



## Out of Status: Re-Entry Process

### What is re-entry?

Re-entry is used by students who have lost their status as an alternative to reinstatement. You will be issued a new initial entry I-20 and will leave the US and re-enter at one of the borders (Canada and Mexico are ok). When you re-enter, you will be considered a new F-1 student. You will have to be in status for at least 9 months (one academic year) before being eligible for any period of optional CPT or OPT.

### How early can I enter the US?

You may enter the US up to 30 days before the start of your program (start date listed on I-20). Keep this date in mind. Do not exit the US too early as you will not be allowed to enter earlier than 30 days before the start of your program.

### What should I take with me?

Take the following items with you:

- New I-20
- Valid passport
- Valid visa
- Admission letter
- I-901 Receipt (Proof of SEVIS Fee payment; you may pay your fee at [www.fmjfee.com](http://www.fmjfee.com))
- Proof of having paid tuition for your new program, if possible

### What should I expect?

Because you previously lost your status, your immigration record will show a former termination. Be prepared to be asked to go to secondary inspection. You may have to wait several hours to speak to someone. Be prepared to truthfully explain how you lost your status at your former school. It is also ok to tell the officer that your new school's immigration advisor suggested that you attempt re-entry as you have been out of status for a short period of time. **HOWEVER, DO NOT REHEARSE A SCRIPT.** Speak respectfully, naturally, and calmly with the immigration officer. Be honest and smile – a positive attitude is very helpful in these situations. After you speak with the officer, the officer will decide if you will be allowed back into the US.

### Can I be refused entry?

Yes. But the chances of this are very small if you have not been out of status long. We see much success with this option – especially when students are honest, calm, and respectful when explaining what happened. If, however, you are not allowed back into the US, you will need to be prepared to return to your home country immediately and attempt to re-enter the US from there.