



Reinstatement to F-1 Status

If you have fallen out of F-1 status but wish to return to your studies without having to leave the country, you'll need to apply for what's called reinstatement. The deadline to do this is five months from the date you fell out of status (unless exceptional circumstances stopped you from filing for reinstatement sooner).

Whether You Are Eligible for Reinstatement

Your chances of being reinstated as an F-1 student are highest if you do not have a history of repeatedly or willfully violating USCIS rules. You must be pursuing, or plan to pursue, a full course of study at your school. You also must not have been engaged in unauthorized work or become deportable under the U.S. immigration laws. Most importantly, you will need to establish that this violation was either:

- beyond your control, perhaps due to a serious injury or illness, school closure, a natural disaster, or
- was related to a reduction in your course load that would have been within the ISO's power to authorize in the first place, and that failure to approve your reinstatement would result in extreme hardship to you.

You'll be expected to prove the grounds upon which you are asking for reinstatement, such as with letters from doctors or school officials.

Processing Time

The current USCIS processing time for reinstatement requests is up to a year. While waiting for a reinstatement request to be processed you are advised not to travel outside the country.

If your application is denied, you will be expected to leave the U.S. immediately.

Reinstatement Application Process

Discuss your eligibility for reinstatement with your international student counselor. If the adviser feels that you have a valid case, then the following need to be provided to USCIS:

- USCIS Form I-539.
- A check or money order for \$370, paid to Department of Homeland Security.
- A cover letter detailing the circumstances that led to your loss of F-1 status, why it was beyond your control, and how you will suffer extreme hardship if you aren't reinstated. If you are applying past the 5-month limit, you should also explain the delay in applying for reinstatement.
- Proof of any reasons that you've stated for why the circumstances were beyond your control, such as a notice from your school describing closure after a natural disaster, or a letter from your doctor and hospital records if you were sick or injured.
- A newly issue I-20 form from your school.
- A photocopy of financial support papers to prove that you can pay for your continued schooling.
- A photocopy of your currently valid passport photo page as well as the page showing your latest visa entry stamp.
- A photocopy of your Form I-94 Arrival/Departure Record.
- A photocopy of your latest transcript and upcoming course registration.
- Proof of payment of I-901 SEVIS fee (if applying for reinstatement past the 5-month deadline).