



F-1 students may use this guide to verify the regulations and for [Special Student Relief \(SSR\)](#), and to determine the criteria and their eligibility before submitting an SSR Request to International Student Services (ISS).

### What is Special Student Relief (SSR)?

SSR is the suspension of certain regulatory requirements by the secretary of the United States (US) Department of Homeland Security (DHS) for F-1 students from countries experiencing emergent circumstances.

Regulatory requirements that may be suspended or altered for an F-1 student are:

- Duration of status
- Full course of study
- Off-campus employment eligibility

### What are Emergent Circumstances?

Emergent circumstances are unforeseen, severe economic hardships resulting from an emergent event, such as a natural disaster, war or military conflict, or national/international financial crisis, that would otherwise undermine a student's financial ability to support their continued study.

### Are Emergent Circumstances and Temporary Protected Status (TPS) the same?

No, SSR and [Temporary Protected Status \(TPS\)](#) are different. When applicable, TPS may be offered to **various visa classifications**, (includes F-1), while SSR is offered **only to eligible F-1 students**.

### Can ISS assist me with TPS or Deferred Enforced Departure (DED)?

No, ISS cannot legally advise students on TPS or [DED](#). It is recommended to speak with an immigration attorney regarding the regulations and criteria for both.

## SSR Student Criteria

DHS must first issue a [Federal Register \(FR\) notice](#) for your country, when the secretary declares that an event constitutes emergent circumstances for . **You may be eligible for SSR if you are:**

- A citizen of the country listed in FR and have been enrolled at a SEVP-certified school since the event occurred.
- Lawfully residing in the US for the dates indicated in the FR notice
- Currently maintaining your F-1 status and have reported on time to your designated school official (DSO)

## SSR Economic Hardship Request Guidelines

SSR can grant eligible students the following relief, if they meet the criteria, and have been either authorized by the International Student Services (ISS), and US Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS), as applicable:

1. **On-Campus Employment:** Eligible students who have secured on-campus employment and have been approved by their on-campus employer to work more than 20 hours per week, may request a SSR by:
  - Submitting a completed SSR Request Form; **and**
  - A Statement from explaining:
    - How employment is necessary to avoid severe economic hardship; **and**
    - How the hardship is a direct result of the current humanitarian crisis in your country

Students cannot work beyond 20 hours per week until a DSO has authorized an SSR economic hardship in SEVIS.



2. **Off-Campus Employment:** Allows eligible F-1 students to work off-campus in any position for any number of hours per week based on the suspension of off-campus employment regulations in accordance with SSR.

Employment is authorized for one year, or until your graduation date, or the expiration of the notice (whichever comes first). If after one year you continue to experience financial difficulties, you are able to apply for an additional period of off-campus employment under SSR, until the expiration of the notice.

Eligible students may request SSR for off-campus employment authorization by completing the following:

- Complete and submit the SSR Request to ISS to obtain DSO recommendation and a new I-20 for SSR economic hardship
- File the [I-765, Application for Employment Authorization](#) online and use employment code: (c)(3)(iii) and have the following items scanned in and available to be uploaded with your application:
  - Copies of F-1 visa and Passport ID page with expiration date (6 months or more in the future)
  - Recent [Form I-94, Arrival Departure Record](#)
  - Two photos in passport-style format (see [guidelines](#))
  - Pay the I-765 application fee of \$410 (may pay by credit or debit card online with application)  
*\*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. Submission must include explanation of why USCIS should grant a fee waiver and the reason(s) for the inability to pay, with any evidence to support the reason(s).*
  - A statement explaining how:
    - Employment is necessary to avoid severe economic hardship; **and**
    - The hardship is a direct result of the current humanitarian crisis in your country

### **IMPORTANT TO REMEMBER:**

1. Applications take an average of 2-3 months to process.
2. You may not begin working until you have obtained approval from your academic advisor and DSO (on-campus employment), or recommendation from a DSO, approval from USCIS and you have received your EAD card (off-campus employment).
3. 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 (e.g., by failing to complete a full-time course load, if you do not have an approved RCL) your authorization is immediately cancelled.
  - Transferring to another school will also cancel your employment authorization even if your card has not yet expired.
4. Please schedule an SSR Request appointment with a DSO regarding any questions about SSR.