Change to Academic Program: Frequently Asked Questions
Students in F-1 Status

Overview

When should I apply for a Change to Academic Program?
Students may apply for a Change to Academic Program in the following situations:
- When a student changes their academic program without first completing the current academic program
- When changing academic level: completing one degree program and beginning a new degree program
  - For example, when a student has completed a Master’s degree and will begin a new graduate program or when a student has completed a Master’s degree and will begin a PhD program

When is a Change to Academic Program not necessary?
Students do not need to complete the Change to Academic Program form in the following situation:
- When a student changes their major
- When a student adds a second major or minor
Instead, these students must email ISSO at isso@iastate.edu to request an updated I-20.

When do I need to submit this request?
Students who have changed their academic level must complete the request within following timeframe:
- For continuing students, 60 days after the last day of their final semester in the previous program, or
- For students on OPT, 60 days after the last day of employment on EAD or by the 90th day of unemployment

Application

How do I apply for a Change to Academic Program?
Change to Academic Program requests can be submitted through an electronic process in Cystart. Students can log in to Cystart using their ISU NetID and password. Complete and submit the Change to Academic Program e-form under the F-1 Student Services tab.

What must I submit for this request?
- Proof of financial support for the next two semesters
  - Please refer to the Estimated Expenses information found on the ISSO website
  - Documents more than 3 months old will not be accepted
  - Examples of financial documentations include: U.S. or foreign bank statements, Letter of Intent for graduate assistants, etc. Consult with an ISSO advisor on other types of acceptable financial support documentation.
- Documentation of admission/acceptance to new program, major, or minor (one of the following):
  - Admission letter
  - Copy of Graduate College form: either Master’s student on PhD Track in Same Department or Request to Transfer from One Major/Program/Department to Another

What is the timeline for processing this request?
It will take ISSO up to 10 working days after there is a check mark in all boxes on the Cystart Change to Academic Program page. ISSO will send an email to the student’s ISU email address when processing is complete. ISSO recommends sending an email to isso@iastate.edu if an email has not been received within 10 working days.
**Immigration Consequences**

What will happen if I do not complete a Change to Academic Program request after changing my academic level within the timeframe noted above?

- Violation of F-1 nonimmigrant status
- Employment authorization may be impacted
- Lose eligibility for all other benefits of F-1 nonimmigrant status
- Lose eligibility to change status, for example from F-1 to F-2, F-1 to H-1B, etc.

**Disclaimer:** This *Frequently Asked Questions* is intended for general information and guidance. Please consult with an International Student and Scholar Advisor in the International Students and Scholars Office regarding your individual request.