Applying for Special Student Relief (SSR) Information Guide

GENERAL INFORMATION

Special Student Relief (SSR) is the suspension of certain regulatory requirements by the secretary of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) for an F-1 student from parts of the world that are experiencing emergent circumstances. Regulatory requirements that may be suspended or altered for an F-1 student include: duration of status, full course of study and off-campus employment eligibility. Permission must be granted by IESC (on-campus employment) or USCIS (Off-Campus employment) before a student can utilize the SSR provisions. Under SSR students can request one of the following:

ON-CAMPUS Work Permission – work over 20 hours per week and a reduction of the minimum unit enrollment (undergraduate = 6 units; graduate = 3 units).

OFF-CAMPUS Work Permission – work over 20 hours per week in any field and a reduction of minimum unit enrollment (undergraduate = 6 units; graduate = 3 units). The student is required to apply for employment authorization to the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS). Approval is subject to review and adjudication by the California Service Center (CSC) of the USCIS.

ELEGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

DHS must first issue a Federal Register (FR) notice for your country. To be eligible for SSR, students must meet the following criteria:

- Be a citizen of the country specified in an FR notice and was present within the United States on an F-1 visa on the designated start date indicated in the FR notice;
- Be currently in legal immigration status;
- Be currently enrolled in classes at CSUN;
- Have a CSUN I-20; and
- Be experiencing severe economic hardship and be able to clearly document that they are experiencing severe economic hardship as a direct result of the current crisis in their home country of citizenship.

DURATION OF EMPLOYMENT AUTHORIZATION

The SSR authorization is issued for a period of one year or until your graduation date or to the expiration date of the notice (see Federal Register (FR) notice for your country) - whichever comes sooner. Students with SSR permission are required to enroll at least half-time. The SSR authorization ends if a student graduates or transfers to a different school.

PROCEDURE

Students are required to make an appointment to meet with an International Student Advisor (ISA). Complete the Acknowledgement and bring the documents listed under Step 1 to your appointment. This will assist you with obtaining preliminary approval. For students who are seeking SSR benefits and have already been approved for Economic Hardship and have an EAD card see below OFF-CAMPUS Work Permission (with already approved economic hardship) for list of documents to submit to obtain an updated I-20 with the SSR approval.

OFF-CAMPUS Work Permission:

- STEP 1: The student will submit the following via email to iescrequest@csun.edu:
  - SSR request form (form is available in the Form and Processes section of the IESC website)
  - Copies of supporting evidence and documents of your situation. Provide examples of supporting evidence such as,
    - Copy of student letter explaining the circumstances that caused the economic need
    - Copy of letter from sponsor explaining circumstances that caused the economic hardship
    - Copies of documents proving the circumstances that caused the economic need.
  - Copies of passport pages showing passport number, expiration date, and full name
  - Copy of most recent I-94
  - Copy of any previously issued EAD(s) (for student file/record)

- This is an online fillable form. Please type or print legibly in black ink.
- Answer all questions fully and accurately. If a question does not apply to you (for example, if you have not used any other names), type or print “N/A” unless otherwise directed. If your answer to a question which requires a numeric response is zero or none (for example, if you do not have a USCIS Online Account Number), type or print “None” unless otherwise directed.
- Check the box “Initial permission to accept employment.”
- Students who do not have a Social Security Number (SSN), may now apply for a SSN when completing Form I-765. To apply for the SSN, complete Items #13a. and 14-17b.
- Item #27: Type in the eligibility code(c)(3)(iii)
- Leave Item #28 - 31b. blank
- Certification Section: Sign your name using a BLACK ink pen. Make sure your signature stays within the signature box without touching any words noted on the form
- Use Part 6. Additional Information to provide all previously used SEVIS numbers and evidence of any previously authorized CPT or OPT and the academic level at which it was authorized.

IESC will take approximately 3 weeks to review and process the SSR request. Please feel free to contact us if has been more than 3 weeks since you have submitted your request to the IESC.

- STEP 2: The student will receive an updated I-20 with the work recommendation and Evidence Letter from International Student Advisor. You will need the documents listed below to complete your packet and mail to USCIS.
  - Two passport photographs with small envelope. Photos must meet U.S specifications (not taken in home country). Refer to I-765 instructions on page 20 for photograph requirements. The student must write his/her name and A-Number (if any) on back edge of each photo lightly in felt pen or pencil.
  - Copies of passport pages showing passport number, expiration date, and full name
  - Copy of most recent I-94
  - Copy of any previously issued EAD(s)
  - Completed Form I-765 - USCIS will consider a photocopied, faxed, or scanned copy of the original, handwritten signature valid for filing purposes. The photocopy, fax, or scan must be of the original document containing the handwritten, ink signature
  - Completed Form G-1145 - Please download the form at www.uscis.gov
  - Original student letter explaining the circumstances that caused the economic need
  - Original letter from financial sponsor explaining circumstances that caused the economic hardship
  - Original documents proving the circumstances that caused the economic need
  - The filing fee for Form I-765 is $410.
    - Payments by check or money order - $410.00 payable to “U.S. Department of Homeland Security” from a bank or other financial institution located in the United States and must be payable in U.S. currency.
    - Payments by credit card - Please see Form G-1450, Authorization for Credit Card Transactions, at www.uscis.gov/G-1450 for more information. (Do not submit this form or any payment to the IESC)

If a student is unable to pay the fee, they may submit a completed Form I-912, Request for Fee Waiver, along with the Form I-765. See https://www.uscis.gov/forms/filing-fees/additional-information-on-filing-a-fee-waiver. An explanation must be included of why USCIS should grant the fee waiver and the reasons for the inability to pay, and any evidence to support the reasons. * Read all information thoroughly and carefully to understand how to properly request a fee waiver. For questions about the fee waiver process, you must contact USCIS directly. If the request for a fee waiver is denied by USCIS, the applicant will need to refile the application along with the proper filing fee.
The student will be responsible for assembling the Application Packet and mailing the packet to the appropriate USCIS Lockbox based on the address that is printed on the student's Form I-765. For students living in California, please mail your packet to USCIS Chicago Lockbox Facility. For students living outside of California, please refer to the Form I-765 Application Instructions (www.uscis.gov) for the appropriate lockbox location.

OFF-CAMPUS Work Permission (with already approved economic hardship):

- **STEP 1:** The student will submit the following via email to iescrequest@csun.edu:
  - SSR request form (form is available in the Form and Processes section of the IESC website)
  - Copies of supporting evidence and documents of your situation. Provide examples of supporting evidence such as,
    - Copy of student letter explaining the circumstances that caused the economic need
    - Copy of letter from sponsor explaining circumstances that caused the economic hardship
    - Copies of documents proving the circumstances that caused the economic need.

  IESC will take approximately 3 weeks to review and process the SSR request. Please feel free to contact us if has been more than 3 weeks since you have submitted your request to the IESC.

- **STEP 2:** The student will receive an updated I-20 with the Special Student Relief (SSR) recommendation from International Student Advisor. You do not need to mail an application to USCIS for approval.

**APPLICATION MAILING INSTRUCTIONS**

The student will put together the packet and then the student is required to mail it to the appropriate USCIS lockbox. Please refer to the I-765 instructions at www.uscis.gov.

**On the envelope, be sure to write “SPECIAL STUDENT RELIEF”**.

When mailing documents by U.S. Post Office--Use Certified Mail Return Receipt and mail to:

USCIS
Attn: I-765 C03
P.O. Box 805373
Chicago, IL 60680-5374

When mailing documents by FedEx, UPS, and DHL deliveries mail to:

USCIS
Attn: I-765 C03 (Box 805373)
131 South Dearborn - 3rd Floor
Chicago, IL 60603-5517

**IMPORTANT INFORMATION**

- IESC does not require ANY fees for the services it provides to international students. No fees, under any circumstances, shall be submitted to IESC. If a student is submitting an application to USCIS, a check payable to "Department of Homeland Security" will accompany the student's application.
- Advisors' responsibilities are limited to reviewing the check for accuracy and returning to the student who will mail the application directly to USCIS.
- CSC/USCIS currently takes 90 to 120 days to process all application.
- Students are not permitted to work prior to receiving employment authorization approval.
- Students are required to submit a copy of the EAD to IESC as soon as they receive it.
- Employment authorization is contingent upon maintaining your F-1 status.
  - If at any time during your authorized period of employment, you fall out of F-1 status your authorization is immediately cancelled.
- Transferring to another school will also cancel your employment authorization even if your card has not yet expired.
Schedule an appointment with an International Student advisor if you have any questions about the SSR.

**IESC/ISA CONTACT INFORMATION**

Please contact IESC at (818) 677-3053 or email an International Student Advisor (ISA) for questions and/or clarifications.

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<th>College</th>
<th>ISA</th>
<th>Email</th>
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<tr>
<td>Engineering &amp; Computer</td>
<td>Brenda Acosta</td>
<td><a href="mailto:brenda.acosta@csun.edu">brenda.acosta@csun.edu</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Business &amp; Economics and</td>
<td>Cynthia Alvarez</td>
<td><a href="mailto:cynthia.alvarez@csun.edu">cynthia.alvarez@csun.edu</a></td>
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<td>Michelle Garcia</td>
<td><a href="mailto:michelle.garcia@csun.edu">michelle.garcia@csun.edu</a></td>
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<td>College of Science and Math and College of</td>
<td>Nicole Goddard</td>
<td><a href="mailto:nicole.goddard@csun.edu">nicole.goddard@csun.edu</a></td>
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<td>Social &amp; Behavioral Sciences, and Humanities</td>
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For processing times please visit: [http://www.csun.edu/international/current-students-forms](http://www.csun.edu/international/current-students-forms). Processing times may vary during peak times. For additional information, please contact us at (818) 677-3053.
International and Exchange Student Center
Special Student Relief (SSR) Request Form

STUDENT ACKNOWLEDGEMENT
I have read and I understand the above information on the requirements for Special Student Relief applications provided by the International and Exchange Student Center (IESC) at California State University, Northridge.

I am applying for:

☐ OFF-CAMPUS Work Permission
☐ OFF-CAMPUS Work Permission (with already approved economic hardship)

Last Name: _______________________________ First Name: _______________________________
CSUN ID: _____________________________
U.S. Address: _________________________________________________________________________________
(Street)            (Apt#)                                                  (City)                                          (State)                             (Zip)
Phone: (______) ________________________    Primary Email: _______________________________________
Signature: _______________________________ Date: __________________________________

FOR IESC USE ONLY
☐ Verified current U.S. Address
☐ Same major / ☐ changed major to: ________________________________
☐ Verified major in PS / SEVIS / Master Roster match
☐ Verified unofficial transcript in PS
   _____ Number of unit’s student is enrolled
   _____ Will student need RCL.
   _____ Add to Part-Time Spreadsheet.
☐ Eligible to enroll in classes for the following semester
☐ No other negative service indicators in PS
☐ Passport valid 6 months into future (expires __________)
☐ I-20 valid (expires __________)
☐ Change DSO Name on PS I-20
☐ Add Economic Hardship/SSR in PS
☐ Add Economic Hardship/SSR in SEVIS
☐ Print I-20
☐ Create letter for student
☐ Other: ____________________________________________

(FSA Name): ___________________      Today’s Date: ___________________