



SMU

International Student & Scholar Services Office (ISSS)

Work Permission Due to Severe Economic Hardship (J-1 Students Only)

As a J-1 student, you may be eligible to obtain permission from your International Student Adviser (ISA) or Alternate Responsible Officer (ARO) authorization to work off campus based on severe economic hardship. If you receive such authorization from the ISA or ARO, it allows you to work in any kind of job off campus. If granted this authorization, you are limited to part-time employment (a maximum of 20 hours per week) during the fall and spring semesters while you must continue to *maintain a full course of study during the fall and spring semesters*.

Eligibility Requirements

These are the criteria that will be used to determine if you are eligible for work permission due to severe economic hardship:

- (1) You must be in current legal status and carrying a full course of study,
- (2) You must have made a good faith effort to find employment on-campus,
- (3) You must demonstrate unforeseen severe economic hardship, which may include "loss of financial aid or on-campus employment without fault on the part of the student, substantial fluctuations in the value of currency or exchange rate, inordinate increases in tuition and/or living costs, unexpected changes in the financial condition of the student's source of support, medical bills, or other substantial and unexpected expenses."
- (4) **Please note: If you are a transfer student from another U.S. school you will lose any employment authorized on your previous school's DS-2019 upon transferring to Southern Methodist University or any other school.**

Steps to Follow

Make an appointment to see an International Student Adviser to have your eligibility evaluated. If your eligibility is confirmed, authorization may be granted with a letter from your ISA or ARO. Please bring the following documents with you:

- Documentation such as a budget showing your current academic program and living expenses as well as your income proving that the income you were due to receive when we first issued your DS-2019 is no longer available like loss of sponsorship or sudden devaluation of your currency in your home country against the U.S. dollar. The more detailed this budget the better your case will be. We are required by law to evaluate all aspects of your situation before we are allowed to give you authorization.
- If your financial difficulty is due to a loss of sponsorship, a notarized letter from your sponsor, (government or non-government) explaining the reasons why they cannot fully support you at this time and how the situation was unforeseen would be required.
- Any other documentation, which supports your case. For example, this could include a sheet showing devaluation of your currency against the U.S. dollar that happened after you arrived in the U.S. In addition, a written statement from you that on-campus employment is unavailable or insufficient.
- Your current DS-2019, valid passport, I-94 card, and proof of insurance for you and your dependents.

If eligibility is confirmed your ISA or ARO will write an authorization letter for employment to go with your DS-2019.

****Warning: Be sure you do not begin employment until you have received authorization form your ISA or ARO. Under no circumstances should you work past the expiration date of the employment authorization. A date of when employment can begin and must end will be put on the letter. Any work without authorization is a serious violation of immigration law and exchange visitor regulations.**