Overview

What is a Program Extension?
A Program Extension is the term used to apply and receive an extension of a DS-2019. When a student’s degree program cannot be completed by the program end date listed on their DS-2019 and need additional time, they must apply for a Program Extension in order to maintain their J-1 immigration status.

Reasons

What are acceptable reasons for a Program Extension?
- Compelling, valid academic reasons (see examples below)
- Change of research topic
- Unexpected research problem(s)
- Original length of time given to complete studies is not sufficient for the average student in this academic program
- Compelling medical reason (student’s illness or medical condition)

What reasons are not acceptable for this request?
- Poor job market/failure to find employment
- Delay in completing degree requirements caused after being placed on academic probation or having been suspended from Iowa State University

Application

When do I submit the Program Extension request?
A student may apply as early as four months prior to the end date on the current DS-2019 and no later than ten working days prior to the end date on the current DS-2019.

How do I submit a Program Extension request?
This is an electronic process completed through Cystart. The link for Cystart can be found on the ISSO homepage. Log in to Cystart using ISU NetID and password. Once in Cystart, select J-1 Student Services and complete the Program Extension form.

What documents do I need to include with my request?
- Proof of financial support for the period of extension you are requesting (one semester, academic year, calendar year). Refer to the Expense Worksheets found on the ISSO website for the amount of financial support you need to show.
  - Financial 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
- If requesting extension due to medical reasons, a letter from a licensed medical doctor or licensed clinical psychologist which documents illness or condition
What is the timeline for processing this request?
It will take 10 working days after there is a check mark in all boxes on the CyStart Program Extension Request page. ISSO will not start processing the request until we have received the Program Extension e-form, approval/verification from the academic or faculty adviser, financial support document, or the doctor's letter (if applicable). If the request is approved, ISSO will prepare a new DS-2019 form with an updated program end date. ISSO will send an email to the ISU email address on file notifying the student to pick up their new DS-2019. ISSO recommends sending an email to isso@iastate.edu if an email has not been received within 10 working days.

Duration
How long an extension can I request?
A Program Extension can be for any length of time that would allow a student to reasonably complete degree requirements.

Can I request additional extensions?
Yes, as long as there continues to be a compelling academic or medical reason for the Program Extension

Immigration Consequences for Failure to Complete Program Extension
What will happen if I do not complete a Program Extension and my DS-2019 expires?
- You will be considered in violation of your J-1 nonimmigrant status
  - Must apply for reinstatement or travel and reenter to regain J-1 status
- You will not be allowed to continue working on campus
- If you have authorization to work off campus, it will be automatically terminated
- You lose your eligibility for all other benefits of your J-1 nonimmigrant status

Disclaimer: This Frequently Asked Questions document 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.