

# Program Extension

## EXTENDING YOUR FORM I-20

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If you are in F-1 status, you have been granted permission to stay in the U.S. for “D/S,” which stands for “Duration of Status.” This means that you have permission to stay in the U.S. until the expiration date on your Form I-20 or the completion of your program of study, whichever comes first, plus a 60-day grace period (plus any authorized period of optional practical training after completion of a program). You must be pursuing a full course of study and making normal progress towards completing the course of study indicated on your Form I-20. If you are not going to be able to finish your program by the end date on your Form I-20, you must apply for an extension of stay in order to remain in legal status. Extensions may only be authorized if the reason for the delay satisfies the legal requirements for an extension as set forth in the U.S. immigration regulations.

### **HOW TO APPLY FOR AN EXTENSION**

- ✓ Complete sections A and B of the Program Extension Application
- ✓ Submit the completed Program Extension Application to the OIE no sooner than 120 days and no later than 30 days prior to the expiration date on your Form I-20

Once the OIE has received your application, we will review your case to determine whether or not you meet the legal eligibility requirements for an extension of your Form I-20. If you meet all legal requirements, the OIE will issue a new Form I-20 with a new program completion/expiration date. You will be asked to come in and sign the Form I-20. The new Form I-20 replaces all previous Forms I-20 and becomes your current, valid, legal document.

*Note:* You should NOT throw away old Forms I-20, because the Bureau of Citizenship & Immigration Services (BCIS) commonly asks for copies of old documents when processing applications for certain benefits, such as Optional Practical Training or a change of status. You should keep all previous Forms I-20 in a safe and secure location.

**\*\*\*The extension process must be completed *prior to* the expiration date on your current Form I-20. If you do not submit a complete Program Extension Application to the OIE prior to the expiration date on your current Form I-20, you will lose your F-1 status. Please plan ahead and submit your Program Extension Application at least 30 days prior to the expiration date on your current document!\*\*\***

In addition to extending your Form I-20, you may also wish to extend your visa (the stamp in the passport), but this is not required to remain legally in the U.S. Visas only need to be valid when you are entering the U.S.; they do not have to be valid for your entire period of stay inside the U.S. It is the Form I-20 that must always be valid while you are in the U.S. If you elect to extend your visa, please be aware that you can only do this outside of the United States at a U.S. Embassy or Consulate. F-1 visas are not renewable within the United States.