

Economic Hardship

Revised May 19, 2020

Overview:

- If other employment opportunities are not available or are otherwise insufficient, an eligible F-1 student may request off-campus employment work authorization based upon severe economic hardship caused by unforeseen circumstances beyond the student's control. These 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 condition of the student's source of support, medical bills, or other substantial and unexpected expenses. (*8 CFR 214.2(f)(9)(ii)(D)*)
- Upon authorization:
 - Students can only work part-time during Fall and Spring semesters, or Fall, Winter, Spring quarters.
 - Students can work full-time during official university breaks/vacation periods.
 - Students **are** allowed to work in positions that are not related to their academic major or curriculum.

Eligibility:

- Must have F-1 status for at least (1) academic year
- Must be in good academic standing and maintaining a full academic course load
- Demonstrate that the off-campus employment will not negatively impact your studies
- Demonstrate that the off-campus employment is necessary to avoid economic hardship due to economic circumstances outside of your control
- Demonstrate that on-campus employment is not sufficient to avoid experiencing economic hardship

Process: If you would like to apply for Economic Hardship with USCIS, you will need recommendation from OGS. Please follow the steps below:

- Step 1 – Collect and complete documents and supporting evidence:
 - Completed [I-765](#) form.
 - DO NOT date until **STEP 5**, when you are ready to send the application to USCIS.
 - Copies of [old I-20's](#).
 - DO NOT send originals.
 - **Two** copies of your I-94
 - Obtain your MOST RECENT [I-94 here](#).
 - **Two** copies of your passport personal information page.
 - **Two** copies of your F-1 visa page in passport – OR – copy of your I-797 (approval of change of status to F-1).
 - Canadian citizens are not required to submit the F-1 visa page in passport.
 - **Two** full-face passport style photos.

- Photos MUST be identical.
 - Photos MUST have plain background.
 - Photos MUST be taken within 30-days of submitting request to USCIS.
 - Copy of your unofficial transcript.
 - Can be obtained from the myNortheastern web portal.
 - Personal statement or letter.
 - Describe the unforeseen circumstances that have occurred. Be specific and describe what has changed for you, what hardships are you experiencing as a result of the change, how the change is beyond your control, etc. Avoid broad generalizations such as “there is a lot of unemployment due to COVID-19.” An effective statement could be, “I lost my on-campus job at Starbucks when my university started remote operations due to COVID-19.”
 - Describe why on-campus employment is not sufficient or unavailable to prevent you from experiencing economic hardship.
 - Describe why you are seeking off-campus employment to avoid severe economic hardship.
 - Describe that acceptance of off-campus employment will not interfere with your full course load and studies. (Example: Class schedule and if you plan to work nights/weekends to avoid interference). Remember that you are a student first and that you are expected to comply with the requirements of your non-immigrant status.
 - Attach backup documentation if applicable. This may include news articles, proof of currency devaluation, letters stating change of family and personal circumstances. This helps the adjudicating officer to have objective and specific information about your specific situation.
- Step 2 – Submit E-Form to OGS
 - Once Step 1 is completed and the above documentation is collected, submit the following E-Form.
 - <https://myogs.northeastern.edu/istart/controllers/client/ClientEngine.cfm?serviceid=EFormEconomicHardshipRequest0ServiceProvider>
 - The processing time for Economic Hardship Recommendation request is **10 Business Days**.
 - PLEASE NOTE: OGS understands that you submitted this request due to economic hardship. Please be patient and allow OGS to review your request completely. OGS will notify you regarding your request within the 10 Business Day processing time.
- Step 3 – E-form Notification
 - You will receive a notification from OGS regarding the status of your Economic Hardship request.
 - If you did not receive a recommendation from OGS, follow the guidance provided to you in the notification email.
 - If you do receive a recommendation from OGS, please proceed to **STEP 4**.
- Step 4 – Make an appointment upon issuance of recommendation

- If OGS issues you a recommendation, you will be asked to make an appointment to retrieve your new I-20 with recommendation.
- After you collect your new I-20, you can proceed to **STEP 5**.
- Step 5 – Submit to USCIS
 - Prepare all documents from **STEP 1** for mailing as well as the following:
 - Include a COPY of your most recent I-20.
 - **Provide payment for Filing Fee.**
 - For more information, visit the [USCIS website for the I-765 form](#).
 - **Sign and Date** relevant documents before mailing (ex. I-765).
 - Mail the complete request to USCIS:
 - Please review the [USCIS website](#) to confirm which address you should mail your application.
- Step 6 – USCIS Notification
 - If authorized, student will be issued an EAD (employment authorization document).
 - Only granted for (1)-year, up to the expected program completion date (program end date on I-20).
 - Can only work part-time during Fall and Spring semesters, or Fall, Winter, Spring quarters.
 - Can work full-time during breaks.
 - If denied, reason or reason for denial will be given by USCIS.
 - There is no appeal process if a denial is provided from USCIS.