F-1 Reinstatement Checklist

F-1 students who fail to maintain their status have two methods of correcting their status:

A. You may travel out of the U.S. and re-enter with an "initial attendance" I-20. By doing this you are "starting over" with your F-1 visa status. Immigration Services recognizes this method as a valid way to correct your status. If your current visa in your passport is valid, you may not have to apply for a new visa. The penalty for this type of status correction is that you will not be eligible for any kind of off-campus work until after you have returned and maintained your F-1 status for another academic year. To pursue this option, please submit a new Certificate of Financial Responsibility with foreign address section completed, and an updated bank statement for one year of funding, with the prospect of more funding for future years.

B. If you do not wish to leave the U.S., or if it is important for you to be able to pursue F-1 off-campus employment benefits within the next academic year, you may also ask USCIS to pardon your status violation through a procedure called Reinstatement to Student Status.

Procedures for F-1 Reinstatement in the U.S.:

1. Discuss with an International Student Advisor the benefits and drawbacks of options A and B as discussed above.

2. Pick-up an I-539 form and F-1 Reinstatement Checklist. Fill out the form I-539, but leave blank any questions that you are unsure of.

3. Submit a new Certificate of Financial Responsibility and proof that you have funding to support yourself for the upcoming academic year. With your proof of funding, OIPS will issue you a new I-20 for F-1 Reinstatement. Your Reinstatement I-20 should be ready in one week from the time you submit your proof of funding.

4. Order a copy of your transcripts and current course list from GMU through Patriot Web and for all other institutions attended as an F-1 student in the United States.

5. Gather your valid passport, I-94 card and visa, and all of your previously issued I-20 forms make scanned copies of each to submit with your application.

6. Write a letter to the USCIS Student Schools Officer explaining the following:
a. That you are asking for F-1 Reinstatement
b. The reason for the violation of F-1 status and why it was beyond your control
   Along with the explanation, please submit any evidence that supports your explanation (letter from academic advisor, medical excuse, etc.)
c. That you intend to maintain your F-1 status in the future
d. If you have a complex situation, a timeline of events can also be helpful to clarify your situation

F-1 Reinstatement to Student Status Application Items:

- Fee for $290.00 using check or money order to USCIS
- Proof of SEVIS fee payment (I-901). You can reprint from fmjfee.com.
- Completed and signed I-539. Go to USCIS.gov, Forms, for copy of I-539.
- Letter from you requesting F-1 Reinstatement
- Letter from DSO Explaining Reason for Reinstatement
- Copy of New SEVIS I-20 for F-1 Reinstatement, p1 and p2
- Any other support letters (if applicable)
- Copy of I-94 front and back (white card) or printout from cbp.gov
- Copy of your visa in your passport
- Copy(ies) of picture and expiration pages of the passport
- Copy of all previously issued I-20 forms, pp. 1,3 prior to 6/26/15 or pp. 1,2 after that date
- Original transcripts from George Mason University and the transcript of each previously attended school in the U.S. while in F-1 status. A print out of the courses you are currently enrolled in should be included.
- Completed Certificate of Financial Responsibility and Proof of Funding, originals (with currency conversions if in a foreign currency)

Assemble your application and send it within five months of Program Completion or Program Termination to the following Address: USCIS Dallas Lockbox

   U.S. Postal Service:
   USCIS
   P.O. Box 660166
   Dallas, TX 75266

   USPS Express Mail/Courier:
   USCIS
   ATTN: I-539
   2501 S. State Highway 121 Business
   Suite 400
   Lewisville, TX 75067
**After you have filed your Reinstatement Application, you will receive an I-797 Receipt Notice with your Case Number on it in about 2-3 weeks. You can check your case status by going to: USCIS.gov, Check Case Status.

**Once you have received your notification that you have been “Reinstated to Student Status,” please see an OIPS Advisor for next steps. You may attend school while you are waiting for your case to be adjudicated, but you may not work on or off campus.