

Economic Hardship Employment

If you are an F-1 student experiencing severe financial hardship while studying in the US, you may be able to obtain off-campus employment authorization from U.S.C.I.S. This authorization allows you to work to meet some of your living expenses. Keep in mind that economic hardship employment will probably not sustain all your financial needs during your difficult time and you should not rely on this to solve your situation for the remainder of your stay at UMBC as a student.

Eligibility

To qualify for economic hardship employment, you meet the following conditions:

- You must have been in 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 **unforeseen, unexpected and beyond your control**.
- You must maintain your status by being enrolled in school full time during the spring and fall semesters when school is in session.

Conditions & Restrictions

- Economic hardship employment authorization cards are issued in increments of one year at a time until your date of graduation.
- If you transfer from one school to another, the work authorization expires **immediately**.
- Employment is limited to 20 hours a week when school is in session (spring and fall) and full time (more than 20 hours) during official school breaks (spring, summer, winter breaks).
- You can seek any job and the employment does not have to be related to your course of study.
- Economic hardship does not affect your ability to be eligible for optional practical training (OPT).

Examples of unforeseen circumstances beyond your control include:

- Death of the financial sponsor
- Loss of scholarship of no fault by the student
- Substantial inflation of home currency rate
- Natural disaster in home country that shows family has been directly affected
- Unexpected increase in tuition, fees living expenses
- Unforeseen and unexpected medical expenses of a family member. Eg: emergency surgery

Application Process

Meet with an international student advisor to discuss whether you are eligible to apply for this benefit. Please bring any and all documentation showing proof that your financial situation necessitates applying for the economic hardship. If we determine you to be eligible to apply for economic hardship, the advisor will request a new SEVIS I-20 with a recommendation for economic hardship.

Checklist of documents to be mailed to U.S.C.I.S.

- **Completed USCIS Form I-765:** Write "(c) (3) (iii)" in item 16 of Form I-765 and use an address where you can receive mail over the next three months. See link for form. <http://www.uscis.gov/files/form/i-765.pdf>
- Copy of new I-20 **issued by international advisor** recommending economic hardship.
- **A letter written by you addressed to U.S.C.I.S.** in which you describe in detail the circumstances that support your request for employment authorization and explaining why other employment options on campus are unavailable or insufficient.
- **Supporting documentation** confirming these circumstances (for example, a letter from letter from doctors showing that family member has undergone surgery or exchange rate data showing currency devaluation, or documentation showing a significant disaster in your country eg: newspaper clippings as well as documentation from family and letter indicating how they have been affected.).
- Check/money order for **\$380 only** made out to the **Department of Homeland Security**. (Do not abbreviate)
- 2 passport size photographs.
- Copy of your I-94 (front and back).
- Copy of your passport biography page (include pages of passport extensions showing passport validity).
- Copy of your F-1 visa (even if expired).
- Copies of **ALL** previous I-20's (including previous schools).
- Any previous EAD cards that have been issued to you.

Once you have prepared all the items listed above, make a complete copy of the application for your records. Mail your application to:

For U.S. Postal Service (USPS):

U.S.C.I.S.
PO Box 660867
Dallas, TX 75266

For Express mail and courier deliveries (FedEx or UPS):

U.S.C.I.S.
Attn: AOS
2501 S. State Hwy. 121 Business
Suite 400
Lewisville, TX 75067