Curricular Practical Training (CPT) is a type of employment authorization for students in undergraduate F-1 status who wish or need to engage in off-campus employment in their field of study when it is an integral component of their curriculum. It is important for students to remember that CPT is a benefit of the F-1 visa status, not a right. Additionally, CPT is curricular and is meant to further your academic studies, not to obtain employment for financial reasons.

CPT at Messiah College is done in cooperation with the Career and Professional Development Center, unless the training experience is required by your major.

CPT is authorized for a semester basis. Each semester of CPT requires a new complete application, even if the employer remains the same.

**Eligibility Requirements:**

- Students must have been enrolled full-time for at least nine months (two consecutive semesters) and be in F-1 status
- Students who have met the above requirement but are new to their degree program must also complete at least one semester in their curriculum at Messiah College
- Students must be maintaining lawful F-1 status
- Students must be in good academic standing (students whose academic programs are listed as suspended, terminated, probation or warning are not eligible for CPT)
- CPT will be revoked if the student does not maintain good academic standing throughout duration of the CPT authorization. It is the student’s responsibility to end employment immediately and report to the Assistant Director of International Student Programs (Hope Newcomer, HNewcomer@messiah.edu) in the Intercultural Office if the student is placed in suspended, terminated, probation, or warning status and if the student is involved in any academic integrity or student conduct violation or any other action that results in the loss of good academic standing
- Students must be making normal progress towards completion of their degree program
- Students must have a written recommendation from their Academic Advisor
- Before submitting the application for CPT, the student must be enrolled/registered for classes for the semester they plan to use CPT. Additionally, students applying for summer CPT must register for subsequent Fall semester coursework prior to submitting a CPT request
- CPT cannot delay or interfere with the student’s progress in the degree program
- Student’s employer must not prevent the student from discussing the Internship with their academic advisors at Messiah College or using their employment experience as a part of future coursework

**Full-time CPT and Part-time CPT**

CPT is approved on a part time (<20 hours a week) basis during the fall and spring semesters, unless an internship or practicum required by the student’s program of study mandates experience beyond 20 hours a week. **International students at Messiah College are limited to a combined total of 20 hours per week of employment during the academic year (inclusive of on-campus employment and any CPT).**
Time spent doing CPT is not subtracted from the 12-month maximum period of OPT (Optional Practical Training), but students who engage in 12 months or more of full-time CPT are ineligible for any OPT after completing their Bachelor’s degree.

**Semester Eligibility Dates**

CPT is authorized on a semester-by-semester basis. Each semester of CPT requires a separate application. (Please note that even if you want to extend a current CPT option to another semester, a separate application must be submitted and work must not occur outside of the dates of each CPT authorization). Please see the Undergraduate Academic Calendar for exact dates.

**Summer semester:**
- Earliest start date: Day after spring ‘Graduation’
- Latest end date: Day before ‘First Day of Classes’ in the fall semester*

**Spring semester:**
- Earliest start date: Day after fall ‘Graduation’
- Latest end date: Day before ‘First Day of Classes’ in the summer session*

**Fall semester:**
- Earliest start date: Day after 2nd summer semester ‘Final Examinations’ end
- Latest end date: Day before ‘First Day of Classes’ in the spring semester*

*unless the student is completing degree requirements during that semester. Students may not engage in CPT after completion of the program.

**How to Apply**

It is important to plan ahead when interested in doing CPT!

1. Email or visit the Intercultural Office and request an appointment with Hope Newcomer, Assistant Director of International Student Programs, regarding a possible CPT experience. This appointment will review your eligibility for CPT and outline the steps in the process. Plan ahead, as this appointment should be made at least one month in advance of your expected start date of CPT.

2. Receive an offer a position. The Career and Professional Development Center can assist with this, if you would like guidance, but they do not assign placements.

3. When you have an offer letter from an Employer, review it to ensure that it has the following 7 components in writing from your employer: (1) Job title, (2) job description, (3) salary, (4) number of hours you will work per week, (5) start date, (6) end date, and (7) the specific work location (the address where YOU will work). If you do not have all of the details listed above please show this to your employer and request these details be added, as you will not be authorized for CPT until all 7 components are confirmed in writing by the employer.

4. Download the F-1 Student Request for CPT form and complete Section I.

5. Take your job offer letter and the F-1 Student Request for CPT Authorization to your academic advisor and ask your advisor to complete Section II of the F-1 Student Request for CPT.

6. Register for an internship course with Joy Fea (fea@messiah.edu) in the Career and Professional Development Center the semester if you do not have a required Practicum/internship in your major requirements.
7. The Career and Professional Development Center will notify you if approved. (Please note, this approval process can take up to one week.)

8. After the Career and Professional Development Center has emailed you with approval, you should register for the Internship course through McSquare.

9. Make an appointment with Joy Fea (fea@messiah.edu) and ask her to complete Section III of the F-1 Student Request for CPT.

10. Bring your complete application (offer letter, completed F-1 Student Request for CPT form, and a copy of your registration for internship) to the Intercultural Office, Monday-Friday, between 8 a.m.-4 p.m.

11. International Student Programs will review your application and notify you within 10 business days of a decision. The Intercultural Office will notify you by email to pick up your work authorization documents if your CPT is approved.

12. Attend the Career and Professional Development Center Orientation.

13. Start your internship and the Internship course in Canvas.

14. Notify Hope Newcomer (hnewcomer@messiah.edu) in the Intercultural Office if anything changes related to your employment.

**Additional Information**

- Time spent doing CPT is not subtracted from the 12-month maximum period of OPT (Optional Practical Training), but students who engage in 12 months or more of full-time CPT are ineligible for any OPT after completing their Bachelor's degree.
- Students who engage in off-campus employment without obtaining CPT authorization, or who work before or after the approved dates on the CPT authorization as listed on the Form I-20, or who are employed differently than defined by the CPT authorization on page two of the I-20 will be considered to have engaged in unlawful employment, which is grounds for the termination of an F-1 visa.
- Students specially approved for full-time CPT in the fall or spring semester are required to maintain full-time enrollment at Messiah College.
- In order to accept salary or wage payment from U.S.-based source, it is necessary to obtain a Social Security Number