Returning to ISU: Frequently Asked Questions
Students in F-1 Status

When do I need to apply to return to ISU?
- When you have been away from ISU for at least an entire semester (other than summer)
- Typically, students are at home or at another U.S. institution when applying

If I have been away from ISU for at least one semester and would like to return, what do I need to do?
- Complete the Returning to ISU eform in CyStart under the F-1 Student Services tab. You can login to CyStart at https://cystart.its.iastate.edu/istart/controllers/start/start.cfm
  - Undergraduate students only: Complete the International Student Reentry Form for the Registrar’s Office. You can find the form at http://www.registrar.iastate.edu/students/reentry/intl-reentry
    - If you were enrolled in classes for even one day of the most recent previous semester, you can skip this step
- Graduate students only: Make sure your academic department has approved your return to Iowa State.

- Once you have been approved to return, ISSO will determine if you need a new SEVIS record
  - If you are out of the U.S. and need a new SEVIS record, it will be created and a new I-20 will be sent to you as you requested in the Returning to ISU e-form. Once you receive the new I-20, you will need to:
    - Submit Form I-901 and pay the SEVIS fee (www.fmjfee.com)
    - Apply for a new visa

  - If you are out of the U.S. and do not need a new SEVIS record, ISSO will contact USCIS and request that your SEVIS record be reactivated
    - The government will only accept reactivation requests up to 60 days before the start of classes
    - In this case, if your previous I-20 is still valid (and has a valid travel signature), then you will be able to use it to return and will not have to pay the SEVIS fee or apply for a new visa

  - If you are at another U.S. institution, you will have to request that they transfer your SEVIS record to ISU. Once your SEVIS record is transferred, we will be able to create a new ISU I-20 and send it to you as you requested in the Returning to ISU e-form
When should I begin this process?

 If you are outside the U.S. and have been away from ISU for more than 5 months, then you should fill out the Returning to ISU e-form three months before the start of classes.

 If you are outside of the U.S. and have been away from ISU for less than 5 months, then you should submit the Returning to ISU e-form 2 months prior to the start of classes.

 If you are at another U.S. institution, you should complete the Returning to ISU e-form 3 months before the start of classes. You should also request your current school to transfer your SEVIS record to ISU as soon as you are done with classes there.
   We will not be able to create your new ISU I-20 until you previous school transfers your SEVIS record.