

Understanding Off-Campus Work Authorization

Planning for Fall 2026 and Beyond

International Services and Engagement Office (ISEO)

September 2, 2026

LEGAL DISCLAIMER

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It is important to consult with a qualified immigration attorney for individual advice regarding specific legal issues.

AGENDA

- Overview of F-1 Employment
- Curricular Practical Training (CPT)
 - Broadcast message – 8/12/26
 - Temporary suspension of CPT issuance - 08/14/26
 - Additional guidance issued 8/24/26
- Alternative employment options
- Campus Resources (Career Center, Student Legal Services)
- Q&A

EMPLOYMENT AUTHORIZATION

International Students on an F-1 Visa have the benefit of working in the U.S. during and after their program of study. However, depending on **when and where** you work, you will need to ensure you have the **proper permission** shown on a specific **document before** you begin working!

This document that reflects your permission to work is your **Employment Authorization**.

IMPORTANT!

DO NOT START WORKING WITHOUT EMPLOYMENT AUTHORIZATION

This webinar is not being recorded, but slides will be available in a few days at cpt.ucsd.edu

DURING PROGRAM

(Maximum of 20 hours a week during academic year, may work full-time during vacation/breaks)

On-Campus Employment

Graduate Student Research, Teaching Assistants, Fellowships, Price Center, etc.

Curricular Practical Training (CPT)

Pre-Completion Optional Practical Training (OPT)

Off Campus Employment in respective field of study.

Severe Economic Hardship

Volunteering & Unpaid Internships

Volunteering for non-profits or engaging in educational opportunities without expectation of pay.

AFTER PROGRAM

(Minimum 20 hours a week)

Post-Completion Optional Practical Training (OPT)

- *Non-Student Appointments (Post-Doc Research or Instructor)*
- *Off-Campus Employment in respective field of study*
- *Volunteering & Unpaid Internships**

24 Month STEM OPT Extension

- *Non-Student Appointments (Post-Doc Research or Instructor)*
- *Off-Campus Employment in respective field of study*

WHAT IS CPT

Curricular Practical Training (CPT) is a type of employment authorization for F-1 students. It is an opportunity to participate in a **paid position off-campus in your field of study during** the time that you are pursuing your degree. CPT is curricular and must be **integral** to your program of study.

- ✓ Paid or Compensated (stipend, housing, gas and food, etc)
- ✓ Off-Campus
- ✓ Related to Major
- ✓ **Integral part of established curriculum**
 - (Practical training is required for all students)

CPT.ucsd.edu

CPT ELIGIBILITY

- **Must have met the One Academic Year Requirement:** You must have been enrolled on a full-time basis for at least one academic year (3 quarters) on the same SEVIS number. (3 Quarters at UCSD at current program, SEVIS Transfer, Change of Status, Change of Level)
- **Must have a Job Offer:**
 - Must be a PAID job
 - Must be related to major
- **Must be integral and required part of program for ALL students, both international and domestic**
 - Course Credit requirement
 - Established cooperative agreement (signed agreement between university and employer) AND must be required.

CPT.ucsd.edu

About the Change

New federal guidance on CPT authorization

August 12, 2026 — ICE sent a nationwide broadcast message to Designated School Officials (DSOs) regarding CPT.

August 14, 2026 — ISEO paused CPT request processing in coordination with all UC campuses.

August 24, 2026 — ICE issued a follow-up clarification notice.

The guidance states that CPT may only be authorized when an internship is a graduation requirement for ALL students in the program—international and domestic.

WHY THE PAUSE ON CPT?

The pause is intended to protect students and the university

- The guidance indicates that approving CPT outside these parameters may put both the student and DSO at risk of violating F-1 rules.
- A student's immigration status can be affected by unauthorized employment.
- ISEO paused processing to allow time to understand the new guidance and thoroughly review existing practices and academic requirements.
- The decision was made in consultation with UC campuses, campus counsel, and leadership.

CPT ELIGIBILITY

Is Practical Training required by my established curriculum?

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ALTERNATIVES TO EXPLORE

CPT may not be the only pathway

- Pre-completion OPT — May be available before graduation for eligible students.
 - *Students should understand the limitations of pre-completion OPT: long/unpredictable USCIS processing times; no guaranteed approval.*
- On-campus employment — Remains permitted under F-1 status and does not require DSO authorization in the same way.
- ISEO is continuing to evaluate whether flexibility or other alternatives exist within the current framework

HOW & WHEN TO APPLY

CPT

Submit in **iServices.ucsd.edu**

Re-opens mid-September

- Job Offer Letter, Proof of Enrollment, Confirmation from Dept that internship is required
- Students **MAY NOT begin working until they have the Form I-20 reflecting CPT Authorization on the 2nd page of their Form I-20.**

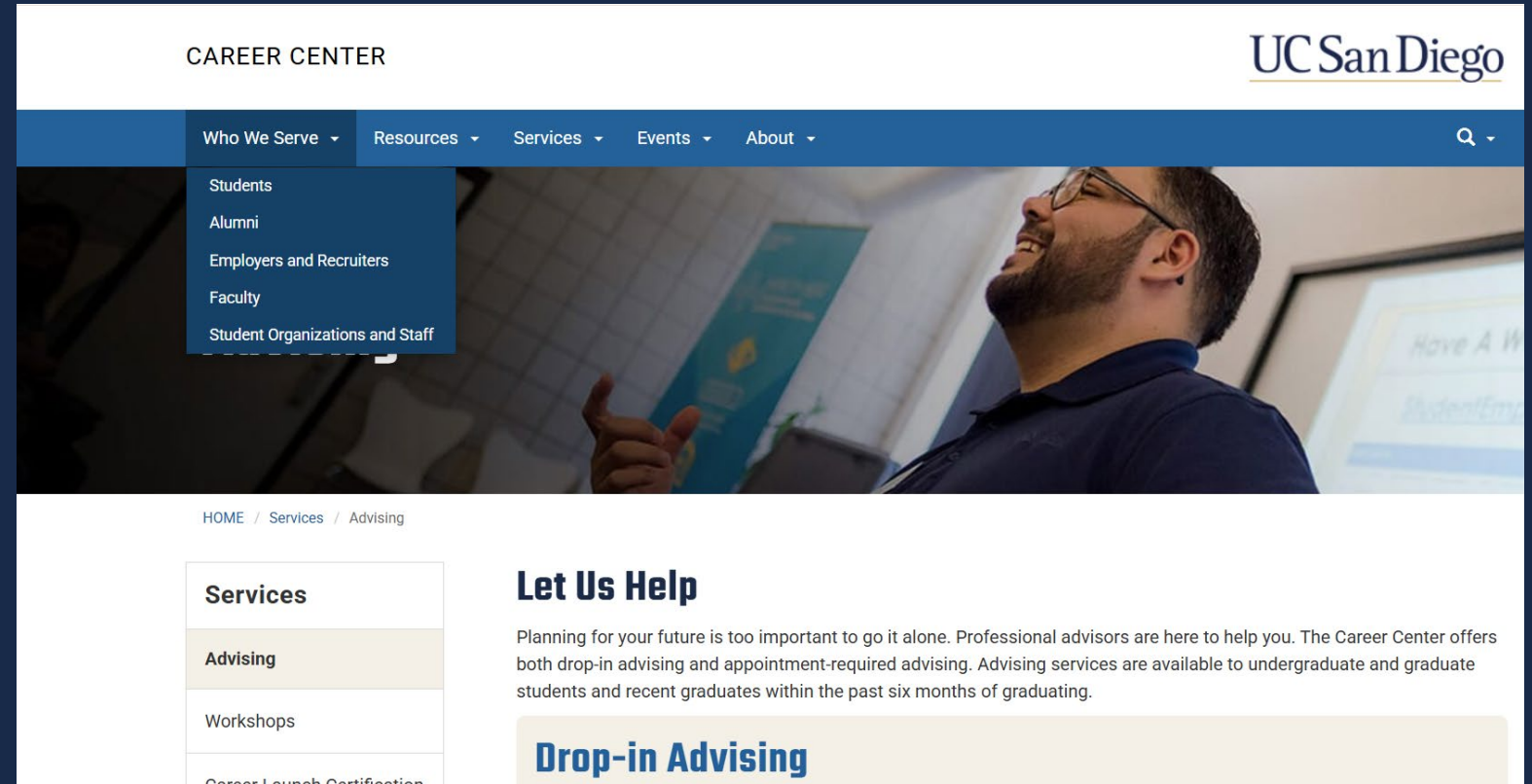
Pre-Completion OPT

Submit DSO recommendation request in **iServices.ucsd.edu**

OPENS mid-September

Submit final application (I-765) to USCIS

CAREER CENTER



Career.ucsd.edu

Student Legal Services



Schedule an Appointment!

Learn more about our counseling services and find a link to schedule an appointment.

[LEGAL COUNSELING APPOINTMENTS](#)

sls.ucsd.edu

Student Legal Services

- Free, confidential legal counseling on all types of legal matters.
- While we do not practice immigration law, we can provide individualized assistance and can refer to outside attorneys and resources as needed.
- Please visit our website to request and schedule an appointment (<https://sls.ucsd.edu>).

sls.ucsd.edu

RESOURCES

Topic Resources

- [iWork.ucsd.edu](https://iwork.ucsd.edu)
- Career Center: [Career.ucsd.edu](https://career.ucsd.edu)
- Student Employment Office: studentemployment.ucsd.edu
- Student Legal Services: sls.ucsd.edu

Contacting ISEO: Review resources available. If you have case specific questions, find ways to connect with an ISEO Advisor by visiting iContact.ucsd.edu

Cpt.ucsd.edu

Q&A



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