

Summary

The US government has authorized certain F-1 students for Special Student Relief (SSR), which is a combination of expanded work authorization and, if desired, Reduced Course Load. The government posts in the Federal Register which people groups are eligible and the criteria for eligibility. The Designated School Official (DSO) at the school at which the F-1 student attends must make the initial confirmation of eligibility and, if the student is eligible, assist the student with accessing the benefits of SSR.

Benefits of SSR

Special Student Relief offers three main benefits to eligible F-1 students: expanded on-campus work authorization, off-campus work authorization, and the option of Reduced Course Load.

Expanded On-Campus Work Authorization: Under standard conditions, an F-1 student is restricted to 20 per week of on-campus work authorization while classes are in session. The student may exceed 20 hours only during school breaks. When authorized by a DSO under SSR, an F-1 student can exceed 20 hours per week for the duration of the authorization period. Authorization is made by a DSO in the Office of International Affairs. Approval by DSO will take 1 to 3 days.

Off-Campus Work Authorization: Under standard conditions, F-1 students cannot work off-campus unless they have approval from USCIS or have specific authorization for CPT or OPT. When authorized by USCIS under SSR, an F-1 student will receive an Employment Authorization Document (EAD) for unrestricted work authorization in excess of 20 hours per week. Authorization is made by USCIS after recommendation by a DSO in the Office of International Affairs. Approval by USCIS will take several weeks.

Reduced Course Load: The benefit of Reduced Course Load must be used together with On-Campus or Off-Campus Work Authorization. It cannot be used alone as the reason for the RCL is to allow more time for work. An RCL can be approved and not be used.

- An undergraduate F-1 nonimmigrant student who receives on-campus or off-campus employment authorization must remain registered for a minimum of six semester hours of instruction per academic term. A minimum of 3 credit hours must be in-person. One course may be online if needed.
- A graduate-level F-1 nonimmigrant student who receives on-campus or off-campus employment authorization under this notice must remain registered for a minimum of three semester hours of instruction per academic term.

Eligibility Criteria General

A student must be:

- a citizen of a country/group for which the US government has made the SSR designation;
- lawfully present within the United States on an F-1 visa on the designated start date;
- currently maintaining F-1 status, including enrollment at the University of North Alabama; and
- able to document that they are experiencing severe economic hardship as a direct result of the current crisis in their country of citizenship.

Directions for On-Campus Work Authorization (Processed within the Office of International Affairs)

To request ON-CAMPUS work permission over 20 hours per week and an option to have a reduced course load (RCL):

- a. Complete this form including the budget worksheet.
- b. Gather supporting evidence about the crisis in your country of citizenship. You should gather more than one example. All documentation must be in English, or have an English translation. Examples of supporting evidence include but are not limited to:
 - a. a published article or report from a reputable source about the crisis in your country;
 - b. a published article or report from a reputable source about the decreased value of your country's currency; and/or
 - c. a published article or report from a reputable source describing the crisis that demonstrates how the crisis has negatively affected your sponsor's earning ability or savings;
- c. Write a personal statement to explain the unforeseen change(s) in your financial circumstances which arose as a result of the crisis in your country of citizenship. Be specific. The statement should include:
 - a. Brief introduction about the crisis in your country;
 - b. Your current academic and living expenses and your economic hardship as a result of the crisis;
 - c. How the funding on your I-20 has changed as a result of the crisis, including a description of your sponsor's current level or support;
 - d. Any other relevant details.
- d. Submit everything listed above in one email to oiaservices@una.edu and we will respond to schedule an individual appointment.

PLEASE NOTE: For extended on-campus work authorization, approval is demonstrated by remarks in the SEVIS record and on an updated Form I-20 which will be issued by a DSO in International Affairs. A student cannot begin extended hours of on-campus employment until they receive approval.

If a student is unable to document that their primary source of financial support comes from the affected country and is not sufficient for their current expenses, their application may be denied by OIA.

Directions for Off-Campus Work Authorization (Approval by USCIS required)

To request OFF-CAMPUS work permission and an option to have a reduced course load (RCL):

- a. Complete this form including the budget worksheet.
- b. Gather supporting evidence about the crisis in your country of citizenship. You should gather more than one example. All documentation must be in English, or have an English translation. Examples of supporting evidence include but are not limited to:
 - a. a published article or report from a reputable source about the crisis in your country;
 - b. a published article or report from a reputable source about the decreased value of your country's currency; and/or
 - c. a published article or report from a reputable source describing the crisis that demonstrates how the crisis has negatively affected your sponsor's earning ability or savings;
- c. Obtain a letter from your sponsor withdrawing or reducing their support and explaining why this is necessary;
- d. Write a personal statement to explain the unforeseen change(s) in your financial circumstances which arose as a result of the crisis in your country of citizenship. Be specific. The statement should include:
 - a. Brief introduction about the crisis in your country;
 - b. Your current academic and living expenses and your economic hardship as a result of the crisis;
 - c. How the funding on your I-20 has changed as a result of the crisis, including a description of your sponsor's current level or support;
 - d. Any other relevant details.
- e. Complete Form I-765 (can be found at www.uscis.gov/i-765) – Eligibility code (c)(3)(iii)
- f. Submit everything listed above in one email to oiaservices@una.edu and we will respond to schedule an individual appointment.

PLEASE NOTE: For off-campus work authorization, recommendation by OIA is not an approval and does not guarantee USCIS approval. A student cannot begin off-campus employment until they receive approval from USCIS in form of an Employment Authorization Document (EAD).

If a student is unable to document that their primary source of financial support comes from the affected country and is not sufficient for their current expenses, their application may be denied either by OIA or USCIS.

Directions for Reduced Course Load (RCL)

Reduced Course Load must be used with On-Campus or Off-Campus Work Authorization. It cannot be used alone as the reason for the RCL is to give more time for work. An RCL can be approved and not be used.

An undergraduate F-1 nonimmigrant student who receives on-campus or off-campus employment authorization must remain registered for a minimum of six semester or quarter hours of instruction per academic term. One course may be online if needed.

A graduate-level F-1 nonimmigrant student who receives on-campus or off-campus employment authorization under this notice must remain registered for a minimum of three semester or quarter hours of in-person instruction per academic term.

This form requests Special Student Relief authorization as made available under federal notices. Please submit this form with suggested evidence and other documents that are relevant to your case.

Part 1: Student Information

Student's Name _____
 SEVIS Number _____ Student ID: _____
 UNA Email Address: _____ US Phone Number: _____
 Current US Address: _____
 I am applying for: On-Campus Off-Campus Reduced Course Load

Part 2: Budget Worksheet

In the spaces below, please enter all the requested information as accurately as possible. Your first UNA I-20 may be helpful. Basic expenses for the current academic year are listed on page 3 of this form for your convenience.

When I began first applied as an F-1		Current Circumstances	
EXPENSES per semester		EXPENSES per semester	
Tuition & Fee		Tuition & Fee	
Housing or rent		Housing or rent	
Meal Plan and/or groceries		Meal Plan and/or groceries	
Health Insurance		Health Insurance	
Books & Supplies		Books & Supplies	
Other*		Other*	
TOTAL		TOTAL	
Describe Other*		Describe Other*	
When I began first applied as an F-1		Current Circumstances	
FUNDING per semester		FUNDING per semester	
Personal Funds		Personal Funds	
On-Campus Employment		On-Campus Employment	
Funds from UNA		Funds from UNA	
Other Funding		Other Funding	
TOTAL		TOTAL	
Describe Other*		Describe Other*	

Part 3: Student's Signature

By signing here, I state that all information on this form and attached evidence is true and accurate.

Signature _____ Date _____

2022-2023 Estimated Expenses Before Scholarships**

UNDERGRADUATE			
	Fall (15 Credits)	Spring (15 Credits)	Annual (9 month)
Tuition (Non-resident)	\$10,200	\$10,200	\$20,400
University Fees	\$600	\$600	\$1,200
International Student Fee	\$300	\$300	\$600
International Student Health Insurance	\$556	\$779	\$1,335
Tuition & Fees SUBTOTAL	\$11,056	\$11,279	\$22,335
Basic Room (Double Occupancy)	\$1,980	\$1,980	\$3,960
Basic Meal Plan	\$1,725	\$1,725	\$3,450
Living Expenses SUBTOTAL	\$3,705	\$3,705	\$7,410
Books, Supplies and Technology	\$800	\$800	\$1,600
Other Expenses SUBTOTAL	\$800	\$800	\$1,600
GRAND TOTAL	\$16,161	\$16,384	\$32,545*
GRADUATE			
	Fall (9 Credits)	Spring (9 Credits)	Annual (9 month)
Tuition (Non-resident)	\$6,660	\$6,660	\$13,320
University Fees	\$270	\$270	\$540
International Student Fee	\$300	\$300	\$600
International Student Health Insurance	\$556	\$779	\$1,335
Tuition & Fees SUBTOTAL	\$7,786	\$8,009	\$15,795
Basic Room (Double Occupancy)	\$1,980	\$1,980	\$3,960
Basic Meal Plan	\$1,725	\$1,725	\$3,450
Living Expenses SUBTOTAL	\$3,705	\$3,705	\$7,410
Books, Supplies and Technology	\$700	\$700	\$1,400
Other Expenses SUBTOTAL	\$700	\$700	\$1,400
GRAND TOTAL	\$12,191	\$12,414	\$24,605*

* This is the estimated expenses that are shown on the Form I-20 or DS-2019.

**This is an estimate of typical expenses. It is not a fixed amount. Changes in registered courses, housing and meal plans will affect the final amount on a student bill. Additional funds for personal expenses such as travel, room furnishings, and supplies are not included.

NOTE: All expenses and fees are subject to change.