

Severe Economic Hardship Fact Sheet

International Student, Scholar and Faculty Services (ISSFS)

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This information is provided by the UT Tyler International Student, Scholar and Faculty Services to current UT Tyler students considering an application for a Severe Economic Hardship work authorization. The information is not intended as legal advice. For legal issues, please consult an immigration attorney.

DESCRIPTION

Severe Economic Hardship is a work authorization for students who are experiencing severe financial difficulties caused by circumstances beyond their control that occurred after obtaining F-1 status. Some examples of circumstances beyond the student's control:

- Unexpected changes in the financial condition of the student's sponsor.
- Loss of financial aid or on-campus employment if the loss is not the student's fault.
- Unexpected medical bills in the U.S. not covered by insurance.
- Large increases in tuition or living costs.
- A substantial fluctuation of currency in the student's home country.

ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

- Full-time enrolled in a Homeland Security-approved school for at least one academic year (fall + spring or spring + fall)
- Valid F-1 status
- Good academic standing
- Unavailable or insufficient on-campus employment to meet the student's financial needs
- Sufficient evidence that employment is necessary due to a severe economic hardship

DOCUMENTS TO SUBMIT TO ISSFS

- I-20 Request Form (from ISSFS)
- I-765 form (from www.uscis.gov)
- Letter explaining the unforeseen circumstances beyond your control that occurred after you arrived in the U.S. that led to the need for off-campus employment

DOCUMENTS TO MAIL TO USCIS

- Two passport photos
- A check for the USCIS application fee (\$410) or application for fee waiver (I-912 from uscis.gov)
- Original I-765 form
- Copy of Economic Hardship I-20. The I-20 issue date must be less than 30 days old.
- Student letter explaining the need for Economic Hardship work authorization
- Copy of passport ID page
- Copy of I-94
- Copy of F-1 visa
- Copy of previously issued EAD cards, if applicable.
- Budget for the coming year, including the approximate amount of money needed to meet student's financial obligations
- Optional additional evidence

HOW TO APPLY

- Submit all required documents to your international advisor.
- If the application is complete, your advisor will issue an Economic Hardship I-20
- Mail the application to USCIS with a check for the USCIS application fee.
- The student will receive a receipt notice from USCIS within 2-3 weeks after mailing the application.
- Approval can take 2-4 months. If approved, the student will receive an Employment Authorization Document (EAD).

TYPE OF WORK ALLOWED

- Approval of Economic Hardship allows the student to work off-campus in a job that is not related to the student's course of study.
- Work is limited to 20 hours per week while school is in session but can be full-time during official school breaks.
- The student is not authorized to work until the EAD card is received.

LENGTH OF WORK AUTHORIZATION

- Economic Hardship is granted for one year or until the student's program end date.
- Approval for Economic Hardship can be renewed. If applying for a renewal, the student must repeat the same application process and show a new unforeseen circumstance or explain why the same unforeseen circumstance continues.
- If the student transfers to another school, the Economic Hardship authorization ends on the SEVIS release date.

ENROLLMENT REQUIREMENTS

- The student must remain enrolled in a full course of study while on Economic Hardship.

Revised 6/4/18