



F1 students that fail to [maintain their status](#) can affect their eligibility to continue to study in result in the termination of their status/

How Can I Regain My F-1 Status?

To regain your F-1 status you have the option to file for reinstatement or to complete the I-20 and F-1 visa process again (**if the current F-1 visa has expired**).

Can I Study Why My Reinstatement Application is Pending?

No, you cannot enroll in classes while out of status, you must have your F1 status reinstated before the program start date of the Form I-20 issued. [USCIS processing times](#) vary, and it may take several months for a decision.

NOTE: Approval of reinstatement cannot be guaranteed by ISS or the DSO, it is at the discretion of USCIS.

REINSTATEMENT OPTIONS:

Out of Status Less Than 5 Months:

- F-1 students out of status **for less than 5 months** may be eligible, depending on the type of status violation and the specific circumstances, by filing for reinstatement with USCIS without departing the United States (US).

Out of Status More Than 5 Months:

- F-1 students out of status **for more than 5 months** more than likely need to depart the US and re-enter under a new SEVIS ID and a new visa (**if the current one has expired**).
- Students in this situation may be approved for reinstatement with USCIS **if they can demonstrate** that failure to file earlier than 5 months was the result of **"exceptional circumstances."**
 - If you cannot provide evidence of "exceptional circumstances" it is recommended to depart the country and complete the I-20 and F-1 visa process again.
 - **Keep in mind that the USCIS reinstatement process can be lengthy, and it may be more time-efficient to request a new I-20 and depart the US, then re-enter to reactivate your F-1 status**
 - **NOTE: If your current visa has expired, you must apply for a new F-1 visa; please check your embassy or consulate [visa wait times](#).**
- **IF DENIED:** If USCIS denies your application for reinstatement, **this cannot be appealed**, and you must depart the country. Remaining in the US after reinstatement is denied will lead to the [accrual of unlawful presence](#). However, you may request a new I-20 and apply for the F-1 visa again with the embassy or consulate closest to your country (this includes fee payment again) to regain your status.

Important Information to Remember

- **You are not in legal F-1 status again until your application for reinstatement is approved.**
- If your application is approved for reinstatement, USCIS will send you your I-20 and Form I-797A *Receipt of Notice*; provide copies of the I-20, 797A, and an updated printout of your I-94 to ISS
- If your application is denied, you may not appeal that decision and you must depart the US immediately. You have the option to request a new I-20 and apply for the F-1 visa again.

Reinstatement of F-1 Status Guide

HOW TO APPLY FOR REINSTATEMENT

1. Contact International Student Services (ISS)

If you do not meet the criteria for the USCIS reinstatement application process: Notify ISS to verify your intent to return after being out of status for 5 months by completing and submitting the [Recertification of Finances](#) form with all required documentation, including a letter of readmission or evidence that you are eligible to return for the term you seek to re-enroll.

If you meet the criteria for reinstatement: You must notify ISS to verify your intent to apply for reinstatement and to request a DSO recommendation, by completing the following:

- a. **Complete and submit the [Recertification of Finances](#)** with evidence of your ability to pay for estimated costs of attendance (and dependents, if applicable), and all other required documentation.
- b. **A letter explaining:** Why you are out of status (specify the violation), the reason for violating F-1 status, the hardship you would experience if reinstatement was denied, and that you are currently pursuing or intending to pursue a full course of study (i.e., approved readmission letter).
 - i. If eligible, DSO will issue a new I-20 with a recommendation for reinstatement.

2. File [Form I-539 Application for Extend/Change Nonimmigrant Status](#) online with USCIS and submit the following items (select the [File Online](#) button):

1. Pay the fee of \$370 USD via the online I-539 application
2. Upload a copy of the I-20 with DSO recommendation of reinstatement and copies of all signed I-20s.
3. Upload a copy of the most recent [I-94 Arrival/Departure Record](#) (and dependents, if applicable).
4. Upload color copies of your passport biographical ID page and F-1 Visa (all must have valid expiration dates).
5. Upload evidence of your ability to pay for the estimated cost of attendance (and dependents (if applicable))
6. Upload a copy of the letter explaining: why you are out of status (specify the violation and include any other evidence that might help explain the nature of the violation).
7. Upload original transcripts from all US schools attended (unofficial copies are acceptable)
8. Upload proof of enrollment in a full course of study (copy of class schedule or verification on transcript)
9. **If out of status for more than 5 months, you must [pay the \\$200 SEVIS fee](#) and upload a copy of your receipt**

USCIS REINSTATEMENT PROCESS

Upon completion of the online I-539, you will receive your [Form I-797C, Notice of Action](#) to verify USCIS's receipt of your application and to confirm your status is "Pending".

Please Read Carefully. If the USCIS requests further evidence (RFE) you will have 30 days to respond; gather what is required and submit it promptly. **No response will result in automatic denial.**

Processing time is unpredictable and may take a few months to reach completion. Notices from USCIS will be mailed to the address on the submitted I-539. When you receive their final adjudication (outcome) letter, you must notify ISS so your SEVIS record can be adjusted accordingly.