

Severe Economic Hardship

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If you are suffering a severe economic hardship due to unforeseen changes in your financial circumstances, you may apply to the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) for authorization to work off-campus. You must have been in F-1 status for one academic year, be in good academic standing, and document that on-campus employment opportunities are unavailable or insufficient to meet your financial needs. Examples of unforeseen circumstances include loss of financial support or on-campus employment, substantial fluctuations in the value of currency or exchange rate, inordinate increases in tuition and/or living costs, unexpected changes in the financial condition of your source of support, medical bills, or other substantial and unexpected expenses.

Contact your adviser in the International Student Services (ISS) to discuss your situation before you complete the required documentation. Your adviser will determine your eligibility and assist you in completing the application and submitting it to USCIS. Required documentation includes:

- Form I-765 (write (c)(3)(iii) in item 16).
- \$340 fee (make your check or money order payable to U.S. Department of Homeland Security).
- Photocopy of Form I-20, with your ISS adviser's recommendation for economic hardship employment.
- Two passport style photos.
- Photocopy of I-94 card (front and back).
- A letter describing your financial difficulties and why on-campus employment opportunities are unavailable or insufficient; include supporting evidence.
- Photocopy of passport identification page.
- Photocopy of visa page.
- Photocopies of any previously-issued EAD cards.

Application processing times vary between two to four months. If approved, USCIS will issue an Employment Authorization Document (EAD) for a maximum of one year. Do not begin working until you receive the EAD. If approved, you may work for any employer up to 20 hours per week while enrolled in a full course of study and full-time during quarter breaks and your annual vacation quarter. This employment does not affect your eligibility for Optional Practical Training (OPT). Employment authorization is automatically terminated if you fail to maintain status or transfer to another school.