

Economic Hardship for F-1 Students

If employment opportunities are not available on campus and students are experiencing economic hardship due to unforeseen circumstances beyond their control that arose after obtaining F-1 status, they may apply to U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) for an off-campus work permit after having been in lawful F-1 status for at least nine months. It is granted in one-year increments.

Section 1: Employment Guidelines

- This authorization allows students to work off-campus up to 20 hours per week when classes are in session and over 20 hours per week (full-time) during semester breaks
- Employment is not required to be related to their course of study
- An offer of employment is not required to apply
- Use of this category of employment does not count towards the 20-hour on-campus maximum, nor does it affect eligibility for practical training
- Students using this authorization must still be registered as full time
- Work authorization will end if a student transfers schools

Section 2: Application Procedure

Bring the following to the Office of International Affairs:

- Completed Form I-765
- Current I-20 Form

After reviewing the materials listed above, an immigration coordinator at the Office of International Affairs will recommend to USCIS that employment authorization should be granted by certifying through the SEVIS system and that the student has made a good faith effort to locate on-campus employment. A new I-20 form containing this recommendation will be available in two to three days.

Note: Students may not work off-campus until the Employment Authorization Document (EAD) has been received from USCIS. This process normally takes between 90-120 days to complete.

The student must mail the following to USCIS to obtain the EAD:

- Completed Form I-765, Application for Employment Authorization
- Processing fee (personal check made out to USCIS); for the most current fee information, visit uscis.gov and scroll to "Forms and E-Filing." There is also more information in Part 4, Fee of Form I-765.
- Two photos with white background (see instructions in Part 3, Required Documentation of Form I-765)
- Copies of all previous I-20 forms
- Copies of both sides of Form I-94
- Letter describing the unforeseen economic hardship (if possible, attach additional documentation) and explain why other employment options are unavailable or insufficient (see instructions in Part 2, Eligibility Requirements: Foreign Students).
- Copies of pages of the passport that include the picture, biographical information and expiration date
- If applying for renewal of work authorization, the student must include photocopies of all previously issued EADs

For further information, please see the instructions located in Form I-765.