EXTENSION OF STAY FOR F-1 STUDENTS

What is an “Extension of Stay”? 

If you will not complete your academic program by the Program End Date found in the Program of Study section of your current I-20, you must file for an Extension of Stay and receive a new I-20 with a new completion date. This must be done before your current I-20 expires.

When should I apply for the Extension of Stay? 

We recommend that you submit your application to our office 30–90 days before the completion date on your current I-20. Note: The earliest that we can accept your application is 90 days before the Program End Date on your current I-20.

• Your extension request must be made and granted prior to the Program End Date found in the Program of Study section of your current I-20. Immigration regulations do not allow granting an extension to a student who requests the extension after the expected Program End Date on the current I-20. Failure to file a timely application will therefore result in loss of F-1 status.

• How does this affect the timing of my application? Since large numbers of students will request an Extension of Stay in the weeks prior to February 1st, June 1st and September 1st, we recommend that you submit to ISSS your complete Extension of Stay application several weeks before your current I-20 expires. Note: We cannot guarantee that your information will be entered into the SEVIS system before your Program End Date unless you submit your documents to us at least one week in advance.

Who is eligible for an Extension of Stay? 

To be eligible for an extension of stay, you must show that:

• You are currently in valid F-1 student status AND
• You have maintained F-1 status and continually been a full-time student AND
• You are making normal progress towards completing your course of study AND
• The delay in completion was caused by compelling academic or medical reasons
  For example:
  o Change of major or research topic
  o Unexpected research problems
  o Loss of credits upon transfer to the University at Buffalo
  o Documented illness
Note: Delays due to academic probation or suspension do not qualify for an extension.

Note: If you are extending due to delays caused by a medical issue, you must submit medical documentation.

How do I apply for an Extension of Stay?

To apply for an extension, submit the following documents to ISSS, Talbert Hall 210 prior to the Program End Date on your current I-20:

- International Student Information Form (attached)
- Academic Advisor’s Recommendation Form (attached)
- Financial documentation (see attached guidelines)
  ISSS will calculate the total amount of financial support that you must document for an Extension of Stay depending upon the number of credit hours you need to complete your program and the number of months / semesters you require to finish your program.
- Register as a full-time student in the next semester

Will I receive a new I-20?

Yes. After we receive your complete Extension of Stay application, ISSS will extend your SEVIS record and create a new I-20 with a revised Program End Date.

Please keep your new I-20 with all of your previous I-20’s. Do not throw away your old I-20’s as they are an important piece of your immigration history!

You should carry all of your I-20’s when traveling because you may be required to present them as proof of your immigration history.