

F-1 EXTENSION OF STAY - I-539 FACT SHEET

For F-1 students who need additional time in the United States

WHAT IS FORM I-539?

Form I-539, Application to Extend/Change Nonimmigrant Status, is used in certain situations to request an extension of stay or change of nonimmigrant status. USCIS instructions indicate F-1 students should use I-539 for certain requests, including an extension of stay

TIMING IS CRITICAL

- File early. USCIS generally suggests filing at least 45 days before expiration but can be filed as early as 6 months before the authorized stay expires.
- For F-1 students, confirm your program end date and immigration record with your Designated School Official (DSO). The I-20 and SEVIS records are central to maintaining F-1 status and requesting an extension of stay
- Do not wait until the last minute. USCIS processing times can change, and an I-539 filing does not by itself guarantee approval.

TYPICAL DOCUMENT CHECKLIST

Form I-539	Current USCIS edition; complete all applicable sections.
Passport & visa	Biographical page, visa page, and other relevant pages.
Form I-94	Most recent I-94 showing admission and current status.
Form I-20	Current I-20 issued by the school; obtain DSO guidance and signature as applicable.
SEVIS information	Evidence supporting the active/continued F-1 program, as applicable.
Financial evidence	Evidence of funds sufficient to support tuition and living expenses, when requested/appropriate.
Status history	Prior I-20s, approval notices, and other records may be needed to document status history.

CURRENT USCIS FEE & FILING NOTES

- USCIS fee schedule currently lists the fee for an I-539 at \$470 for paper filing and \$420 for online filing. Fees can change—verify the amount immediately before filing.
- USCIS also offers premium processing for certain I-539 requests, including F-1, but eligibility, fee, and timing should be verified on the current USCIS fee schedule page.
- If filing online, create/use an individual USCIS online account and follow the current I-539 online filing instructions.

IMPORTANT F-1 REMINDERS

- A pending I-539 does not replace the obligation to comply with F-1 requirements. Continue working with your DSO and follow the terms of your F-1 program.
- Travel while an I-539 is pending can have immigration consequences. Consult your DSO and immigration counsel before international travel.
- If your F-1 status has already expired, or you have violated status, obtain individualized legal advice before filing.

USEFUL OFFICIAL TOOLS & RESOURCES

USCIS — Form I-539: <https://www.uscis.gov/i-539>
USCIS — I-539 Instructions: <https://www.uscis.gov/sites/default/files/document/forms/i-539instr.pdf>
USCIS — Fee Schedule (G-1055): <https://www.uscis.gov/sites/default/files/document/forms/g-1055.pdf>
USCIS — Case Status Online: <https://egov.uscis.gov/>
USCIS — Processing Times: <https://egov.uscis.gov/processing-times/>
USCIS — Online Account: <https://myaccount.uscis.gov/>
ICE/SEVP — F-1 Travel Information: <https://www.ice.gov/sevis/travel>
ICE/SEVP — Student Resources: <https://studyinthestates.dhs.gov/>

IMPORTANT: This fact sheet is for general informational purposes only and is not legal advice. USCIS forms, fees, processing times, and filing procedures may change. Always verify current requirements on the official USCIS website before filing.