

International Students Participation in the Co-Op Program

this information is also available on Purdue ISS website:

<https://www.purdue.edu/IPPU/ISS/student/f1/employment/cpt.html>

(check under Cooperative Education (Co-Op) Programs)

Cooperative Education (Co-Op) programs can provide a strong and meaningful complement to the formal education of students. International students may be eligible for co-op programs. It is important to note that **international students must apply for CPT for the work authorization to work during their co-op sessions**. Acceptance into a Co-Op program is not employment authorization.

3-Session Co-Op: Typically, international students are able to complete a 3-session co-op using three semesters of CPT authorization. If you complete your 3 sessions using less than one year of full-time CPT authorization, you will be eligible to apply for Optional Practical Training (OPT) after you graduate.

5-Session Co-Op: International students can participate in 5-session co-ops, but it requires detailed, advanced planning. There are several options to navigate the work authorization necessary to complete a 5-session co-op.

- One option is to use CPT authorization for all five sessions: this option means you would exceed one year of full-time CPT and would not be eligible for OPT after you graduate.
- A second option is to use a combination of CPT and pre-completion OPT. Students typically use CPT for three regular semesters (fall and spring semesters) and pre-completion OPT for two summer sessions. Note that every month of pre-completion OPT used takes away one month of post-completion OPT. So, for example, if you use a total of 6 months of full-time pre-completion OPT to complete your co-op program, you would only have 6 months of post-completion OPT left after you graduate. Please note that applications for pre-completion OPT must be submitted to USCIS for adjudication, and it is recommended that you apply at least three months before your intended start date.

If you have been accepted into a Co-Op program, ISS highly encourages you to make an appointment with an ISS Immigration Counselor before you even begin your co-op in order to make a plan of how you can acquire work authorization to participate in all sessions.