F-1 OFF-CAMPUS EMPLOYMENT Due to ECONOMIC HARDSHIP

What is Economic Hardship employment authorization?

Economic Hardship Authorization is permission granted to F-1 students by the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) to work off-campus on the basis of “severe economic hardship due to unforeseen circumstances beyond the student’s control” [8CFR 214.2(f)(9)(ii)(c)].

Who is eligible for Economic Hardship employment authorization?

To be eligible to apply for economic hardship, you must document that:
• You have been in valid F-1 status for at least one academic year (two semesters)
• You are experiencing economic hardship based on unforeseen circumstances (see below) that arose since your last I-20 was issued
• You are currently in good academic standing and are carrying a full course load
• Employment opportunities on campus are unavailable or insufficient
• Acceptance of employment will not interfere with your full-time study

What are “unforeseen circumstances”?

• Loss of financial aid or on-campus employment resulting from circumstances beyond the student’s control
• Substantial fluctuations in the exchange rate or value of home country’s currency
• Unexpected changes in the financial condition of the student’s financial sponsor
• Unexpected medical bills
• Other substantial and unexpected expenses

How do I apply?

• First, submit an Economic Hardship application (completed Form I-765) and supporting documents (see below) to ISSS.
• Use the check-list provided to compile your documents.
• When your application is complete, ISSS will enter your EH application into the SEVIS system, and will produce a new I-20 with the EH recommendation
• Pick up your endorsed documents from ISSS
• Send your package to USCIS. Use the checklist provided for details of the address and mailing instructions.
• If you are approved, you will receive an Employment Authorization Document (“EAD card”) from the USCIS Service Center
• Scan ISSS a copy of your card for your records – iss@fit.edu
How long will processing at the USCIS take?

EAD processing time is estimated at 8-12 weeks. As processing times fluctuate, you are encouraged to apply as soon as possible if you are experiencing economic hardship and feel that you qualify for this type of employment authorization. You cannot begin employment until you have received your EAD.

If your application is approved, your EAD will be mailed to you at the address you listed in item 3 of Form I-765. Please report the outcome of your application to the ISSS. Be sure to scan ISSS a copy at isss@fit.edu.

Please Note:

- Employment may not begin until you receive the EAD card
- Economic Hardship Employment Authorization is limited to 20 hours per week when school is in session and full-time (40 hours per week) during school breaks and vacation periods
- Economic Hardship Employment authorization is normally issued for one year. A renewal for work authorization will require re-application, and the exact same procedures as outlined in this handout.
- Employment authorization is automatically terminated when you graduate, transfer universities, or if you violate your F-1 status in any way (e.g. not registering as a full-time student).