



PROGRAM EXTENSION

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQ)

What is a program extension?

A program extension is the process of obtaining a new I-20 (for F-1 students) or DS-2019 (for J-1 students) to extend a student's authorized period of stay in the United States. A program extension is appropriate when a student is unable to complete the original study objective before the expiration date on the current I-20 or DS-2019.

Who is eligible for a program extension?

You are eligible for a program extension if you (1) have been enrolled full time throughout your period of studies (or have an OIS Part-Time Enrollment Authorization Form on file for each applicable semester), (2) have otherwise maintained your immigration status, and (3) the additional time is needed for *academic or medical* reasons.

Who is not eligible for program extension?

You are not eligible for an extension if you have been dismissed from the university. You are not eligible if you have ever been enrolled less than full-time prior to receiving approval from your academic advisor and OIS. You are not eligible if you have completed all terms of your program of study and simply wish to delay graduation. You are not eligible if you are out of status with the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) in any way.

When should I seek a program extension?

The regulations require **both F and J students** to obtain extensions *before the expiration date on their current I-20 or DS-2019*. Students who fail to obtain the extension *before* the I-20 or DS-2019 expires are considered "out of status" and must seek reinstatement. Reinstatement can require a long processing period, during which time a student cannot legally be employed, even on campus. ***Reinstatement may be difficult to obtain, even for simple reasons like "forgetting" that your I-20 or DS-2019 expired.***

What are the consequences of failure to obtain a program extension?

If you forget the deadline and apply late, you will be "out of status". If you are employed and overlook the date, you WILL be working "illegally" and may begin accruing "unlawful presence." Such mistakes will jeopardize prospects for obtaining employment authorization, extensions of stay, and obtaining permanent resident status. They could even lead to being banned from entering the United States.

What is the procedure for obtaining a program extension?

1. ***Get your academic advisor's approval.*** At least one month before your I-20 or DS-2019 expires (and preferably earlier than that), meet with your academic advisor or department chair to complete the form below.
2. ***Bring the signed form and complete a "Request for I-20/DS-2019" form at OIS.*** Also bring the following:
 - You must provide updated documentation (issued within last 6 months) of your financial support, such as a bank statement or offer letter for a graduate assistantship, so please bring this information with you.



Program Extension Request Form

To be completed by student:

Student Name: _____

Student ID Number: _____

SEVIS ID Number: _____

Current program completion date in Section 5 on current I-20: __/__/____

Explain the compelling academic or medical reasons that delayed your completion of the program before current completion date:

Do you have dependent(s) in F-2 status?

Financial Support: Proof of financial support must be provided for the first year of the new extension period or to the end of the extended period if shorter than one year. Tuition and living expenses depend on degree level and period of extension: Please list amount of funds and attach original financial documentation.

Sponsor funding (attach official evidence of funding and sponsor letter): \$ _____

UALR funding (attach letter of assistantship, scholarship, job offer, etc.) \$ _____

Dependent support: \$2,500 per spouse and or child (attach official bank statement): \$ _____

Student signature: _____

Date: _____



To be completed by Academic Advisor or Department Chair:

This form is provided for your convenience and is designed to facilitate the communication of information required by U.S. immigration regulations for students who will not complete their studies within the "normal" time frame for their level of study. Regulations require that the student must be studying/researching full time, making normal progress toward completing the degree program and the delay of the student's degree completion is not caused by academic probation, separation, or suspension:

1. The student is engaged in the following course of study:

Major: _____ Degree level: _____

Number of Credits Earned to date: _____

Total Required Credit for Degree: _____

New Anticipated Graduation Date: ____/____/____
Month/Year

- Is the student in good academic standing: _____
- Has the student been studying/researching full time? _____
- Is the student considered to be making normal progress towards completing the degree program? _____

2. The student has not yet completed the course of study due to:

- Delay caused by a change in area of specialization
- Delay caused by a change in research topic
- Delay caused by unexpected research difficulties
- Delay caused by lost credits upon transfer to the UALR
- No unusual delay: original completion estimate no reasonable for average student in this program
- Other (Please explain on the reverse side)

I am aware that the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services does not allow program extensions due to delays caused by financial difficulties, failure to find employment, academic probation, or suspension, and I recommend that the student be granted additional time to complete the course of study

Academic Advisor's Signature: _____ Date: _____

Academic Advisor's Name: _____ Email: _____

OIS Signature and Seal: _____