

# Loss of F-1 Status and Options for Regaining F-1 Status

If you have not maintained your F-1 student status, your SEVIS record will be terminated and you will lose your F-1 status. While out of status, you are not eligible for any F-1 benefits, such as on-campus work, Curricular Practical Training (CPT), or Severe Economic Hardship (SEH) work authorization.

## There are two ways for an F-1 student to regain F-1 status:

- **Travel and re-entry** the US on a new, initial I-20
- Apply to USCIS for **reinstatement** to F-1 status while remaining in the U.S.

These two options are outlined below.

*Saint Paul College strongly encourages students who have lost F-1 status to consult with an immigration attorney (lawyer) when deciding between reinstatement or travel and re-entry.*

## Travel and Re-Entry

Travel and re-entry to regain F-1 status means leaving the U.S. and re-entering on a new initial I-20. If your F-1 visa is still valid, you do not need to apply for a new F-1 visa. However, you must pay the I-901 SEVIS Fee for your new initial I-20. You will need to provide updated proof of funds (\$28,550) to request a new initial I-20. A re-entry to the U.S. after a status violation is viewed by Immigration as “initial attendance” in F-1 status. This means that you would be subject to waiting one academic year before being eligible for CPT, OPT, or Economic Hardship. If your F-1 visa is expired, you would need to apply for a new F-1 visa outside of the U.S.

## Reinstatement

Instead of travel and re-entry, you may choose to apply to USCIS for reinstatement to F-1 status. When applying for reinstatement, you must establish to the satisfaction of USCIS that you:

- Have not been out of status for more than five months at the time of filing the request for reinstatement (or explain why the reinstatement application could not be filed sooner);
- Do not have a record of repeated or willful violations of immigration regulations;
- Are currently pursuing, or intend to pursue, a full course of study in the immediate future at the school which issued your I-20;
- Have not engaged in any unauthorized employment;
- Are not deportable on any ground other than overstaying or failing to maintain your F-1 status

**You must also be able to establish to the satisfaction of USCIS that:**

- **The violation of status resulted from circumstances beyond your control.** Such circumstances might include serious injury or illness, a natural disaster, or inadvertence, oversight, or neglect on the part of Saint Paul College, but do not include instances where a pattern of repeated

violations or where a willful failure on the part of the student resulted in the need for reinstatement.

- The violation relates to a reduction in your course load that would have been within Saint Paul College's power to authorize, and that failure to approve the reinstatement would result in extreme hardship to you.

**Approval of reinstatement is determined by USCIS.** Students should be aware that applications for reinstatement can be denied and usually cannot be appealed. USCIS may request additional evidence from you during your reinstatement application process. If your reinstatement application is denied, your F-1 entry visa will also be automatically canceled.

Reinstatement applications can take up to 12-18 months for USCIS to adjudicate. While your reinstatement is pending, you must continue to enroll in a full course of study, and purchase the required MinnState health insurance. You may not utilize any F-1 benefits, including on-campus work or CPT or OPT while your reinstatement application is pending.

### **Applying for Reinstatement to F-1 Status:**

You must have all of the below documents/materials to apply for Reinstatement:

- Copy of valid passport
- Copy of visa
- Copy of I-94 record
- Reinstatement I-20 (provided by Saint Paul College International Student Services)
- Copies of all previously-issued I-20s
- Evidence and source of financial support
- Current transcript and transcripts from other U.S. schools previously attended
- Funds for the [USCIS Filing Fee](#) (I-539 fee and biometrics fee)
- A letter requesting reinstatement to F-1 student status which explains your situation truthfully and states that failure to maintain status was due to any or all of the reasons listed above
- Any supporting documentation

Once you have gathered the above documentation, you must apply for reinstatement to USCIS by filing [Form I-539](#). [Form I-539](#) application for reinstatement can be filed online after creating a USCIS Online account, or can be filed by paper mail. Filing online is recommended. If filing by paper mail, it is recommended to also file [Form G-1145](#) so that you can receive electronic notifications regarding your reinstatement application. You should also write "REINSTATEMENT" at the top of Form I-539 if filing by mail.

Mail to:           **USCIS**  
                          **P.O. Box 660166**  
                          **Dallas, TX 75266**

***Saint Paul College strongly encourages students applying for reinstatement to F-1 status to consult with an immigration attorney on their application.***

*Updated: January 2025*