



Special Student Relief

Special Student Relief (SSR) is the suspension of certain regulatory requirements by the secretary of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) for an F-1 student from parts of the world that are experiencing emergent circumstances. Regulatory requirements that may be suspended or altered for an F-1 student include duration of status, full course of study and off-campus employment eligibility.

Special Student Relief

DHS issues a Federal Register (FR) notice when the secretary declares that an event constitutes emergent circumstances.

Please see [Special Student Relief | Study in the States \(dhs.gov\)](#) for eligibility.

1. Off-Campus Employment authorization may be requested with USCIS to avoid severe economic hardship. The following regulations are suspended:
 - The requirement that a student must have been in F-1 nonimmigrant student status for one full academic year to be eligible for off-campus employment (*i.e., can apply during first year*).
 - The requirement that an F-1 nonimmigrant student must demonstrate that acceptance of employment will not interfere with the student's carrying a full course of study (*i.e., can be authorized for less than full-time coursework*).
 - The requirement that limits an F-1 nonimmigrant student's employment authorization to no more than 20 hours per week of off-campus employment while school is in session (*i.e., may work more than 20 hours per week while school is in session*); and
 - The requirement that the student demonstrate that employment under 8 CFR 214.2(f)(9)(i) is unavailable or otherwise insufficient to meet the needs that have arisen as a result of the unforeseen circumstances (*i.e., does not need to provide evidence of having sought on-campus employment or practical training*).
2. F-1 nonimmigrant students who receive on- campus or off-campus employment authorization under this notice must remain registered for a minimum of undergraduate - 6 credits per required term; graduate - 3 credits per required term. Students applying for off-campus employment authorization must maintain their full-time course load until they receive the Employment Authorization Document (EAD) from USCIS.

Procedures

Off-Campus Employment authorization based on Special Student Relief allow students to work off-campus in any position for any number of hours per week based on the suspension of off-campus employment regulations stated above. **Employment may not begin until you have received the Employment Authorization Document (EAD) from USCIS.** Employment is authorized for one year or until your graduation date or the expiration of the notice, whichever is sooner. If after one year you continue to experience financial difficulties, you can apply for an additional period of off-campus employment authorization under Special Student Relief, until the expiration of the notice.

Employment authorization is contingent upon maintaining your F-1 status. If at any time during your authorized period of employment, you fall out of status (for example by failing to complete a full-time course load) your authorization is immediately cancelled. Transferring to another school will also cancel your employment authorization even if your card has not yet expired.

The application for special student relief off-campus employment authorization must submit the following documents to ISS for review:

- [Completed SSR Request Form](#)
- Completed Form I-765 <https://www.uscis.gov/i-765> **signed in blue ink.** You MUST use the electronic version and type in your responses. Do not handwrite the form. Item #27 should be completed as (c)(3)(iii).
- Copy of new Form I-20 recommending employment authorization issued by International Student Advisor
- Copy of picture and expiration date page in passport AND visa page
- A letter explaining how you are experiencing severe economic hardship as a direct result of the current crisis in your home country.
- Recent Form I-94 – can be obtained at <https://i94.cbp.dhs.gov/i94>
- Two photos in passport-style format (see [guidelines](#))
- Application fee of \$410*
- Check or money order payable to the “Department of Homeland Security (with name and I-94/admission number included on the payment) OR complete the Form G-1450 <https://www.uscis.gov/g-1450> to pay by credit card; this option is available, but we do not recommend this as there are known issues with this form that may delay processing

**An applicant who is unable to pay the fee may submit a completed Form I-912, Request for Fee Waiver, along with the Form I-765 Application for Employment Authorization. See www.uscis.gov/feewaiver. The submission must include an explanation of why USCIS should grant the fee waiver and the reason(s) for the inability to pay, and any evidence to support the reason(s).*

Statement from student that explains the following:

1. This employment is necessary to avoid severe economic hardship; and
2. The hardship is a direct result of the current humanitarian crisis in Venezuela or Syria.

To apply for SSR authorization, please submit the above documents to the International Students & Scholars Office. A new Form I-20 will be issued to you, and then you can send the application to USCIS. Applications take an average of 2-3 months to process. Approximately 2-4 weeks after you send in the application you will receive a receipt in the mail from USCIS stating they have begun processing your application. Applications should be mailed to the following address:

For regular U.S. Postal Service (USPS) For Postal Service Express mail and courier deliveries

USCIS
PO Box 805373
Chicago, IL 60680

USCIS
Attn: I-765 C03
131 South Dearborn - 3rd Floor
Chicago, IL 60603-5517

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