Change of Degree Level (F-1 Students)

If you begin a new degree program at a higher degree level next semester, you will need to notify the Office of International Services once you are admitted to that program. Students usually change to a higher degree level (e.g., Bachelor’s degree to Master’s degree; Master’s degree to PhD); however, if you start a new program at the same degree level, let us know.

If you plan to start a new program at another institution in the United States, you will need to have your SEVIS record transferred to that school. Please review our Transfer Out Fact Sheet on how to get an I-20 from another U.S. institution.

F-1 students must request an I-20 for their new program before the end of their 60-day grace period. F-1 students must also begin classes in their new program within 5 months of completing their current program.

What information is required for OIS to create a Change of Degree Level I-20?

- Offer of admission to new program:
  - Your department will upload a copy of the admissions letter in My OIS, which will notify OIS that you have been admitted to the new program.
  - If you decide not to attend this program, you do not need to submit the ‘Change of Level I-20’ request in My OIS.
- Financial documentation to show that you can cover the estimated tuition and living costs for the first year of your new program.
  - Check the most recent OIS’ estimates for undergraduate and graduate students.
- Digital copy of your F-1 visa stamp
- Digital copy of your I-94 record
- You do NOT need to pay the SEVIS fee again.

How can I request an I-20 for my new program?
OIS will email you to inform you that we have received the admissions letter from your new program. Then you can submit the “Change of Degree I-20” e-form in My OIS.

- Log in to My OIS using your Pitt Username and Password.
- In the "Admission to Orientation" tab, click “Change of Level I-20”.
- Submit the "Change of Level I-20" form.
- If you have submitted all proper documentation, the OIS will create an I-20 for your new degree program in five to seven business days.

Can I travel outside the U.S. before I start my new program?

- You can travel outside of the United States and re-enter before the start of your new academic program if you have received the I-20 for your new program from the OIS.
  - When travelling, bring your I-20(s) from your previous program, and your I-20(s) from your new program, when you re-enter the United States.
- If you are considering travelling outside of the U.S., please review OIS' travel information website.
Can I still use my current visa stamp?
- If your current F-1 visa stamp is valid, then you can continue to use it until the expiration date.
- Your SEVIS number will remain the same, and you won’t need a new F-1 visa stamp, but we need to work together to create a new I-20.

Can I work in between my two programs of study?
- Students can work on-campus at Pitt in between programs if they have received the I-20 from OIS for their new program.
  - For example, if you are finishing one program in the spring and starting a new program in the fall, you can work on campus at Pitt during the summer break more than 20 hours per week.
- If you are currently on OPT/STEM OPT, your OPT/STEM OPT ends on the earlier of two dates:
  - the day your EAD card expires, OR
  - the day BEFORE your new program starts at Pitt.

If you have additional specific questions about transferring out, please email or schedule an appointment to discuss with your Immigration Specialist.