

What is Special Student Relief (SSR)?

SSR is the suspension of certain regulatory requirements by the secretary of homeland security for an F-1 student from parts of the world that are experiencing emergent circumstances. These circumstances could be a natural disaster, war and military conflicts, or national or international financial crises. Regulatory requirements that may be suspended or altered for an F-1 student include: duration of status, full course of study and employment eligibility.

Who does SSR affect?

SSR affects F-1 students who meet the following criteria:

- Have citizenship of a country or countries that are specified in the Federal Register (FR) notice. This notice is sent when the secretary of homeland security declares that an event constitutes emergent circumstances.
- Have been lawfully present in the United States for the dates indicated in FR notice.
- Have reported on time to their DSO and been enrolled in an SEVP-certified school since the event.
- Currently maintaining F-1 status.
- Experiencing severe economic hardship.

When does SSR apply to F-1 students?

SSR applies when emergent circumstances have occurred. Emergent circumstances is when a world event occurs that affects F-1 students from a particular region and create significant financial hardships, such as but not limited to:

- Natural disasters.
- Wars and military conflicts.
- National or international financial crises.

How does a DSO recommend SSR?

The DSO must certify in SEVIS that a student meets all of the following eligibilities:

- Good academic standing.
- Citizenship in the affected country or region, as per the FR notice.
- Meets minimum course requirements
- for duration of authorized employment.
- Maintaining status.
- Needs employment to alleviate severe economic hardship caused by the emergent circumstances.

The DSO should note any specifics, as recommended by SEVP, in the remarks section of the student's Form I-20, "Certificate of Eligibility for Nonimmigrant Student Status."

Please note: SSR and Temporary Protected Status (TPS) are different. TPS may be offered to various visa classifications, when applicable, including F-1 students. However, SSR, when applicable, is offered only to eligible F-1 students.