



## Change of Status

There are two ways to change to F-1 status.

**Option 1: Travel and Reentry:** Leave the US, apply for an F-1 visa at a US consulate, and reenter the US on F-1 status. (There are no US consulates in the US.) Note that you can only reenter the country 30 days before the start of your F-1 status.

-or-

**Option 2: Change of Status:** Change your status in the US through USCIS without obtaining a new visa. (You will need to obtain a visa at a US consulate abroad the next time you leave the US). This option can take 3-9 months. Note that biometrics (fingerprints) are required with this application.

Important note: *You must maintain your current status until 30 days before the start date listed on the I-20 or the change of status will be denied.* If your current status is expiring please consult an attorney to see if a bridge application is possible.

You *cannot* change your status in the US if you are on C, D, K, or M status, entered the US on a Visa-Waiver, are on J-1 or J-2 status and are subject to the two-year residency requirement, or are on B-1/B-2 status and cannot prove that you decided to study *after* entering the US.

### Step 1: Request an I-20/DS-2019.

- If you will Travel and Reenter, request an *Initial I-20*.
- If you will Change your Status in the US, request an *Initial I-20 for Change of Status*.
- You must provide **proof of finances**. Review the Estimated Cost of Attendance handout and the Financial Documentation handout for more information.

### Step 2: Pay the SEVIS fee.

- See the ISS website for information on paying the SEVIS fee:  
[http://www.widener.edu/campus\\_life/resources/intl/visa.aspx](http://www.widener.edu/campus_life/resources/intl/visa.aspx)

### Step 3: Change your status.

- If you will Travel and Reenter, consult the page linked above for details.
- If you will Change your Status in the US, please see page two for the required documents. ISS will review your application before submission.

### Step 4: Provide ISS with proof of your new status.

Bring copies of your new status to ISS for review:

- Travel and Reentry: F-1/J-1/F-2/J-2 visa, port of entry stamp and I-94.
- Change of Status: I-797 approval notice with I-94 attachment.

### **Change of Status Application Form**

- Complete either the online or paper form I-539 at <http://www.uscis.gov/i-539>. (The paper form is at the bottom of the webpage and must be typed).
- Pay the filing fee of \$370 and the biometrics fee of \$85 via credit card, money order, or check. Make checks and money orders payable to U.S. Department of Homeland Security.
- Also complete the G-1145 form to accept electronic notification that your application has been received: <http://www.uscis.gov/g-1145> (must be typed).

### **Financial Documents**

- Include copies of the documents you submitted in order to request your I-20.
- Include a copy of the SEVIS I-901 fee payment.

### **Correspondence**

- Submit a letter indicating why you want to change to F-1 status.
- If you have any other relevant correspondence, you may also include it.

### **Family Relationship**

- If you are including dependents in this application, you should provide copies of marriage certificates and/or birth/adoption certificates as relevant to prove the relationship between the primary (F-1) and dependent (F-2) applicant(s).

### **Identity**

- Although many documents are acceptable for this section, ISS recommends that you submit the biographical page of your passport. Make sure the photo is clear.

### **Immigration Status**

- Copy of new I-20/DS-2019.
- Copy of I-94 print out: [www.cbp.gov/i94](http://www.cbp.gov/i94).
- Copy of port of entry stamp in passport.
- Copy of visa.
- Copy of other immigration documents (I-797 notices, all I-20s, all DS-2019s, etc.)
- Transcript/enrollment verification or admission letter for new students.
- Proof of maintaining current status such as copies of the primary's immigration documents, pay stubs/employer letter for H-1B holders, etc.

**After all the documents have been collected, make an appointment with ISS to review your application.**

## How to mail your application

If you live in:

Alabama, Arkansas, Connecticut, Delaware, District of Columbia, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Mississippi, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, Oklahoma, Puerto Rico, Rhode Island, South Carolina, Oklahoma, Tennessee, Texas, Vermont, Virginia, U.S. Virgin Islands, or West Virginia

Mail to:

**USPS:**

USCIS

P.O. Box 660166

Dallas, TX 75266

**Express and Courier Mail:**

USCIS

ATTN: I-539

2501 S. State Highway 121 Business  
Suite 400

Lewisville, TX 75067

- A certified mail service is recommended
- A receipt notification should arrive within 3 weeks with tracking information, the status of application could be found at [www.uscis.gov](http://www.uscis.gov)
- Respond promptly to any requests for additional information from USCIS.
- Make an appointment with ISS immediately when receive a “Blue Letter” from USCIS. A blue letter could mean request for evidence for your application.