

Applying for Reinstatement

Students, who are out-of-status and would like to regain valid F-1 status, can apply for reinstatement. To apply, you must be able to provide to the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) that you:

- Have not been out of status more than 5 months at the time of filing the request for reinstatement
- Can demonstrate that the violation of status was beyond your control or was the result of exceptional circumstances that prevented you from maintaining status. Such circumstances might include serious injury, illness, a natural disaster, or oversight.
- Do not have a record of repeated or willful violations of immigration regulations.
- Are currently pursuing, or intending to pursue, a full course of study in the immediate future at the school, which issued the Form I-20.
- Have not engaged in unauthorized employment.
- Are not deportable on any ground other than overstaying or failing to maintain status.

How to apply for reinstatement

You are responsible for filing the request for reinstatement. Your DSO will issue the I-20 for reinstatement purposes, but the application for reinstatement must be made by you directly to USCIS. It is your responsibility to pay any fees required that are associated with the reinstatement, including the I-90 fee and I-539 filing fee. If your fees are not paid, your I-20 will be automatically terminated by SEVIS

- Obtain the Form I-539 at <https://www.uscis.gov/i-539>. Write “REINSTATEMENT” on the document.
- Submit the Form I-539 and the documents listed below to USCIS. Include:
 - The original I-20 issued for purpose of reinstatement. The I-20 must be signed and dated.
 - Photocopies of all previously-issued I-20s
 - Copy of I-94 card or a printout of I-94 record of travel history that can be obtained at <https://i94.cbp.dhs.gov/I94/#/home>
 - Photocopy of passport and visa
 - Proof of financial support showing one year of tuition, fees and living expenses
 - A letter requesting reinstatement to F-1 student status which explains your situation and truthfully states that failure to maintain status was due to any or all of the reasons listed above
 - Completed G-1145 Form (optional; it signs you up for email/text message notification of your application’s arrival at USCIS)
 - Check or money order made payable to “U.S. Department of Homeland Security” for USCIS filing fee

- Once you receive your Receipt Notice from USCIS called "I-797 Receipt Notice", please submit a copy to your DSO.
- If you are approved by USCIS for reinstatement of your F-1 status, you must notify your DSO.

Travel and Reentry for Reinstatement

- In some situations, it may be advisable to depart the U.S. and re-enter with a new I-20, rather than applying for reinstatement. You may do this by obtaining a new I-20 from the school you are currently attending or wish to attend, then departing the U.S. If your visa has expired, you will have to renew the visa before re-entering the U.S. Students who violated status are not eligible for automatic visa revalidation. A re-entry to the U.S., after a status violation, is viewed by Immigration as "initial attendance" in F-1 status. As such, you are bound by restrictions placed on new students, such as the academic year waiting period for eligibility for practical training.

NOTE: Should you receive a letter from USCIS titled RFE (Request for Evidence) please bring the letter to your international advisor immediately. You will only have 30 days to respond. If you do not respond, your application will be automatically denied.

Frequently Asked Questions

What is the major difference between the two options?

Students who are reinstated continue in their previous F-1 status. Students who choose travel and reentry are considered initial status students. This is most important when considering eligibility for Optional Practical Training or Curricular Practical Training. Students who reenter using a new I-20 will be required to complete one academic year before becoming eligible to apply for off-campus employment.

What are the costs associated with each option?

Reinstatement in the U.S: USCIS charges an I-539 application fee.

With travel and reentry, there is the \$200 SEVIS fee, plus any expenses incurred for travel and visa applications.

Which option is the least risky?

Each option has its risks. If your application for reinstatement is denied, you will be required to depart the U.S. immediately. If you are denied re-entry at the border, you may be required to return home immediately from the port of entry.

May I continue to study while my application for reinstatement is pending?

Yes, you must continue to study in order to maintain your F-1 status.

May I continue to work on-campus while my application for reinstatement is pending?

No. Once it is determined that you have violated your student status, you must stop working immediately.

How long will the reinstatement process take?

Reinstatement applications take approximately three to four months to process.