

Recovering F-1 Status

There are two options to recover your F-1 status.

1. **Reinstatement by USCIS:** With the recommendation from your international student advisor, apply to USCIS for reinstatement to F-1 status
2. **Travel and Re-enter:** Obtain a new I-20 from OISS, leave the United States and reenter in F-1 status.

If you are uncertain about which option will be best for you, please make an appointment with your international student advisor to discuss your options.

Reinstatement Eligibility

You will only be considered for reinstatement as an F-1 student if you establish the following;

1. The violation of status was due to circumstances beyond your control **or** that failure to reinstate you will result in extreme hardship,
2. You are pursuing or will pursue a full course of study, and
3. You have not been employed without authorization

Reinstatement Application

Submit an online F1 Request for Services Form and then make an appointment with your assigned international student advisor who will review the situation and determine whether NOVA can recommend reinstatement. You will need to upload the following documents:

- Letter explaining, in detail why the violation was beyond your control and if not, why not receiving reinstatement will result in extreme hardship
- New F-1 Financial form and bank statement(s)
- Passport
- I-94 Travel History
- Copy of all previous I-20 forms
- Official transcripts from all schools attended in the U.S.
- Completed I-539 form (available at www.uscis.gov/i-539)

If the international student advisor agrees that NOVA can recommend reinstatement she/he will provide you with following documents and help you to prepare your application for mailing.

- Letter, on official school letterhead, with a detailed explanation of the events which lead up to the termination of the I-20. The letter will include how long you have been out of status; whether you are pursuing or intend to pursue a full course of study in the immediate future; whether the violation was beyond your control and if so, how; and whether the violation might have been authorized as less than a full course of study.
- New I-20 form

You will need to make a copy of all documents for your file and mail all the documents with a **check or money order** for the current filing fee (<https://www.uscis.gov/i-539>) written to **U.S. Department of Homeland Security** and send to the below address. Current processing times are taking 6-10 months.

If sending via USPS:
USCIS Dallas LockBox Facility
PO Box 660166
Dallas, TX 75266

If sending via FedEx/UPS/DHL:
USCIS
Attn: I-539
2501 S. State Hwy. 121 Business
Suite 400
Lewisville, TX 75067

Travel and Re-entry in F-1 Status

If you elect to leave the U.S. and re-enter with a new “**Initial Attendance**” I-20, it will be necessary for you to make the request via the **online F1 Request for Services Form**

You should upload the following documentation.

- New I-20 Application
- New Financial form and bank statement(s)
- Copy of Passport

After you have your I-20 you must depart the U.S. as soon as possible. In order to return to the U.S. you will need:

- Valid passport
- Valid F-1 visa
- New I-20
- New receipt for SEVIS fee paid for the new I-20
- Official transcript

You will be eligible to return to the U.S. no more than 30 days before the reporting date on the new I-20.

NOTE: To be eligible to work off campus, an F-1 student must have been lawfully enrolled as a full-time student for nine months or one academic year. If a student falls out of status after being enrolled for nine months and decides to recover status by reentering the United States, the nine-month period begins again when he/she returns.

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