

University of Alabama at Birmingham
International Recruitment and Student Services

Extension of Program of Study

Purpose

This handout is designed for students in F-1 or J-1 student status. It will provide you with basic understanding of (1) the limitations placed by regulations of the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) upon the length of time you may be enrolled in a program of study and (2) the procedures you must follow if you require additional time to complete program requirements. Consult with staff in International Recruitment and Student Services (IRSS) if you believe the time limitations placed upon your study are insufficient to allow you to complete your current program.

Duration of Status

You have been admitted to the U.S. for “duration of status”, which is defined as:

1. The time during which you are pursuing a full course of study and making normal progress toward completing that course plus;
2. The time you may be working in authorized “practical training” after you complete studies (if you qualify and are so authorized) plus;
3. 60 days to depart the country.

The DHS grants duration of status to students by entering the notation “D/S” in the upper right corners of both the F-1 form I-20 or J-1 form DS-2019 and the “Departure Record” (Form I-94).

Limitations of Duration of Status

The “completion of studies” date in item #5 on the most recent DHS Form I-20 you were issued is the date by which the DHS expects you to complete requirements for your current program. If you are unable to complete your program of study by that date, consult with your immigration advisor at least 30 days before reaching the I-20 completion date. If you are eligible for an extension of your time limit, your advisor will assist you to comply with extension requirements.

Eligibility Requirements for Program Extension

You may apply for an extension of your program of study if:

1. You have not yet exceeded the time limitation placed upon your study by the expected completion of studies date in item #5 on your I-20, AND
2. You have continuously maintained lawful F-1 status, AND
3. The delay in completing program requirements has been caused by compelling academic reasons (such as changes of major field or research topics, or unexpected research problems), or compelling and documented medical reasons. Delays in completing program requirements, which are caused by academic probation or suspension, are not acceptable reasons for extension of a program of study.

If your completion of studies date has expired or if you do not meet the eligibility requirements to apply for program extension, you may need to apply for “reinstatement” to lawful F-1 status. In this case, immediate consultation with your immigration advisor is necessary.

Application Deadline for Extension of a Study Program

You must apply for an extension within the 30-day period before the completion date on your I-20. You should contact staff in IRSS at least 30 days before your I-20 completion date so that you will have

sufficient time to prepare your application. If your completion date has already passed, please contact staff in ISSS immediately.

Application Procedures

1. Academic Advisor's Recommendation for an Extension Form must be completed by your academic advisor. Your immigration advisor will require this form. If a letter is substituted, it should normally (1) certify that you have been continuously enrolled for a full course of study, (2) recommend an extension of your study program, (3) provide a new date when you are expected to complete your studies and/or (4) verify the reason(s) for a delay in your completion of program requirements.
2. **Updated financial support documents.** If your financial support documents are more than 12 months old, you will be required to provide new funding information.

Failure to Comply with Program Extension Regulations

It is your responsibility to comply with all immigration regulations that apply to F-1 students, including the extension of study program regulations discussed in this handout. Staff in the IRSS will assist you with this. If your I-20 completion of studies date will soon expire or if it has expired, you are urged to immediately contact your immigration advisor. If you fail to comply with your responsibilities, you may not be eligible to continue (or to apply for) benefits provided to F-1 students. For example, you may not be eligible to continue any type of employment (even on-campus employment) or apply for school transfer, practical training or other F-1 benefits.

Further information

Additional information on your permission to remain in the U.S., as well as counseling and assistance, is available from the IRSS. Staff of IRSS are pleased to offer information on all federal regulations related to maintaining your student status.

UNIVERSITY OF ALABAMA AT BIRMINGHAM
International Recruitment & Student Services

ACADEMIC ADVISOR'S RECOMMENDATION
FOR
EXTENSION OF TIME LIMITATION FOR A PROGRAM OF STUDY

Student Name: _____

Student Number: _____

Previous Date of Expected Completion: _____

Email Address: _____

Academic Advisor: This form is provided to facilitate the communication of certain information required by regulations of the Department of Homeland Security. Its completion is needed for a student in F-1/J-1 status to be granted an extension of the time limitation placed by the DHS upon the student's current program of study. Any questions you have may be directed to the Immigration Advisor at 934-3328. Please complete this form in full and return it to the Immigration Advisor, International Recruitment and Student Services, 1600 10th Ave South, Birmingham, AL 35294-1280.

1. This student will complete requirements for his/her current program on or about: _____
(M/D/Y)

2. This student has not yet completed the current program of study due to
(Please check all reasons which apply)
- Delay caused by a change in major field of study
 - Delay caused by a change in research topic
 - Delay caused by unexpected research problems
 - Delay caused by lost credits upon transfer to our school
 - No unusual delay. The original length of time given to complete studies was not reasonable for an average student in this program
 - Other (please explain on the reverse side of this form)

I therefore recommend that this student be allowed additional time to complete his/her studies.

Academic Advisor's Signature: _____
(School of Public Health Students Must Get Signature of Academic Dean)

Name and Title (please print): _____

Department (please print): _____

Date: _____