



# Curricular Practical Training (CPT)



International Student & Scholar Services  
UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO BOULDER

**Be Boulder.**  
 University of Colorado **Boulder**  
Version 01.23.2026

# What is CPT?

- Curricular Practical Training (CPT) is a temporary training authorization for an “alternative 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.”
- CPT can only be authorized *prior* to your degree completion.
- The training experience must be related to your *major* field of study and be **“an integral part of an established curriculum.”**
- CPT can be authorized as part-time (20 or fewer hours per week) or full-time (over 20 hours per week) if you meet the CPT eligibility requirements.





International Student & Scholar Services  
UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO **BOULDER**



# Eligibility for CPT

# CPT Eligibility Requirements (1 of 2)

**You must meet ALL the following criteria to request CPT**

- You are a degree-seeking student currently in valid F-1 status.
- You completed one full academic year (Fall & Spring semester) of continuous full-time enrollment in active nonimmigrant status.
  - Summer enrollment does not count towards this requirement.
- You are enrolled in an internship course that can count towards your degree *or* the University Catalog states that an internship is required for your degree program.
- You have an internship/training offer that relates to your current major field of study (not minor, certificate program or previous major).



International Student & Scholar Services  
UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO BOULDER

**Be Boulder.**  
 University of Colorado **Boulder**

# CPT Eligibility Requirements (2 of 2)

- You are enrolled full-time at CU Boulder or have an approved Reduced Course Load (RCL) if using CPT **in the Fall or Spring semester**.
  - Note: On-campus presence is required every Fall and Spring semester, and during your final semester if it is the summer.
- The training is not related to the marijuana industry (including working in a lab extracting CBD oil for medical purposes).
- You and your Academic Advisor or Graduate Program Advisor must complete the CPT Request e-Form.



# How do I know if I am eligible for CPT through my degree program?

- Your Graduate Program Advisor or Academic Advisor can confirm if your degree program is designed in such a way as to enable you to meet one of the following requirements for CPT:
  - Be enrolled in an internship course for credit that can count towards your degree (such as elective credits). Enrollment in the course must be concurrent with the training. **OR**
  - Your degree must require an internship and that requirement is clearly documented in [the University Catalog](#).
- If you do not meet one of the two requirements for CPT listed above, then you have the option to apply for [Pre-completion OPT](#) for off-campus work authorization.
  - Please review ISSS's [Pre-completion OPT webpage](#) for information on the application process.





# Planning For CPT



# CPT Start & End Dates

## CPT based on enrollment in an internship course

- your CPT authorization dates cannot overlap with another semester.
  - CPT authorization can begin the day after the previous semester ends
  - The CPT authorization must end before the first day of the next semester (unless you are using CPT in your final semester).
- For CPT in the summer term, you must enroll in **summer session D** for your CPT to begin as early as the day after the previous Spring semester ends, and to end as late as the day before the following Fall semester.
  - If you enroll in another summer session, then your CPT may only be authorized for the dates of that session
- If you are requesting CPT in your final semester, CPT authorization cannot go beyond the last date of the semester.
  - For Summer 2026 graduates, the last day that you can have CPT with Session D enrollment is July 31, 2026.

CPT based on your degree requirements, your CPT authorization dates must align with your department's degree requirements.



# Do I need to have an internship before I apply for CPT?

- Yes, CPT is employer specific. When you apply for CPT, you are requesting CPT authorization for a specific:
  - training opportunity.
  - number of hours worked per week.
  - dates of training.
  - work location (remote work is allowed, but you must meet the F-1 requirements for on-campus presence).
  - educational goal and objective associated with the particular training/internship opportunity.



# What information should my offer letter include?

- Be on letterhead and addressed to you (the student).
- Specify your internship start date and hours you will work per week.
  - The CPT start date indicated in your offer letter should be at least 10 business days from the day you submit your *CPT Request* in the [MyISSS portal](#) to allow time for your academic advisor/graduate program advisor to sign the e-form and for ISSS to process the request.
- Describe the nature of the practical training opportunity (internship duties and expectations).
  - If offer letter does not include a description of the internship duties, you must also upload an internship description.

[Handout: Curricular Practical Training \(CPT\) Offer Letter Requirements](#)

# What types of training are allowed on CPT?

- Paid or unpaid
- Be directly related to your current **major** field of study.
- Be an integral part of your major curriculum.
- Not be related to the marijuana industry (including working in a lab extracting CBD oil for medical purposes).

Please note: CPT training *can* be 1099 contract training.



International Student & Scholar Services  
UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO BOULDER

**Be Boulder.**  
 University of Colorado **Boulder**

# **Internships with Out-of-State Employers**

- International students in F-1 status are required to maintain on-campus presence every fall and spring semester, and summer if it is their first or final semester
- Students can have an internship that is outside of Colorado during the fall or spring semester if the student will be working remotely from Colorado and maintaining their on-campus presence.
  - ISSS will require a letter from the employer that explicitly confirms the student will work remotely from Colorado.
  - ISSS will also require an attestation from the student confirming that they will reside continually in Boulder to attend their in-person classes during the internship.

# **Internships with Out-of-State Employers (*exceptions*)**

- Students may participate in out-of-state internships if the internship will take place over the summer term.
  - If the summer term will be the student's final semester of study, the student is not eligible for an out-of-state internship.
- The following students may be eligible for an internships outside of Colorado during the Fall or Spring semester:
  - Ph.D students in dissertation stage
  - master's students working on a thesis, or
  - students with full-time practicums required for their degree that have completed all their required coursework

Please [speak with ISSS](#) to see if this applies to you

No other exceptions are permitted.

# Can I have CPT and on-campus employment simultaneously?

Yes, full-time or part-time CPT will not impact your on-campus employment.

- Be sure you are aware of any on-campus employment restrictions related to students in F-1 status.



International Student & Scholar Services  
UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO BOULDER

**Be Boulder.**  
 University of Colorado **Boulder**

# Does CPT have any impact on post-completion OPT eligibility?

- If you have been authorized for a cumulative total of 12 months/365 days or more of **full-time** CPT at your current degree level, you are ineligible for Optional Practical Training at that degree level.





# Applying for CPT

# How early should I apply for CPT?

The CPT Request Form should be submitted **at least 2 weeks** before your training opportunity start date to allow for processing by your Academic Advisor/ Graduate Program Advisor and ISSS.

- Submitting CPT requests less than 2 weeks from the requested start date slows down ISSS processing time

Note: If CPT is based on an internship course, you must first be enrolled in the internship course.



International Student & Scholar Services  
UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO BOULDER

**Be Boulder.**  
 University of Colorado **Boulder**

# How do I apply for CPT?

Once you have a training or internship offer *and* you are registered for an internship course, if applicable, you must complete the *Curricular Practical Training (CPT) Request* form through your [MyISSS Portal](#).

Next steps:

1. Form is routed to your Academic Advisor or Graduate Advisor for approval.
2. Once your CPT Request Form is approved by your advisor, ISSS will process your request within 3 – 5 business days.
3. ISSS will issue you your CPT Authorized I-20.

**You cannot work until you have received the I-20 authorizing CPT from ISSS and you are in your CPT authorization period, listed on page 2 of your I-20.**

Please remember: Working without authorization will result in the loss of F-1 status.



International Student & Scholar Services  
UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO BOULDER

**Be Boulder.**  
 University of Colorado **Boulder**

# **CPT Documentation & Reporting**



# What am I required to report while I am authorized for CPT?

CPT is date-specific, employer-specific, hours worked-specific, location-specific, and educational goal and objective-specific. **If anything about your CPT employment changes, you must report the change to ISSS.**

- This includes updates to your internship location
  - If your home address changes, please make sure to submit that change in the Buff Portal within 10 days of your move as well - [Updating Your Address in Buff Portal](#)



# What CPT authorization documentation am I required to keep for my records?

ISSS recommends you keep:

- A copy of the internship agreement form (if applicable).
- Internship offer letter.
- Other supporting documents showing the training was related to major field of study.
- Your CPT authorization I-20 (students are responsible for keeping a copy of *every* I-20 issued to them)



International Student & Scholar Services  
UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO BOULDER

**Be Boulder.**  
 University of Colorado **Boulder**

# Can I extend my CPT authorization if authorized through an internship course?

CPT authorization for an internship is granted on a semester-by-semester basis. An extension is only applicable to extend a currently approved and ongoing internship with no changes to complete the internship within the current term. Extending CPT authorization beyond the start date of an upcoming term requires a new CPT request, not an extension of a currently approved CPT authorization.

## Requirements for extension:

- The request to extend CPT is received prior to the end of the current term in which the CPT is authorized (i.e. prior to the last day of finals)
- The request to extend CPT includes a new Curricular Practical Training (CPT) Request e-form with an explanation of why the extension is needed to meet the requirements of the internship course.
  - The academic department must provide this explanation.
- The extension dates do not go beyond the start date of the next semester.
- ISSS receives the request to extend the CPT before the current authorized CPT ends. Requests submitted after the last day of enrollment for the current term in which the original CPT was authorized will be denied.
- A grade has not been posted for the internship course.

# Can I continue my internship for the same employer during a subsequent academic term?

Yes! You must...

- Meet all [CPT eligibility requirements](#)
- Reapply for CPT by submitting a new CPT Request e-Form ([MyISSS Portal](#)).
- ***Do not*** participate in CPT beyond your previously approved CPT end date until you have received your new approved CPT I-20 and you are in your new CPT authorization dates.

**Note:**

- Please submit your new request at least 10 business days prior to your expected CPT start date for the new term.

# What if there is a gap between work authorization periods for the same employer?



For any period in which you are formally employed in the U.S., you must have work authorization.

- If there will be a gap between your current CPT authorization and the requested start date of your next CPT authorization (including weekends), then you *cannot* be classified as an employee during that gap.
- Work with your employer to ensure you are officially removed as an employee and do not receive any benefits for the period during which you will not have CPT work authorization (including weekends).
- To avoid the need to be removed as an employee during the work authorization gap, make sure your CPT authorization requested start date is for the date *immediately following* your current CPT end date.

# Social Security, & Taxes

## Social Security Number (SSN)

If you have a paid position and do not currently have an SSN, please specify this on the CPT Request Form. You must then complete the Request for SSN Letter for Approved CPT e-form (available in [MyISSS portal](#)) and ISSS will issue you an SSN Letter in addition to your CPT authorization I-20.

## Taxes

You need to file a tax return every April that you live in the U.S. – whether you earn income or not!

- [Reporting Annual U.S. Presence and Income Tax](#)
- [International Tax Office](#)



International Student & Scholar Services  
UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO BOULDER

**Be Boulder.**  
 University of Colorado **Boulder**

# Use Career Services to find your next opportunity!

<https://www.colorado.edu/career/>



**Be Boulder.**  
 University of Colorado **Boulder**

# Final Note on Professional Etiquette

Accepting a job offer and then pulling out is called *reneging*, which is a serious professional offense.

- Please review the [Career Services' policy](#) addressing renegeing on a job or internship offer letter. Please keep this policy in mind prior to accepting an internship offer.

# Questions from you



International Student & Scholar Services  
UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO **BOULDER**

**Be Boulder.**  
 University of Colorado **Boulder**