



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:  
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The public relations department of the APPROACH INTERNATIONAL STUDENT CENTER makes public the latest events and news involving the name of the school and, consequently, our Executive Board.

We have been notified by some of our students (who received audios and screenshots with a false and misleading message) that an immigration firm associated with a law firm in Orlando is affirming to their clients that "Approach ISC is the only English school in Boston that is not releasing off-campus work authorization for students during a pandemic." Last year, in an effort to inform our students, Approach clarified the off-campus immigration regulation as it relates to the COVID-19 pandemic last year as follows:

According to the [code of federal regulations \(8 CFR 214.2 \(f\)\(9\)\(ii\)\(c\)\)](#) - USCIS may grant off-campus work authorization to F1 students for two reasons:

1. Due to severe economic hardship
2. Or a special student relief due to emergent circumstances

The Student and Exchange Visitor Program (SEVP) defines "severe economic hardship" as a financial condition caused by unforeseen circumstances beyond the student's control that make it difficult for a student to continue education in the United States. These financial conditions may include:

- Loss of financial aid or on-campus employment through no fault of the student.
- Substantial changes in the exchange rate or value of the currency upon which the student depends.
- Inordinate increases in tuition or living costs.
- Unexpected changes in the financial state of the student's source of support.
- Medical bills.
- Other substantial and unexpected expenses.

To qualify for off-campus employment, the student must be able to demonstrate why on-campus employment is unavailable or insufficient to meet the student's financial needs, which arose from unexpected circumstances. Under emergent circumstances, the government may suspend some requirements for affected F-1 students, including the requirements for off-campus employment.



In such cases, the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) will issue a notice in the Federal Register, giving details of such suspension.

This regulation is written with college/university students in mind as economic hardship can prevent a student from graduating from a degree program resulting in financial loss to that student. Students enrolled in Intensive English programs suffer no financial loss if required to return home due to reasons of financial hardship. Therefore, cases involving non-degree F1 students are denied by USCIS. To date, the federal register has not published a special relief notice to allow F1 students to work off-campus due to the pandemic. Therefore, work authorization with basis on special relief would also be denied by USCIS.

This immigration firm is charging students \$800 to file a work authorization process with no legal basis for approval, therefore misleading students during a period of economic difficulty. The decision to not authorize off-campus employment practiced by Approach aims to protect its students from being scammed into paying for a process with no legal basis for approval and to protect its students from getting involved in situations that may harm their F1 immigration status in the future. This immigration firm has already been reported to the office of the Attorney General for pursuing unfair and deceptive trade practices, and our attorneys have already contacted this firm to cease and desist from recruiting and misinforming our students.

Furthermore, the department of public relations of APPROACH INTERNATIONAL STUDENT CENTER is available for further clarification.

Best Regards,

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Public Relations Specialist