



University at Buffalo
The State University of New York

Office of International Education
International Student and Scholar Services

REINSTATEMENT FOR F-1 STUDENTS

What is Reinstatement?

F-1 students who have failed to maintain their immigration status may request reinstatement from the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS). The USCIS has the discretion to reinstate F-1 students to lawful immigration status.

Normally, the USCIS will reinstate a student to lawful F-1 student status if the following criteria are proven to the satisfaction of the USCIS:

- The violation of status was due to circumstances beyond the student's control OR failure to be reinstated would result in extreme hardship to the student AND
- The student is currently pursuing a full-time course of study AND
- The student has not engaged in unauthorized employment AND
- The student has not been out-of-status for more than 5 months.

Who should apply for Reinstatement?

An F-1 student should apply for Reinstatement in the following situations:

- The student failed to maintain a full-time course of study (12 credits or 9 credits plus an assistantship) during one semester.
- The student did not have Designated School Official (DSO) approval for a Reduced Course Load during one semester.
- The student failed to apply for an I-20 extension prior to the expected completion date in section 5 of the I-20.
- The student failed to complete a SEVIS transfer from one school to another in a timely manner.

How do I apply for Reinstatement?

First, you will need a new I-20 for your application for Reinstatement. To obtain a new I-20, **submit the following to ISSS, 210 Talbert Hall:**

- A cover letter from you addressed to the USCIS requesting Reinstatement to Student Status and explaining your circumstances. Be sure to address the above criteria as they pertain to your situation and include any other relevant information. Address your letter as follows:

USCIS
Attn: I-539
2501 S. State Highway 121
Business
Suite 400
Lewisville, TX 75067

- International Student Data Form (*attached*)
- Completed Form I-539. (*Fillable online at: www.buffalo.edu/intlservices/documents/i-539_expires2012.0229_001.pdf*)
- Copies of all previous I-20's (front and back)
- Financial documentation for new I-20
- Form I-901 (proof that you paid the SEVIS fee) (***only for students who were out-of-status for more than five months***)
- Original I-94 card
- Check in the amount of \$290 payable to the "USCIS"
- Photocopy of your passport (biographic page) and U.S. visa stamp

What happens after I submit my application to ISSS?

An International Student Advisor will review your application for Reinstatement and advise you if additional documentation, explanation or revisions are needed.

Who will send the application to the USCIS?

When your application for Reinstatement is complete, the International Student Advisor will send your application to the USCIS.

How long is the Reinstatement process?

The estimated processing time is two months. You may attend school while your application is pending, but you may not begin an assistantship or engage in any on- or off-campus employment until you are reinstated to F-1 status.

After your application has been reviewed by the USCIS, they will inform ISSS of their decision. ISSS will then notify you by e-mail. After that, you can pick up your documents in ISSS, 210 Talbert Hall, North Campus.

How does Reinstatement affect my dependents?

If your I-20 has expired or you fail to complete a transfer to another school in a timely manner, your SEVIS record will become inactive. If your SEVIS record is inactive, your dependents' records will also be inactive and we will not be able to issue I-20's for your dependents. Therefore, neither you nor your dependents should travel outside the U.S. until you have been reinstated to F-1 status.