authorization?

No. You do not need to apply to the USCIS. In fact, only Fried Center for Global Engagement can authorize CPT for eligible Hope students.

When can I begin my CPT employment?

You may begin working immediately after you receive your I-20 authorizing you for CPT from Fried Center for Global Engagement and as soon as the start date requested on the I-20 arrives. **DO NOT** begin your employment before you receive the CPT authorization from Fried Center for Global Engagement, or you will be working illegally!

What if I want to do CPT for more than one semester?

Fried Center for Global Engagement will require you to renew your CPT application each semester. This means you must plan in advance to renew your authorization before your current semester’s authorization expires if you wish to continue working. Remember, you must also be able to demonstrate you are registered and continuing to make academic progress for the future semester at the time of application, unless you will be applying to extend your CPT into the summer.



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Can I use CPT to engage in self-employment or open a business?

No, it is not possible to use CPT for these purposes.

Will I be eligible to extend my I-20 if I do full-time CPT?

In most cases, no. While you may be eligible to be approved for full-time CPT, you are still expected to be making normal progress on your degree. Unless your CPT is required by your program, Fried Center for Global Engagement will not be willing to extend an I-20 if a student did one semester or more of full-time CPT and then cannot graduate on time. If you believe you may find yourself in this situation, please talk to an DSO advisor before applying for full-time CPT.

Do I have to be registered when I am participating in CPT in the Fall/Spring?

Yes, you must always be registered as a student at Hope College during the Fall/Spring semester for tuition-bearing credit - an internship registration that carries no tuition is not sufficient by itself.

- If you are participating in **part-time CPT**, you must maintain full-time enrollment (12-16 credit hours).
- If you are participating in **full-time CPT** (more than 20 hours/week), and you are still completing your coursework, you must still be registered for at least 12 credit hours while doing full-time CPT.

It is your responsibility to determine with your academic advisor what it is appropriate for you to register for.

What is the difference between Optional Practical Training (OPT) and CPT?

OPT permits employment *after* completion of a course of study. You don't need a job offer to apply for OPT. There is no time limit to CPT, while full-time OPT is limited to one year.

If I do CPT, can I still do OPT later?

Yes, as long as you do not engage in *full-time CPT* (that is, more than 20 hours/week) *for a cumulative total of 12 months*. Part-time CPT (20 hours or less per week) has no impact on subsequent eligibility for OPT, even if you work for more than a year.



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Can I change employers if I have CPT authorization? Can I work full-time instead of part-time, or vice-versa?

Yes, but only with prior authorization from Fried Center for Global Engagement. If you change employers, or if you change from part-time to full-time employment, you **MUST** re-apply for a new CPT authorization. You cannot make the change until you have obtained a new CPT authorization I-20, or you will be working without authorization (i.e., “working illegally”). If you change from full-time to part-time employment, you *should* let Fried Center for Global Engagement know so that your employment will not affect your eligibility for OPT.

Am I eligible for CPT if I am or ever have been a part-time student?

If you have ever been enrolled as a part-time student, you must have an Fried Center For Global Engagement [“Reduced Course Load Request”](#) approval on file for the semester(s) you were under-enrolled. Otherwise, CPT cannot be authorized.

If I have an internship or other work opportunity which is unpaid, do I still need CPT authorization?

Yes, if the internship, work, or volunteer opportunity is related to your major field of study, you should still apply for CPT authorization even if you will not receive payment. The definition of "employment" in immigration terms does not necessarily equate with being paid, and Homeland Security expects international students engaged in even unpaid internships to be authorized for CPT. This includes students who may be registering for internship credit through their academic department.

If I am authorized for CPT employment and I decide not to use it, can I file another CPT application later?

Yes, unless you are ineligible due to one of the factors listed previously. However, please ask Fried Center for Global Engagement to notify the USCIS of the cancellation of your CPT as soon as you know you will not use the entire period authorized.