



Division of Student Affairs
Office of International Student Services

ECONOMIC HARDSHIP APPLICATION PROCEDURES

To be eligible for off-campus employment due to economic hardship the student must:

- Have been in F-1 status for one full academic year, be in good academic and legal standing, and carry a full course of study.
- Demonstrate that there has occurred an unforeseen severe economic hardship beyond his or her control and that on-campus employment opportunities are not available or insufficient.
- Establish fact that other employment options are unavailable or insufficient.

Important aspects of economic hardship employment:

- Economic hardship refers to financial problems caused by unforeseen circumstances beyond the student's control. The financial problems may, for example, result from an unexpected loss of a graduate assistantship, the death of a financial sponsor, or fluctuations in the home country currency or exchange rate. If the financial situation is too severe, it may not be possible to solve the problem with part-time employment and the student may be denied the Employment Authorization Document (EAD). The Designated School Official (DSO) and the student may need to look at other solutions.
- Employment is limited to 20 hours per week while school is in session and full-time during vacations or holidays.
- The application requires a recommendation by the DSO in SEVIS. If approved by the US Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS), the USCIS will issue the student an EAD card.
- USCIS approval is granted in one-year intervals.
- Authorization ends upon expiration of the EAD card, the completion date of the program or school transfer.

To apply, submit the following to the Office of International Student Services:

- Completed USCIS Form I-765. In item #16 on the form, write in the following code: (c) (3) (iii)
- A check or money order payable to "Department of Homeland Security" (see website for current fee information.)
- Copy of I-94 (front and back)
- Copy of Passport
- Current I-20
- Two passport photos
- Supporting materials documenting the unforeseen nature of the economic hardship and the unavailability of other employment on campus, including a letter that describes your circumstances (see reverse for sample letter).
- Copy of old EAD card (if applicable)

The DSO will then make a recommendation for employment in SEVIS by updating the student's record. The DSO will mail the complete packet containing copies of the documents to the USCIS Service Center.

You may not begin work until USCIS has approved your petition and you have received your EAD (Employment Authorization Document) card. **IMPORTANT: EAD cards cannot be delivered to a P.O. Box.**

It is currently taking 3 months or more to process Economic Hardship Authorizations.

PERSONAL LETTER FORMAT FOR ECONOMIC HARDSHIP

Mr. International Student
2500 W. North Avenue
Baltimore, Maryland 21216

September 27, 2010

USCIS
Vermont Service Center
75 Lower Welden Street
St. Albans, VT 05479

Dear Examiner,

Please review the circumstances surrounding my request for employment based upon economic hardship.

<Explain what has changed that has caused your hardship, like the death of your sponsor or the loss of an assistantship.>

<Explain how you have continued to maintain your good F-1 status and how this is the first time you have applied for employment authorization (only if this is the case, of course.)>

<Explain that the additional employment will assist you in supplementing your income source and identify that other source. Remember that if you have NO other resources, USCIS will deny your employment authorization based on the fact that no one is able to finance full-time coursework and pay for living expenses on income generated from a part-time job.>

<Explain how a denial will cause you great hardship, and the importance of obtaining the degree you are seeking/ how your course of study will help you academically or professionally after you leave the United States. >

Thank you for your kind consideration of my application.

Sincerely,
International Student
International Student