



This handout should *only be used as a guide* to apply for reinstatement of your F-1 student status from the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS). Please schedule a 1:1 appointment with your International Student and Scholar Services (ISS) advisor before applying for reinstatement by calling ISS front desk at 312.362.8376.

It is very important that you consult with your ISS advisor and file the reinstatement application with USCIS (assuming you qualify) **as soon as possible** to help avoid accruing any unlawful stay. If it has been more than 5 months since your status violation, please consult an immigration attorney right away.

If you have violated the terms and conditions of your F-1 student status, you may make a reinstatement request to USCIS only if you establish to the satisfaction of USCIS the following:

- The violation of status was due solely to circumstances beyond your control or that failure to reinstate you would result in extreme hardship;
- You do not have a record of repeated or willful violations of regulations;
- You are pursuing or will pursue a full course of study at DePaul University;
- You have not been employed without authorization;
- You are not in removal proceedings; and
- You have not been out of status for more than 5 months at the time of filing the request for reinstatement. If it has been more than 5 months since your status violation, please consult an immigration attorney right away.

ALL individuals applying for reinstatement to F-1 student status MUST first meet the following requirements:

- ✓ MUST be a DePaul University student in a degree program or the English Language Academy (ELA).
- ✓ MUST have an original DePaul University SEVIS I-20 document.
- ✓ MUST have current financial documents verifying availability of adequate funds to cover tuition and living expenses for at least one academic year. Bank letters/statements must not be older than 6 months.

TO APPLY FOR REINSTATEMENT OF F-1 STUDENT STATUS YOU MUST SUBMIT THE FOLLOWING TO USCIS:

- ❑ Money order(s) payable to the **U.S. Department of Homeland Security** for the appropriate USCIS filing fee as well as the biometric fee. For the latest information, including the exact amounts, please visit USCIS link: <https://www.uscis.gov/i-539>.
- ❑ A **completed Form I-539**. You may also download the fillable Form I-539 from the USCIS website at <https://www.uscis.gov/i-539>. If you have any dependents, you must also complete the supplement page. As USCIS will send their response back to the mailing address listed on the I-539, please make sure the address used will be valid for at least the next several months. If you think you may change your U.S. home address while your reinstatement application is pending with USCIS, please list **c/o** someone else's address or your P.O. Box address in the U.S. mailing address field. Note, USCIS does not forward mail when applicants move. Please have an immigration attorney review your completed I-539 form, including Part 5: Public Benefits section. Your ISS advisor can refer you to an immigration attorney, if you do not have one.
- ❑ **Cover letter** issued by your ISS advisor.
- ❑ **Personal statement** signed by you explaining why you violated the terms of your non-immigrant status and why failure to receive an approval of your application for reinstatement would cause you undue hardship. Your letter should be brief and to the point.

- ❑ Copy of SEVIS **I-20 form** indicating “Reinstatement” from DePaul University signed by you and your ISS advisor.
- ❑ CLEAR copies of **financial documents** verifying that you have adequate funds to cover your study and living expenses for at least one academic year. If you have a financial sponsor, please include an affidavit of support signed by your sponsor establishing your relationship to each other and the financial contribution.
- ❑ Proof of **current class registration** (print-out of full-time enrollment summary in Campus Connect).
- ❑ Copy of your **SEVIS fee receipt** (showing that you already paid it). In some cases, a student who is issued an initial Form I-20 on or after September 1, 2004, will be required to show proof of payment of the SEVIS fee upon submission of a Reinstatement application. For more information, visit <https://www.fmjfee.com>. You may also discuss the applicability of this fee to your individual case when you meet with an ISS advisor during a Reinstatement appointment.
- ❑ CLEAR copies of pages containing the following in **your passport**: name, bio-data, photograph, passport number and expiration date, and most recently issued **visa** that you used to last re-enter the U.S. Do **not send your original passport** to USCIS.
- ❑ Print-out of your **I-94 card** information: <https://www.cbp.gov/travel/international-visitors/i-94>

You should mail your application to the appropriate USCIS service center (refer to USCIS website: <https://www.uscis.gov/i-539-addresses> for the correct address) using a **fast and trackable mailing service** like Priority Express, certified USPS mail, FedEx, UPS, or DHL. Please do not use regular USPS mail, as it may take too long and/or get lost in the mail. We recommend that you make a copy of your entire application for your own records. Please also remember to **provide your ISS advisor with a copy of the FedEx/UPS/DHL or certified mail receipt** and track the delivery of your application.

Once you receive a **receipt notice for your reinstatement application** from USCIS (typically within 30 days), **please remember to provide your ISS advisor with a copy**. Expect to wait at least 3 - 4 months or longer for a decision from USCIS. You may track the status of your application on USCIS website: <https://egov.uscis.gov/processing-times/>.

If USCIS issues a **request for evidence (RFE) notice**, please contact ISS right away and schedule an appointment with your ISS advisor, so they can help you review/respond to the RFE in a timely manner. If USCIS approves your reinstatement application, ISS will be able to re-issue a new SEVIS I-20 for you.

USCIS requires all Form I-539 applicants and co-applicants to attend an appointment, where biometrics such as fingerprints will be collected. For more information on **how to prepare for your biometric service appointment**, please review link: <https://www.uscis.gov/forms/forms-information/preparing-your-biometric-services-appointment>. Biometrics appointments will be scheduled at USCIS Application Support Centers (ACS). To find ACS closest to you please use this link: <https://egov.uscis.gov/office-locator/#/asc>

PLEASE NOTE: You cannot travel outside of the U.S. until you receive an answer to your reinstatement application. If you should leave the U.S. before USCIS decides on your case, your application will be considered abandoned. This "abandonment of petition," as termed by USCIS, could result in further complications of your nonimmigrant status.

OBTAINING LAWFUL F-1 STATUS THROUGH TRAVEL: If you would like to learn how to regain lawful F-1 status by leaving the U.S. and making a new lawful entry to the U.S. in F-1 student status, please schedule an appointment with your ISS advisor before making any travel arrangements. **If it has been more than 5 months since your status violation, please also consult an immigration attorney before leaving the U.S.** Depending on the duration of your unlawful presence in the U.S., you may not be able to re-enter the U.S.