The University of Oklahoma
Office of International Student Services

ECONOMIC HARDSHIP EMPLOYMENT AUTHORIZATION APPLICATION

Definition of Severe Economic Hardship under US Immigration Regulations
The United States Citizenship and Immigration Service (USCIS) defines severe economic hardship as situations that are unforeseen and beyond the student’s control, such as insufficient on-campus employment, a significant devaluation of your home currency, or unexpected changes in the financial circumstances of your main source of support.

Eligibility Requirements
You are eligible to apply for employment authorization based on severe economic hardship if you:
- Have been in F-1 student status for one academic year (two semesters)
- Are in good academic standing and taking a full course load
- Determine that on-campus employment is not available or insufficient
- Demonstrate unforeseen severe economic hardship
- Attest that employment will not interfere with your studies

Procedure
1. Write a letter explaining why you are applying for economic hardship work authorization. Include an explanation of the unforeseen economic circumstances. List your assets, income, and expenses. Include your educational objectives. The letter should be very detailed, but no more than one page.
2. On the ISS website under forms select “letter request”. Select “other” under the type of request section and attach the letter you wrote explaining why you are applying for economic hardship. In the notes section enter “DSO letter for economic hardship”. Our office will notify you once the letter is ready to be included with your application.
3. Also on the ISS website under forms select the “replacement I-20” form. The reason for requesting the form will again be “other” and again under the comment section enter “needed for economic hardship application”. Our office will notify you when your new I-20 is ready to be picked up.
4. Submit supporting documentation that details the unforeseen circumstances (such as a letter from your sponsor explaining why they can no longer provide financial support).
5. Complete the I-765 form. For #16, enter (c) (3) (iii). You may indicate the OU ISS address in Field #3.
6. Obtain 2 passport photos that meet USCIS specifications. Write your name and I-94 admission number on the back of the photo in pencil.
7. Provide a check or money order in the amount of $380 payable to Dept. of Homeland Security (DHS).
8. Provide a clear copy of each of the following: your passport photo page (and passport expiration date), visa, I-94. A new I-20 will be processed for the request.

You must make an appointment with OU ISS to process your application for Economic Hardship Employment Authorization. After discussing your situation with you, the International Student Advisor may recommend you for economic hardship employment and process a new I-20 form. You will send your application to the USCIS Service Center in Texas. You cannot begin employment until you have received the Employment Authorization Document (EAD) from USCIS.

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