Applying to the USCIS for a Change of Nonimmigrant Visa Status

Any nonimmigrant visa holder (except those holding C, D, K, or M visa status, or visa waiver status) can apply for a change of status to F-1 if s/he has maintained lawful non-immigrant status up to the time of application. A person in J status may apply for a change of status within the US only if not subject to the 2-year home residency requirement. F-2 to F-1 changes of status cannot study full time until the USCIS approves change of status request.

**STEP 1: Obtain a Change of Status I-20**

1. Complete the I-20/DS2019 Request for Change of Status form on our website (www.ou.edu/cis/iss) under Forms, then click Change of Status.
2. OU ISS will review your documents and prepare a Change of Status I-20 for you in 3 to 10 business days.
3. OU ISS will email you when your I-20 is ready to be picked up.
   - You may use eShip Global (study.eshipglobal.com) to obtain courier service for your documents so that they can be sent directly to you from our office. When completing your shipment, select International Student Services as the office that will be sending your documents.
4. When you receive your I-20, sign it and include a copy of the signed original I-20 with your Change of Status application.

**STEP 2: Pay your SEVIS I-901 fee**

Change of status applicants changing to F-1 or J-1 with an “initial attendance” I-20 or DS-2019 must pay a one-time SEVIS I-901 fee. The fee can be paid online at www.fmifee.com after issuance of a new I-20 or DS-2019. Print 2 copies of your payment confirmation. Include one with your application and keep one for yourself.

**STEP 3: Prepare your application to USCIS**

1. Complete I-539 form
   - In Part 1., enter the address where you would like your documents to be sent. You may use the OU ISS address if you would like your documents to be sent directly to our office.
   - Part 2. #1. Choose “b.” and indicate the status you are requesting (F-1 or F-2)
   - Part 3. #1. Enter “D/S” for Duration of Status.
   - Part 4 must include a foreign address.
2. Write a letter of explanation for the USCIS, explaining why you need to change status, and why you entered the US in one status and now wish to change to a new status. Include why a denial of the status change would cause hardship. This is a required part of the application.
3. Gather the required information following the appropriate checklist on the back of this page. The application must be mailed to the appropriate USCIS Service Center for adjudication. Visit the USCIS website at http://www.uscis.gov/i-539 for the proper mailing address. We recommend you make a copy of your entire application to the USCIS and keep it for your records.
4. USCIS will send a receipt notice to the address you indicated on your application. If you move while your change of status is pending:
   - Notify USCIS immediately at https://egov.uscis.gov/coa/displayCOAForm.do
   - Notify OU ISS
5. If the change of status is approved, you will receive a new I-94 card at the bottom of your Approval Notice from USCIS.
6. If the USCIS sends the approval documents to your home address, you MUST bring your new documents to OU ISS within 10 days to allow us to register your change of status in SEVIS. Failure to do so will result in a termination of your new visa status.

**REMEMBER:** The USCIS can take 2 to 6 months to process a change of status application. OU ISS will not support change of status applications less than 4 months prior to a new program start date.

If you wish to start a program in less than 4 months in F-1 status, we recommend that you do the following:

- Exit the US with the new I-20, successfully complete a consular interview, and reenter the US in F-1 status. **You CANNOT return to the US in your F-1 status more than 30 days prior to your program start date.** This is a US immigration regulation.
- Plan for a later program start date.
### Change of Status From:

#### F-2 to F-1
- **Completed** I-539 form
- Check or money order for $290 payable to Department of Homeland Security (DHS)
- Proof of payment of the SEVIS fee
- Support letter from applicant
- **Copy of original Change of Status I-20**
- Copies of current I-20s for both F-1 and F-2
- Copies of passport, I-94 and visa page for F-1
- Copies of passport, I-94 and visa page for F-2
- admission letter
- Evidence of sufficient financial support in USD$ accompanied by English translation, if applicable

**Important to note:**
- No on-campus employment until F-1 is approved.
- No full time enrollment or study until F-1 is approved.

#### F-1 to F-2
- **Completed** I-539 form
- Check or money order for $290 payable to Department of Homeland Security (DHS)
- Support letter from applicant
- **Copy of original Change of Status I-20**
- Copies of all current I-20 forms for both F-1s
- Copies of passport, I-94 and visa page for both F-1s
- Proof of family relationship (copies of marriage license, birth certificate/s)
- Evidence of sufficient financial support in USD$ accompanied by English translation, if applicable

**Important to note:**
- No SEVIS fee required.
- Must maintain full-time enrollment until change of status is approved.
- On-campus employment must cease when F-2 is approved.

#### H-4 to F-1
- **Completed** I-539 form
- Check or money order for $290 payable to Department of Homeland Security (DHS)
- Proof of payment of the SEVIS fee
- Support letter from applicant
- **Copy of original Change of Status I-20**
- Copies of I-797 approval notices for both H-1B and H-4
- Copies of passport, I-94 and visa page for H-1B
- Copies of passport, I-94 and visa page for H-4
- admission letter
- Evidence of sufficient financial support in USD$ accompanied by English translation, if applicable

**Important to note:**
- No on-campus employment until F-1 is approved.

#### H-1B or H-4 to F-2
- **Completed** I-539 form
- Check or money order for $290 payable to Department of Homeland Security (DHS)
- Support letter from applicant
- **Copy of original Change of Status I-20**
- Copies of all current I-797 approval notices for H-1B or H-4
- Copies of current F-1 I-20
- Copies of passport, I-94, and visa page for F-1
- Copies of passport, I-94, and visa page for H-1B or H-4
- Proof of family relationship (copies of marriage license, birth certificate/s)
- Evidence of sufficient financial support in USD$ accompanied by English translation, if applicable

**Important to note:**
- No SEVIS fee required.
- H-1B recommended to maintain full-time employment until change of status is approved.
- NO on-campus employment in any case!

#### H-1B to F-1
- **Completed** I-539 form
- Check or money order for $290 payable to Department of Homeland Security (DHS)
- Proof of payment of the SEVIS fee
- Support letter from applicant
- **Copy of original Change of Status I-20**
- Copies of passport and visa page for H-1B
- Copy of I-797 verifying H-1B status
- admission letter
- Evidence of sufficient financial support in USD$ accompanied by English translation, if applicable

**Important to note:**
- No on-campus employment until F-1 is approved.