

Curricular Practical Training (CPT) Authorization Instructions for Contextual Education

International students pursuing off-campus internship placements for their Contextual Education must receive Curricular Practical Training (CPT) authorization from ISSO prior to the start of their internship. It is important to receive CPT authorization to maintain F-1 visa status. Students will not be able to engage in any activities at their Contextual Education site until receiving CPT approval. The process for requesting CPT authorization is as follows (and you can find this information on ISSO's website under **Begin Your Request for CPT Authorization** [found here](#)):

1. **Secure an official internship offer letter from your site.**
 - a. This offer letter should be on official letterhead and include:
 - i. Dates of placement (must match the dates you are requesting on your CPT form).
 1. *If you are in a placement for both Fall and Spring semesters, you must secure an offer letter for each semester. The dates on each letter must reflect the dates of the semester in which you are seeking CPT authorization.*
 - ii. Name of the supervisor
 - iii. Number of hours per week
 - iv. Compensation details
 1. *If you are receiving a Contextual Education Scholarship from your site, this is not compensation. Internships are "unpaid" unless your site is paying you directly as an employee.*
 - v. Address where the work will be taking place
 - vi. Brief description of expected duties
2. Log into the ISSOPortal ([linked here](#)). Go to the **Request Center** and initiate a **CPT – Add New** request through the system.
 - a. Follow the instructions in the request to complete the questionnaire, upload required documents and confirm your understanding of conditions to maintain status.

- b. You will be asked for the name and email of the BU staff or faculty member authorized to review and approve your request.
 - i. Please list the Assistant Director of Contextual Education, **Rev. Nikki Renée**, as this staff member with the email nikkiy@bu.edu. The system will automatically send this email once you submit the form, and our office will be notified to approve your request.
 - c. Once our office has approved the request, it will officially be submitted to ISSO for review and processing.
 - d. Monitor the status of your request through the **Request Center** in the ISSOPortal.
 - e. Your ISSO Advisor will review your request and update the ISSOPortal within 10 business days. You will receive an email to notify you of the CPT approval, to seek clarification/additional documentation, or of a denial.
3. If approved, your new I-20 with the CPT authorization will be uploaded to the ISSOPortal. You can download and print the new I-20 from the **Document Center** in the ISSOPortal.

The Office of Contextual Education recommends that you begin the request for CPT Authorization as soon as possible. Because processing can take up to 10 business days and you may be asked to resubmit certain documents, it is best to seek approval early so that you are able to begin your Contextual Education internship at the start of the semester.

If you have questions about the CPT approval process, please contact your ISSO advisor.

We look forward to supporting you as you pursue your Contextual Education!

All the best,

The Office of Contextual Education
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