UNIVERSITY OF WYOMING | Global Engagement Office International Students and Scholars

Eligibility and Application for Work Authorization based on Severe Economic Hardship

Work authorization based on Severe Economic Hardship is intended for F-1 students who have unforeseen circumstances beyond their control, after they arrive in the US, which cause the student severe economic hardship. All students must attend an Economic Hardship Information Workshop or review the workshop slideshow posted on the UW ISS website before making an application appointment with ISS.

Severe Economic Hardship Work Authorization (c)(3)(iii) Eligiblity:

- Student must have been in F-1 status for at least one full academic year (a fall and spring semester)
- Student must be in "good academic standing" with the UW. Students on academic probation are not eligible to apply.
- Student must acknowledge that acceptance of employment will not interfere with their enrollment in a full course of study
- Student must prove to United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) that employment is necessary due to severe economic hardship **caused by circumstances beyond their control that arose after obtaining F-1 status**
- Student must prove that on-campus employment is not available or not sufficient to meet their needs that have arisen due to the **unforeseen circumstances**
- Offer of employment is NOT required for application

Severe Economic Hardship Work Authorization Highlights:

- Allows student to work in addition to the 20 hours per week on-campus already allowed by the F-1 status
- Employment authorization is designed for off-campus use, but there is no specific prohibition on it being used for on-campus employment
- 20 hours of work per week allowed during fall and spring semesters
- No USCIS limit on employment hours during spring, summer, and winter breaks
- Student remains in F-1 status
- Employment does NOT have to be related to field of study
- Student may apply at any time and lasts for one calendar year
    - Unless student graduates, transfers, changes degree level, or otherwise fails to maintain F-1 status

Severe Economic Hardship Work Authorization Student Responsibilities:

- Student must continue to maintain F-1 status including:
    - Enroll full-time in the fall and spring semesters
    - Maintain good academic standing with UW
    - Do not work illegally or violate on or off-campus employment rules
    - Continue in degree/program at UW. Transferring to a new school, changing program levels, or graduating will terminate the employment authorization
- Do not work more than 20 additional hours per week using the EAD card, on or off campus during the spring or fall semesters
- Student does not HAVE to work once they receive the EAD and there is no penalty for not using the card
- Student does not need to report this employment to USCIS/ISS

Applying for Severe Economic Hardship Work Authorization
Timing and Application Checklist

Severe Economic Work Authorization application may be filed at any time (after the first academic year). Student may not be employed outside of the regular F-1 benefit until the EAD card is received and the start date on the care has been reached. Approval of the application can take approximately 90 days or more.

Application Checklist:

NOTE: You must bring ALL documents to your appointment with ISS before your work authorization request can be made in SEVIS.

1. Complete USCIS Form I-765 – download from the ISS webpage. See step-by-step samples in the ISS Severe Economic Hardship Workshop Slideshow on the UW ISS website
2. Complete USCIS Form G-1145 Notification of Application Acceptance – download from the ISS webpage
3. Official transcript from the UW Office of the Registrar (Do NOT open the envelope!)
4. Copy of current passport, most recent visa, current I-94 printed from www.cbp.gov/i94 or I-94 card if in passport, any other documents you have such as I-797 for change of status or previous Economic Hardship EADs
5. Two (2) passport style photos according to USCIS requirements, taken within the last 30 days. You can get these from FedEx Kinkos, Walmart, The UPS Store, UW WyoOne office in the IT Building or any other establishment that takes passport style pictures. Make sure these are good quality photos that meet the requirements before you accept them!
6. Filing fee of $410.00. A check or money order payable to "US Department of Homeland Security". Or Form G-1450 Credit Card Authorization Form. Or Form I-912 Fee Waiver Petition. *Cash cannot be accepted
7. Letter describing your circumstances, including:
    - Statement that accepting employment will not interfere with your full course of study
    - Description of why employment is necessary to avoid severe economic hardship due to unforeseen circumstances beyond your control
    - On campus employment is not available (not usually true) OR not sufficient to meet the needs that have arisen due to the unforeseen circumstances
8. Supporting documentation of your circumstances described in your letter
9. Attend a MANDATORY Economic Hardship workshop with ISS staff or review the Severe Economic Hardship Workshop Slideshow on the UW ISS website
10. Make an appointment with ISS to apply for the OPT. If you are not in Laramie, your application may be mailed to ISS but it is recommended that you call ISS to go over the packet before you mail it so that you do not forget anything. Please do not send original passport/visa, I-20s or I-94 cards if you mail your application to ISS.

Note of Caution

While USCIS Regulations provide a variety of opportunities for you to be employed during your time in F-1 status, working improperly or without authorization is a serious violation of your status. It is your responsibility to comply with all Immigration and SEVIS reporting requirements that apply to F-1 students. The ISS staff is responsible for advising and counseling you regarding your responsibilities. If you fail to meet your responsibilities, you may not be eligible for benefits normally granted to F-1 students and could potentially lose your immigration status and have to leave the United States. Failure to follow regulations can result in your status being automatically terminated in SEVIS.