



Reinstatement to F-1 Visa Status

F-1 students can fall out of status with the CIS in several ways. These include dropping below a full course of study, working without authorization or more than the weekly limit, allowing their I-20 to expire (line 5c), or failing to follow transfer procedures from one school to another, etc. Being out of status means that a student will no longer be eligible for benefits such as practical training, on-campus employment, co-op, or transfer to another school. It also means that once the student travels out of the country they will be unable to re-enter on their current I-20. Under SEVIS International Services is required to report your failure to maintain status to the CIS.

One option in order to get back in status with CIS is to apply for reinstatement. An application is sent into the district office of CIS where an officer will decide whether or not to reinstate the student based on the information provided in the application. The officer is looking for circumstances beyond the student's control and that the student was not working illegally. Students who are not granted reinstatement are required to return home immediately. Understand that there is some risk involved in the reinstatement process.

You will only be considered for reinstatement as an F-1 student if you establish that the violation of status was due solely to **circumstances beyond your control** or that failure to reinstate you would result in extreme hardship; you are pursuing or will pursue a full course of study; you have not been employed without authorization; and you are not in removal (deportation) hearings.

The application for reinstatement must contain the following items:

- I-539 form**
- Cover letter of explanation & any supporting documentation**
 - 'Dear Immigration Officer'
 - If possible include, 'have not worked without authorization'
- Original I-94 form**
- Financial documents– less than 1 yr. old**
- Check or Money order for \$300**
 - made out to 'Department of Homeland Security'
- Photocopies of all old I-20's**
- Certified transcripts from ALL schools attended in the U.S.**
- Copy of biographic page of the passport**
- Official evidence of current enrollment**
- SEVIS fee (I-901) - \$100 & receipt – except in come cases**
- New I-20 for reinstatement- ISSS will do this**
- Support letter from ISSS Advisor**

International Services will mail the application to CIS for you, and notify you of the response once it arrives.

It usually takes CIS at least three months to make a decision.

An alternative to the reinstatement process is to exit the United States and return on a new, initial attendance I-20 from Georgia State University. This "closes the book" on the student's previous status and the student will "start over" with a new record in the US. Although the USVISIT system is still new, in the future all I-20 records for a student will be tracked and border officials will have a clear picture of the violations that caused a student to violate their status and require reinstatement by travel. Another drawback to this process, besides the costly plane ticket, is that students will have to wait two academic terms before they are eligible for many F-1 benefits. If you wish to pursue this option, please discuss it with an advisor.