I have just been offered an internship opportunity. Can I begin work in two days?

No. You must apply for CPT at least five business days before you wish to begin work. You must have been approved for and have received an updated I-20 signed by an immigration coordinator and endorsed for CPT before you may begin work.

My degree program does not require an internship, does this mean I cannot participate in an off campus internship?

Not necessarily. You may still be eligible to apply for CPT if you and your adviser can document how the training is an integral part of your course of study still in progress. You will be required to enroll in either an internship credit or an independence study course specifically designed for this purpose.

Can I use my current CPT authorization for another internship since it has not yet expired?

No. A CPT authorization is a job-specific authorization, so you must submit a complete new application to the Office of International Affairs for review if you wish to hold additional employment.

Can I do full-time CPT and still be eligible for the full 12 months of optional practical training (OPT)?

Yes. However, students who have been authorized for more than 12 months of full-time CPT become ineligible for OPT. And yes, USCIS will count the days of CPT authorization, and if you have had 365 days or more of full-time CPT, you will be INELIGIBLE for OPT. But any amount of full-time CPT adding up to less than 12 months has no impact on OPT eligibility, and part-time CPT does not impact OPT eligibility at all.

What should I do if I quit my training before the original anticipated CPT authorization end date?
You should contact an immigration coordinator immediately so that we can amend your authorization dates. This is especially important when you were authorized for full-time CPT, so that this time will not count against your eligibility for optional practical training (OPT).

Do I need to submit proof of enrollment for the past academic year?

No. The International Affairs coordinator will verify your enrollment history through the University Registrar's Office. However, if you recently transferred to Ohio State and wish to begin work on CPT prior to having been enrolled here for one academic year, you will need to provide us with transcripts from your previous school to show that you have fulfilled the enrollment requirement.

I hold a Graduate Assistantship and my department has offered me a 75 percent appointment. Am I eligible to apply for CPT?

No. While school is in session a student may only engage in a maximum of 20 hours of employment per week. Furthermore, CPT is authorization for off-campus work only.

I work at the library for five hours a week and have been offered an internship off campus. Am I eligible to apply for CPT?

While school is in session a student may only engage in a maximum of 20 hours of employment per week, regardless of whether they are engaged in employment on or off campus. So if you meet the eligibility requirements for CPT, you may be authorized for part-time CPT for an additional 15 hours. However, the total employment while school is in session may not exceed 20 hours per week (graduate assistantships count as your 20 hours of permissible work per week).

Do I need to apply for CPT for an unpaid internship?

Yes. You should apply for work for authorization for any internship, even if you will not be paid.

May I volunteer for an off-campus organization without CPT authorization?

Even if you are not being paid for work you are performing off campus, you may still require CPT authorization. "Volunteer" work is
considered work for which no one would be paid and is charitable in nature, such as helping in a soup kitchen or walking dogs at an animal shelter. If you are working for a company, and doing work in your field of study, this would be considered "unpaid employment," which does require work authorization such as CPT.

How do I know that I am authorized for CPT? And when may I begin work?

You will receive an e-mail message that a new Form I-20 has been issued for you. Prior to beginning your training you must be in possession of this updated Form I-20, which will be properly endorsed with the CPT authorization on page three. Employment before or after your authorized dates of training is considered ILLEGAL.

I want to find a full-time internship and not enroll in classes this spring semester. Can I apply for CPT?

Full-time CPT can only be authorized in your annual vacation term and during breaks between terms, unless the CPT is required by all students during a particular semester in the academic year, as stated in the course catalogue, or if you are a graduate student done with all coursework needing to work full-time on CPT to gather data for your thesis or dissertation. You must maintain your full-time enrollment during autumn and spring semesters in order to maintain your F-1 status, regardless of your CPT work plans.

Do I have to take classes while on CPT?

You must be enrolled as a full-time student during the semester of your part-time CPT work. If you are on authorized full-time CPT during your annual vacation term, you must be enrolled for at least an internship or independent study course that gives you academic credit for the work you are performing on CPT.

My department/ college does not have a specific internship course. Can I still participate in CPT?

Yes, as long as your academic advisor can identify an appropriate course for you to enroll in that will give you credit for the work you are performing on CPT. Some departments will enroll students in independent study credits for CPT.

Is there a minimum credit requirement for the independent study and/ or internship course?
There is no minimum credit requirement for CPT. However, you must receive at least one hour of credit (some departments offer a "zero," or half unit of credit), and you must maintain your full-time enrollment during the academic year.

I have been enrolled as a full-time student for the past two years but in H4 status and just recently changed to F-1 student status. Am I eligible to apply for CPT?

Yes. As long as you are currently in F-1 status and will maintain this status throughout your CPT, and have been enrolled as a full-time student for at least one academic year, you are eligible to apply for CPT.