In this video, we’ll be explaining the process of applying for CPT.

After viewing this video, you will be able to identify the steps required to apply for CPT, prepare a complete CPT request, and understand the general CPT application timeline.

There are five main steps required to apply for CPT, and we’ll be going over each in this video.

Remember that you’ll need a confirmed position before you can apply. The steps to apply include:

1) review application timelines

2) receive an offer letter from your employer

3) identify your academic department approver

4) enroll in CPT credit, and

5) submit a complete request through your MyISSS account

The first step in the process is to review application timelines. CPT can be authorized for one quarter at a time, so you’ll need to submit a separate request for each quarter you hope to work in the position. When you apply for CPT, the period of your request can include breaks between quarters.

You’ll need to be enrolled in CPT credit before ISS can authorize CPT. For this reason, you can only apply after the course registration period opens. Check the UW academic calendar for specific dates, but you can see the general timelines on this slide. Once you submit a request online, it may take about 4 weeks total for you to receive approval and a new I-20.  

The second step is to receive an offer letter from your employer. It’s required to submit this offer letter with your request form. We have a template available on the ISS website for you to reference. We’ll be checking that the letter is on letterhead, and includes the name of your employer and the title of your position, your position start and end dates, and the employer’s address.  

Next you’ll need to identify your Academic Department Approver. This is important because CPT can only be authorized with the support of your academic department. If you don’t know who to contact, check in with your Major Advisor, or your Graduate Program Advisor.  Certain departments – like the College of Engineering and the Foster School - also have Career Center staff who can assist with your request.

Once you identify your Advisor, let them know you plan to apply for CPT. When you apply, you’ll need to include your Department Advisor’s information in the approval section of the request form.

The next step is to enroll in CPT credit. ISS requires a minimum of 1 credit each quarter, even if you have more than one authorized CPT. Keep in mind that your academic department may require additional credits.

Please view our second video in the series for details about CPT credit options. Check in with your Department Advisor if you have questions about CPT credit or need help to enroll.

You’ll need to enroll in CPT credit for the quarter you are requesting CPT work authorization. The only exception to this rule is for Summer quarter, when you may be able to defer your CPT credit and enroll for Autumn quarter instead. This exception is possible under ISS policy, but does require the approval of your Academic Department. If you defer Summer CPT credit to Autumn, and then need authorization for Autumn quarter also, you’ll be required to enroll for a minimum of two CPT credits in Autumn quarter: one for Summer, and one for Autumn.

Once you are enrolled for CPT credit, save a copy of your registration page from MyUW. You’ll need to upload this proof of enrollment into the CPT request form.

Once you’ve enrolled for CPT credit, you can submit a request form through your MyISSS account. The form is called Curricular Practical Training, and can be found on the Requests & Documents tab.

In the request form, you’ll need to answer all required questions about your position. Choose the quarter you are applying for, explain how the CPT experience is related to your study, and provide your employer’s name and address. You’ll also need to include the requested start and end dates of your position, but it’s important to know that ISS cannot backdate CPT authorizations. You’ll receive your requested start date of or the date of approval, whichever is later. Make sure to consider processing timelines when discussing a start date with your employer.

In the application, you’ll also need to choose whether you are applying for part-time or full-time authorization. Remember that part-time is 20 hours per week or less, while full-time is more than 20 hours per week. In the approver section, provide the name, title, and email address of your Academic Department Advisor.

Once you’ve completed these questions, you’ll need to upload the required offer letter, and proof of CPT credit enrollment. Students who transferred their SEVIS record to UW or have a Change of Level I-20 can apply based on previous study. If this is the case for you, please also submit a transcript from your previous degree program in the corresponding upload field. Once you’ve completed all the fields in the form, click “submit” at the bottom right.

After you submit, your Department Advisor will receive an email prompt to answer some questions about your request.

In the next video, we’ll be going over the CPT approval process and steps you may need to take after receiving a CPT I-20.