

A student who fails to maintain F-1 or M-1 student status should apply for reinstatement with the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS). Examples of how a student may fail to maintain status include:

- Failure to complete the I-20 transfer procedure on time when changing schools or degree programs
- Failure to apply for an extension of program before I-20 expires
- Failure to complete a full course of study during a given semester (without a valid exception per DHS regulations)

**QUALIFICATIONS** – A non-immigrant alien who has failed to maintain status may apply for reinstatement to lawful status at the discretion of DHS, but only under limited conditions specified in immigration regulations.

An application for reinstatement may be considered if the following can be proved:

- You have not been out of status for more than five (5) months
- You do not have a record of repeat violations
- You are pursuing, or will in the next available term, a full course of study
- You are not (or have not been) engaged in unauthorized employment
- You are not deportable on any grounds other than the status violation
- The status violation was beyond your control, or failure to timely submit a Program Extension

**PENDING REINSTATEMENT** – You are not in legal F-1/M-1 status until your application for reinstatement is approved.

**School Attendance:** An applicant for reinstatement to F-1/M-1 status must maintain full-time academic enrollment while the application is pending.

**Employment Benefits:** No F-1 employment benefits are available until the reinstatement is approved; M-1 students are not allowed to work at all.

**TRAVEL** – As an alternative to applying for reinstatement in the U.S., you may opt to travel and re-enter the U.S. using a new “initial attendance” I-20. Please note that this type of travel can restrict your eligibility for practical training. Please consult with the International Student & Scholar Services Office to discuss this option further.

**HOW TO APPLY** – Please make an appointment with the ISSS Office and bring the following documents with you to your appointment:

- Check or money order, payable to Department of Homeland Security ([check current fee here](#))
- I-94 card (original) (be sure to make a copy of the front & back of the card for yourself to keep)
- personal letter explaining your situation and requesting reinstatement (original; **be sure to sign the letter**)
- Form I-539: <http://www.uscis.gov/files/form/i-539.pdf>  
(on part 2, Question 1A, write “reinstatement to F1 status”; on part 3, question #1, write “D/S”)
- new original F-1 I-20 issued for reinstatement\*
- SEVIS Fee Payment Receipt (**required if you have been “out of status” more than 5 months**)  
[www.fmjfee.com](http://www.fmjfee.com)
- passport with visa (photocopies)
- proof of financial support (original or photocopy)
- copy of academic transcripts (this can be an unofficial copy)
- All previously issued I-20’s (photocopies)
- dependent’s documentation (if applicable – passport, I-20, I-94) (photocopies)

The word "**REINSTATEMENT**" should be written at the top of the form to further distinguish it from other uses of Form I-539.

\*A new I-20 for Reinstatement will be issued, and copies of your documents will be made at your appointment and.

**SUGGESTIONS FOR PERSONAL LETTER** – A strong letter should establish convincingly why you are out of status by specifically stating the violation, and the reason(s) you are in violation. State how failure to receive reinstatement approval will affect

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you; state that you are currently pursuing or intending to pursue a full course of study and specifically request that the Department of Homeland Security reinstate you to student status. Be sure to state that you have not violated any other immigration regulations and have not been employed without proper authorization.

**PROCESSING THE REINSTATEMENT** – Once your application is complete and has been reviewed by the ISSS Office, it will be submitted to the Vermont Service Center for adjudication. If you decide to mail the reinstatement application yourself, the ISSS Office would advise you to send your packet “certified mail; return receipt requested”. This allows you to track your application during the mail process and ensures proof that you sent your application and that it was received. Regardless of who sends the reinstatement application, the following materials must be sent in this order:

Mailing Address: USCIS - Vermont Service Center  
ATTN: I-539  
75 Lower Weldon Street  
St. Albans, VT 05479

In a few weeks you will receive a Notice of Action from the Service Center. This notice lets you know that the Service Center has received your application; it does not mean that your application has been approved. Read this notice carefully. If the Service Center is requesting further information, gather what is asked and see the ISSS Office; pay strict attention to given deadlines.

**The reinstatement process can take a few months to be acted upon. You must be attending school full-time and stay in compliance with all F-1/M-1 student regulations. Failure to do so can result in the denial of your application. When you receive your final adjudication letter, bring your returned documents to the ISSS Office so that your immigration records can be adjusted accordingly and a copy made for your student file.**