



## SOUTHEASTERN LOUISIANA UNIVERSITY

### F-1 Economic Hardship Work Authorization

---

If you are an F-1 student who is experiencing **unforeseen, serious financial hardship** while studying in the U.S., you may be able to obtain off-campus employment authorization from the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) under certain conditions. This authorization may provide real help in difficult circumstances by allowing you to supplement your income enough to meet some living expenses. Economic hardship employment authorization will not, however, enable you to earn enough to bear the cost of full-time course of study required to maintain F-1 status. It should not be thought of, then, as a solution for serious financial difficulties.

#### Eligibility Requirements

To qualify for economic hardship employment, immigration regulations require that you meet the following conditions:

- You are a full-time student in good standing and have been in valid F-1 status for at least one full academic year.
- You must be able to document the circumstances which led to your economic situation were unexpected and beyond your control.
- You must be capable of continuing full-time studies and maintaining F-1 status while engaged in economic hardship work permission.

Immigration regulations state that unforeseen circumstances “may include loss of financial aid or on-campus employment without fault on the part of the student, substantial fluctuations in the value of currency or exchange rate, inordinate increases in tuition and/or living costs, unexpected changes in the financial conditions of the student’s source of support, medical bills, or other substantial and unexpected expenses.” Only unforeseen problems can be the basis for the hardship employment since the students must first demonstrate that all of the financial resources needed for their program of study are available before they are able to obtain an I-20 and enter the US in F-1 status.

#### Conditions and Restrictions of Employment

If USCIS authorizes your hardship employment application, you will receive an Employment Authorization Document (EAD) from USCIS granting you permission to work off-campus. Typically, permission is granted for one year or for the remainder of your academic program, whichever period is less. Please also note the following:

- You may work off-campus for up to 20 hours per week while school is in session and full time during vacation periods and official school breaks.
- You may work in any job, related or not related to your studies.
- You may **not** start employment until you have received an EAD or before the start date indicated on the EAD.
- Hardship employment does not count towards your ability to work on-campus or affect your eligibility for practical training. (The total number of hours worked per week, however, between both off and on-campus work must still be 20 hours while school is in session.)
- If you transfer to another institution, your EAD becomes invalid.

## Application Process

You must first make an appointment to meet with the International Services Office to determine your eligibility and review the conditions and procedures for applying. It is recommended that you bring a draft letter explaining your economic need and supporting evidence that documents this.

The following documents are also required:

- **Form I-765** printed from [www.uscis.gov](http://www.uscis.gov)
  - ✓ **BLACK INK ONLY!** (or type)
  - ✓ **DO NOT LEAVE ANY ITEMS BLANK!** (If it does not pertain to you, enter N/A)
  - ✓ **INLCUDE ALL PAGES PAST PAGE 4, EVEN IF BLANK, WRITE N/A ON THOSE SPACES**
- **Part 1. Reason for Applying** – If this is your first time applying for an EAD, select 1.a. Initial permission to accept employment. If you are applying to replace a lost or stolen EAD, select 1.b. If you have ever received an EAD in the past for any reason, select 1.c. Renewal.
- **Part 2. Information About You** –
  - Complete the fields for Last name, first name, etc. then enter any other names used in the appropriate section
  - Enter your U.S. Mailing address. This address must be available to you for at least 3-5 months since this is where USCIS will mail your receipt and EAD card if approved. If you are using a friend or relatives address, you must enter the In Care of Name or the documentation will not be delivered. Be sure to mark in the box if this is your physical address. If you are using a friend or relative's address you will mark this selection No and then complete the U.S. Physical Address box. If this is your Physical Address, you may skip the Physical Address section.
  - Other Information – Do not complete 8 and 9 if you do not have these numbers, you will know if you did. Complete 10, 11 & 12. For 13.a. select if you have ever received an SSN. If you have skip to 14 and select No then skip to number 18.a.
  - Country of citizenship – List your country/s of citizenship
  - Place of Birth – complete items 19.a. – 20.
  - Information about last arrival in U.S. – Enter your I-94 number. You can get this by going to [www.cbp.com/i94](http://www.cbp.com/i94) and select [Get I-94](#)
  - Enter your passport number in 21.b.

- Skip 21.c.
- Enter the country that issued your passport. In 21.e. enter your passport expiration number.
- For 22 – 24, this information can also be found on your I-94 record.
- 25 should be F-1 Student
- 26 is your SEVIS ID found on your I-20
- 27 should be entered (c) (3) (iii)
- Do NOT complete 28 – 31, those are for other employment authorizations
- **Part 3. Applicant’s Statement**
  - Select the appropriate box under Applicant Statement
  - Applicant’s Contact Information – Enter your contact information
  - Read through the certification statement and then sign and date under Applicant’s Signature
  - If you were the only person to complete the form and had no interpreter, you may skip the remaining questions.
- **Part 6. Additional Information (write N/A if the following does not pertain to you)**
  - If you have ever had more than one SEVIS number, you must enter it here
  - If you have ever participated in CPT, you must list ALL periods of authorized CPT here
  - Be sure to write your name in the boxes provided (leave the A-Number blank)
  - For page number write 3, for Part number write 2, for item number write 27.

- **Two passport sized photos** (2” X 2”) with a white background
- **Filing Fee** in the form of check or money order made payable to “US Department of Homeland Security.” Amount can be found on instructions to Form I-765.
- **Copy of I-94** – Can obtain from [www.cbp.gov/i94](http://www.cbp.gov/i94)
- **Copy of visa stamp**
- **Copy of passport** and any renewal pages
- **Copy of previously issued EAD** (if applicable)
- **Documentation attesting to economic hardship.** This includes any letters from you, family members, sponsors, etc.

Once all of the above documents have been gathered, bring them with you to the International Services Office to complete the application process. A new I-20 will be issued that will be mailed to USCIS along with the application. After USCIS has received your application, you will receive a receipt that you may use to track the progress of your application at [www.uscis.gov](http://www.uscis.gov).

### **Important Reminders**

You must be physically present in the US until after USCIS receives your application for processing. We strongly recommend that you discuss travel plans in advance of the filing with USCIS to avoid any rejection or denial.

If you receive a Request for Evidence (RFE), please consult the International Services Office immediately.

While the application is pending, we strongly advise you against changing your address. This may result in you having to submit a new application and fee if the documents are lost. If you anticipate moving or changing your address before the decision can be made, please use the address of someone who can receive mail on your behalf – remember to put “c/o” on line three of the form.

Once you have received your EAD document, please send a copy to the International Services Office. We will also issue you a new I-20 with the economic hardship work authorization on the third page.

Your Economic Hardship will be automatically terminated when you begin a new level of study at another educational level or transfer to another school.