

This guide is provided by the UT Dallas International Student Services Office to UT Dallas alumni considering requesting Economic Hardship. The information is not intended as legal advice. For legal questions, please consult an immigration attorney.

WHAT IS ECONOMIC HARDSHIP

Economic Hardship is an F-1 work exception reviewed by USCIS on a case-by-case basis for students who experience a severe financial hardship caused by circumstances beyond their control after obtaining F-1 status. Some examples of circumstances beyond the student's control:

- Unexpected changes in the financial condition of the student's sponsor.
- Loss of financial aid or on-campus employment if the loss is not the student's fault.
- Unexpected medical bills in the U.S. not covered by insurance.
- Large increases in tuition or living costs.
- A substantial fluctuation of currency in the student's home country.

ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

- The student must be in F-1 status for at least one academic year and be in good academic standing.
- The student is unable to obtain on-campus employment or the pay from available on-campus employment must be insufficient to meet the student's financial needs.
- The student must be able to prove to USCIS that employment is necessary due to a severe economic hardship.
- The student is not required to have a job offer to apply for Economic Hardship.

STEPS TO APPLY FOR ECONOMIC HARDSHIP

STEP 1. HOW TO APPLY

- Carefully review the UT Dallas Economic Hardship Guide.
- Set an appointment to speak with an international student advisor to review requirements and required documents.
- Submit the required documents to obtain an economic hardship I-20. Processing time is 3 - 5 business days.
- Pick up the I-20 and mailing instructions.
- Send the required documents to USCIS. USCIS processing usually takes about three months.
- If approved, USCIS will send you an Employment Authorization Document (EAD) authorizing off-campus employment.

STEP 2. DOCUMENTS TO SUBMIT TO ISSO

- Reinstatement request form.
- Copy of I-765 form.
- Copy of your letter explaining the need for Economic Hardship and any additional evidence.
- Copy of previously issued EAD cards, if applicable.

STEP 3. DOCUMENTS TO SUBMIT TO USCIS

- Two passport photos (No glasses allowed)
- A check or money order for the USCIS application fee. Or use Form G-1450, Authorization for Credit Card Transactions.
- Original I-765 form.
- Copy of Economic Hardship I-20, pages 1 and 2. The issue date on the I-20 must be less than 30 days old.
- Your letter explaining the need for Economic Hardship and any additional evidence.
- Copy of passport.
- Copy of I-94.
- Copy of F-1 visa.
- Copy of previously issued EAD cards, if applicable.

TYPE OF WORK ALLOWED

- Approval of Economic Hardship allows the student to work off-campus in a job that is not related to the student's course of study.
- Work is limited to 20 hours per week while school is in session but can be full-time during official school breaks.
- The student is not authorized to work until the EAD card is received.

LENGTH OF WORK AUTHORIZATION

Economic Hardship is granted for one year or until the program end date. Approval for Economic Hardship is not limited to one year and can be renewed. If applying for a renewal, the student must repeat the same application process and show a new unforeseen circumstance or explain why the same unforeseen circumstance continues.

ENROLLMENT REQUIREMENTS

Student must maintain full-time enrollment to maintain F-1 status.

ADDITION INFORMATION

There is a high rate of denial for economic hardship, even for students who seem to have a valid reason for applying. For example, saying that your parents are having difficulty paying can be viewed as an invalid reason. A more valid reason would be a parent losing a job and not being able to find employment. Also, please note that economic hardship is no longer valid if the student transfers to another school.

ISSO CONTACT INFORMATION

ISSO appointment advising is available:

- Walk-In Advising: Monday and Friday 1pm - 4:45pm (in person; no appointment necessary)
- Appointment Advising: Tuesday and Thursday 9am – 11:45am, Thursday 1pm – 4:45pm (call 972-883-4189 to schedule a phone or in person appointment)
- 5 Minute Express Advising: Monday, Thursday, and Friday 1pm – 4:45, Tuesday and Thursday 9am – 11:45am (in person; no appointment necessary)

To schedule an appointment, call 972-883-4189. You may also email the ISSO at ISSOCurrent@utdallas.edu.