Program Extension: Frequently Asked Questions
Students in F-1 Status

When do I need to submit program extension request?
- When your current degree program cannot be completed by the program end date on your I-20 and you need additional time
  - Your program end date is provided on page 1 of your I-20 form

What are acceptable reasons for program extension?
- Compelling, valid academic reasons (see examples below)
  - Change of major
  - Change of research topic
  - Unexpected research problem(s)
- Completing a master’s degree with a creative component or thesis and only given two years to complete the program on the original I-20
- Addition of a second major at the same degree level
- Addition of a minor
- Compelling medical reason (student’s illness or medical condition)

What reasons are not acceptable for this request?
- Allow additional time for Curricular Practical Training
- 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

How long an extension can I request?
- Any length of time it would reasonably take to complete degree requirements

Can I request additional extensions, if needed?
- Yes, as long as there continues to be a compelling academic or medical reason

When do I submit the program extension request?
- As early as four months prior to the end date on current I-20
- At least ten working days prior to the end date on your current I-20

How do I submit program extension request?
- This is an electronic process completed through CyStart. Log in to CyStart using your ISU NetID and password
- Complete and submit Program Extension request found under F-1 Undergraduate or F-1 Graduate Student Services tabs. The following must be submitted for this request:
  - Program Extension: Student Request e-form
  - Academic/Faculty Advisor Verification of Academic Status e-form
Proof of financial support for the period of extension you are requesting (one semester, academic year, calendar year). Refer to the Expense Worksheets for the amount of financial support you need to show

If requesting extension due to medical reasons, a letter from a licensed medical doctor or licensed clinical psychologist which documents your illness or condition

What do I need to know about the financial documentation?

- Refer to the Expense Worksheets found on the ISSO web site 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

What is the timeline for processing this request?

- 10 working days after there is a check mark in all boxes on the CyStart Program Extension Request page
- ISSO will not start processing your request until we have received the following:
  - Your program extension request e-form
  - The approval/ verification from your academic or faculty advisor
  - Financial support documentation
  - Doctor’s letter, if applicable

How will I know if my program extension request has been approved?

- When you request is approved, ISSO will prepare a new I-20 form for you with an updated program end date
- ISSO will send an e-mail to your ISU e-mail address notifying you to pick up your new I-20
  - If you do not receive this e-mail within 10 working days as noted above, please send an e-mail to isso@iastate.edu to check on your request.

What are the immediate consequences if I fail to request program extension before my current I-20 expires?

- You will be considered in violation of your F-1 nonimmigrant 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 F-1 nonimmigrant status
- You lose your eligibility to change your status, for example from F-1 to H-1B