F-1 and J-1 Student Program Extension Guidelines and FAQs

Students in F-1 and J-1 visa status may request a program extension to their I-20 or DS-2019 end date if they have a valid academic reason for needing more time to complete their program.

Who is eligible?

The federal government stipulates that students must be making normal progress towards degree completion to receive an extension of their I-20 or DS-2019 end date.

- OIS can extend an I-20 or DS-2019 if a student needs more time to complete required courses, fulfill requirements for a minor/certificate, or complete their thesis or dissertation.

- OIS cannot extend an immigration document if the student has repeatedly failed courses or has completed all their academic requirements and wants to take more non-required credits.

- Program extensions can only be granted prior to the I-20 or DS-2019 end date. OIS cannot grant an extension after a student is in their grace period.

How do I submit a Program Extension request?

- OIS recommends applying at least a month before your I-20 or DS-2019 expires.
  - OIS also recommends that students discuss their Program Extension request with their academic advisor or departmental representative before submitting the e-form.

- Students must submit the “Program Extension” e-form in My OIS under the “F-1 Students” or “J-1 Students” tabs.
  - As part of the process, students must list appropriate contact information for their academic advisor or departmental representative.
  - The student’s academic advisor or departmental representative must complete a separate part of the e-form to explain why the student needs more time to complete their program.
  - NOTE: Program Extension requests are not complete without the advisor’s portion.
  - NOTE: J-1 students must upload updated financial documentation to the “Program Extension” e-form.

- After receiving the academic advisor or departmental representative’s input, OIS will review the e-form within 5 to 7 business days.

- If OIS approves the request, OIS will create a new I-20 / DS-2019 with an updated end date.
  - I-20s: Students will receive a digitally signed I-20.
  - DS-2019s: Students will work with their Immigration Specialist to receive their DS-2019.
FAQs:

Do I need a new visa stamp if my current visa stamp expires before my updated I-20 or DS-2019 end date?

- No. You can remain in the U.S. with an expired visa stamp. The I-20 or DS-2019 determines how long a student can remain in the U.S., provided that the student is maintaining their immigration status.
- A valid visa is required at the border for re-entry into the U.S., with some very specific exceptions. Review OIS’ Travel website for more information about international travel in F-1 or J-1 status.

Can I extend my program to a summer term end date?

- Yes. However, you will be required to enroll in the summer term. You must enroll full-time, or have an approved reduced course load, for your final summer term.
- OIS will confirm your enrollment in the summer term via your PeopleSoft record before extending your I-20 or DS-2019 end date.

Can I request a Program Extension after I have already applied for post-completion OPT?

- Since an OPT request is directly tied to the I-20 end date, it is very difficult to extend your I-20 end date if you have already submitted your post-completion OPT application to USCIS.
  - If you are in this situation, contact your Immigration Specialist immediately for guidance.
- For this reason, OIS strongly recommends you carefully consider your I-20 end date prior to requesting OPT.

Do I need to re-verify my I-9 for on-campus work once I get an extension?

- Yes. You will need to re-verify your I-9 if you want to work beyond your original I-20 or DS-2019 end date. Students should reach out to their hiring department and/or Human Resources for details on this process.

If I need an extension, but I don’t have enough remaining courses left to be full-time in my final term, what do I do?

- Please make sure your academic advisor or departmental contact knows that you will be taking less than a full-time course of study in your final term. They can note this in their section of the Program Extension e-form.
- You may also request a final term Reduced Course Load authorization separately.

Do J-1 students have special requirements for Program Extensions?

- Yes. J-1 students also need to upload updated financial information, as part of their Program Extension e-form.

If you have specific questions about F-1 or J-1 student Program Extensions, please reach out to your Immigration Specialist.