

Reinstatement to F-1 Status

F-1 visa holders are subject to specific responsibilities while studying in the United States. (A brief outline of your rights and responsibilities is included on the back of the SEVIS checklist, which all of North Park's international students must complete every semester.) If you have failed to maintain your F-1 status for any reason, it is your responsibility to speak with the International Office to discuss your options for regaining valid F-1 status. Two options exist:

1. **Apply for Reinstatement to F-1 Status:** You will submit an application for reinstatement from within the United States and pay an application fee.
2. **Leave the U.S. and reenter on a New Form I-20:** You will travel outside of the United States and reenter on a new I-20, with a new SEVIS ID number.

Both of these options carry risk, and neither reinstatement nor reentry are guaranteed. Please discuss your options with the International Office and, if you wish, with an immigration attorney.

Reinstatement to F-1 Status

In order for you to apply for reinstatement, all of the following must be true:

- Your status violation did not involve unauthorized employment
- You have not been out of status for more than five months
- You continue to be full-time enrolled in your program of study
- You are not deportable from the U.S. on any grounds other than the status violation for which you are requesting reinstatement
- You do not have a record of repeated violations
- Your status violation resulted from circumstances beyond your control or you failed to apply in a timely fashion for a reduced course load that would otherwise have been approved by the DSO.

As of summer 2012, you should use the online ELIS system (Electronic Immigration Service) to apply for reinstatement. ELIS is run by U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services.

1. Go to www.uscis.gov and click on the "ELIS" button on the right hand side.
2. Create an online account (this may take several hours, as you have to wait to receive a password by email).
3. Select "Application to Extend/Change Nonimmigrant Status."
4. Complete your personal information
 - a. In the address field, make sure you don't use any special characters; write "West Foster" for your street *name*, for example, not "W. Foster."
 - b. For the question "What was your immigration status at the time of your most recent arrival into the United States?" select F1 from the drop down menu.
 - c. In the section about Arrival/Departure Record, enter the number from your I-94 card. If your I-94 card is marked "D/S" for Duration of Status, leave blank the question about expiration date.
 - d. For the question "Do you have an alien registration number?" answer NO.
5. At the section labeled "Benefit Request Type," select "I am seeking reinstatement to student status."
6. In the section labeled "Eligibility Information," answer NO to the question, "Are you filing this benefit request for status based on a Principal Alien's nonimmigrant status?"
7. Upload the following supporting documents, following the online instructions:
 - a. A letter to USCIS, explaining that the violation of your status resulted from circumstances beyond your control or, if you failed to apply in a timely fashion for a reduced course load, that the RCL would have been approved and that not being granted reinstatement would cause severe hardship to you. Also indicate that you are continuing to pursue a full course of study at North Park University.

- b. Current financial documents, showing that you can pay for your tuition and living expenses. If you are receiving a scholarship from North Park, a statement of award, printed from WebAdvisor, can serve as one of your financial documents.
 - c. Copy of your valid passport
 - d. Copy of your I-94 card, front and back
 - e. Copy of new I-20, prepared for reinstatement
 - f. Any additional documents you think might help your case (transcript from North Park, current/next semester course schedule, etc.)
8. Pay your \$290 application fee online.
 9. Confirm all of your answers, and press the “e-sign” button.

Please note:

- A decision to reinstate an individual to F-1 student status is at the discretion of USCIS.
- Processing times vary greatly; you can expect this process to take up to 4 months.
- You may not travel outside of the United States while your application for reinstatement is pending!
- You are not eligible for any F-1 student benefits (such as practical training authorization or working on campus) until USCIS reinstates your F-1 student status.
- You must come to the International Office with the results of your application when you receive them from USCIS.
- If your request for reinstatement is denied:
 - The visa that you used to enter the United States is automatically cancelled.
 - You may apply for all future non-immigrant visas only in your country of citizenship or permanent residence.
 - You must leave the United States immediately. If you remain in the U.S. for more than 180 days, you will be barred from returning to the U.S. for three years. If you remain in the U.S. after the denial for one year or more, you will be barred from returning to the U.S. for ten years.

Reentry on a New I-20

In some situations, students may choose to depart the United States and reenter the country using a new I-20 (including a new SEVIS ID number), rather than applying for reinstatement. (This is your only option if termination of your F-1 status resulted from unauthorized employment.) If you are considering this option, you must be aware of the following:

- Reentry to the U.S. with a new I-20 after a status violation is viewed as a new entry in F-1 status. This means that you will no longer be eligible for any benefits (such as practical training and economic hardship work authorization) that require a one academic year waiting period.
- You must have a valid F-1 visa in your passport prior to reentry to the United States.
- Because you will be entering on a new “Initial” I-20, you may enter the U.S. only 30 days prior to the start of the next academic term.
- You may not depart to and reenter from Canada, Mexico, or an adjacent Caribbean island unless you stay outside of the U.S. for more than 30 days. Stays of 30 or fewer days in one of these countries does not count as an official departure from the U.S. for the purpose of reentry on a new I-20.
- Your reentry to the United States is not guaranteed. A prior SEVIS record, with indication of previous violations of F-1 status, may show up in government databases, even if you are using a new SEVIS ID number. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) officials have the right to permit or deny your reentry.

Please sign here, indicating that you have read this information sheet and understand the risks of applying for reinstatement and/or reentering the U.S. on a new SEVIS I-20.

Students Signature: _____

Date: _____