Loss of Status

An F-1 international student who has failed to maintain his or her immigration status may request reinstatement from the U.S. Citizenship & Immigration Services (USCIS). The USCIS has the discretion to reinstate students to lawful immigration status. In order to obtain valid F-1 student status, a student may file for reinstatement inside the United States or travel abroad to regain status. Generally speaking, the USCIS will reinstate a student to lawful F-1 student status if:

1. The violation of status was due to circumstances beyond the student’s control OR failure to be reinstated would result in extreme hardship to the student AND
2. The student is currently pursuing a full-time course of study AND
3. The student has not engaged in unauthorized employment AND
4. The student has not been out-of-status for more than 5 months.

Applying for Reinstatement inside the United States

If applying for a reinstatement without leaving the United States, you will need to prepare the following:

- Download and Completed Form I-539 (www.uscis.gov/i-539)
- Check or money order for $370.00 payable to the Department of Homeland Security. You may also be subject to a biometrics fee.
- Complete copies of all previous form I-20s
- Original financial documentation for new Form I-20
- Original Form I-94. You may download yours here: https://i94.cbp.dhs.gov/I94
- Photo copy of passport and visa (If you are a Canadian citizen, you may enclose a copy of your citizenship card or a birth certificate & a government-issued photo ID)
- Form I-901 (proof that you have paid the SEVIS fee) www.fmjfee.com/i901fee
  - If you have been out of status more than 5 months, a receipt for the payment of a new SEVIS Fee is required. www.ice.gov/sevis/i901/
- A cover letter from you explaining your circumstance. Be sure to address the above-mentioned criteria.
- Copy of academic transcripts

An International Student Advisor will review your documents and prepare a new Form I20 for the Reinstatement application. Once reviewed and prepared, an advisor will notify you. Please review the application carefully and sign the updated I-20. You will mail the application to designated United States Citizenship & Immigration Services (USCIS) office. Be advised that Reinstatement application can take nine to twelve months to process.

After the reinstatement application is filed, you may continue to attend school while the application is pending. However, you may not begin an assistantship or engage in any on- or off-campus employment until your reinstatement application is approved by USCIS. Currently it takes nine to twelve months for USCIS to adjudicate such applications.
1. Mail your application to the following address by a trackable mailing service to the USCIS Dallas Lockbox.

For U.S. Postal Service (USPS):  
USCIS  
P.O. Box 660166 Dallas, TX 75266

For FedEx, UPS, and DHL deliveries:  
USCIS ATTN: I-539  
2501 S. State Highway 121 Business  
Suite 400  
Lewisville, TX 7506

Travelling Abroad to Regain Status
If you plan to travel abroad to obtain a new F-1 visa, you should present the following required documents, to the U.S. Consulate in your home country:

- Initial Form I-20 from the Office of International Education
- proof of financial support
- evidence of non-immigrant intent
- the visa application forms DS-160, available at the U.S. consulate or online here (look for the Forms & Fees section): \https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas.html\n- two photographs
- visa processing fee receipt (separate from the SEVIS fee receipt)
- valid passport

Please be advised that you may be subject to an additional security check that might delay the visa application process by a month or more.

You will also need to present the I-20 form to the Immigration official at the port of entry when you arrive in the U.S. Your passport should be valid six months longer than you expect to be in the U.S. and should be renewed in a timely manner. If entering the U.S. by land from Canada or Mexico, there is a $7.00 (U.S.) fee for the I-94 card that will be issued at the U.S. border and stamped by an Immigration inspector. For more information please access the following website for a list of U.S. Consulates and a description of the F-1 visa application procedures at each: \https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas.html\.

When you enter the United States, an immigration officer will return the Form I-20 to you, after stamping the upper right corner of that form, and stapling Form I-94 to it or to your passport. Retain the form; it is the record of your stay in the U.S. as an international student. You will need it for re-entries to the U.S., for practical training authorizations, or for transfers to another
school. If the officer does not return the form to you, let us know and we will issue you a replacement I-20 when you arrive on campus.

To maintain your student status, you must enter the U.S. using the I-20 form issued by the institution where you intend to enroll by the start date listed on the form. You must be enrolled as a full-time student (except for vacation periods) and not accept unauthorized employment off campus. F-1 students are allowed to work on campus up to 20 hours per week and fulltime during vacation periods. Note that off-campus employment is authorized either by the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) or Immigration Services on campus through application procedures, and only in very limited circumstances. Please see your international advisor before accepting any employment or volunteer positions. You must also notify our office within 10 days of any change in your address, or your academic program, while in the U.S.

**Important Items of Note**

We urge you to read all emails from the International Student Immigration Listserv. The bulletins are an excellent way to ensure you will be notified of any pertinent changes to U.S. immigration regulations, and also of any programming or upcoming events sponsored by our office.

**U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (C.I.S.) requires students and their dependents to check in with Immigration Services and have their immigration documents reviewed.** All internationals coming to UGA are required to complete the online check-in with the international office within 30 days of their program start date. Failure to check-in may result in a hold being placed on your registration for subsequent terms and a loss of your legal student status.

If you have any questions, please contact the Office of Global Engagement. You may set up an appointment with an International Student Advisor to discuss your case further. Please call the front desk at (706) 542-2900, or email immigration@uga.edu to set up an appointment. We look forward to working with you on your case.