



CHANGING TO STUDENT STATUS

To change your status in the United States to a student from your present status, you will need to be officially accepted to a full-time academic program. If your status is that of a spouse (F-2, J-2, H-4), your spouse must be in the U.S. in valid status when you are requesting this change. F-2 status holders must first receive the F-1 approval from immigration to begin full-time studies and/or work on the assistantship. J-2 holders must first receive J-1 approval or J-2 work authorization before they can begin work on campus. H-4 holders must first receive the F-1 approval before they can work on campus. If you are in any other status in the U.S. you must be in valid status in order to request a change of status to F-1 from immigration.

A. You will need a valid reason for requesting the change to F-1 or J-1, such as:

1. Admission to school and/or an offer of a graduate assistantship by the school you will attend;
2. a written request from your sponsor requesting you to change; and/or
3. your spouse is graduating and returning to your home country and you need more time to complete your studies.

B. Your application to USCIS (United States Citizenship and Immigration Service) for the change to F-1 or J-1 should include the following:

1. Letter from you to the immigration service center containing:
 - a. your address, telephone number, and date;
 - b. your request to change from your visa status stating that you will be a full-time student and the reason for requesting the change (item from A. above);
 - c. your plans to return to your home country once you are completed with your program; and
 - d. if F-2 changing to F-1, proof that you were not a full-time student while in F-2 status.
2. Completed Original Form SEVIS I-20 or DS-2019 signed both by the school and you - (School issues)
3. Copy of I-94 departure card – applicant
4. Original financial proof documents (example - bank letter; school award-assistantship letter; family letter w/bank letter) – (applicant)
5. Copies of your passport number, passport expiration date and entry visa and all past immigration documents. (Applicant)
6. If F-2 or J-2 changing to F-1/J-1, copies of your spouses or parents valid immigration forms: I-20/DS-2019, visa, passport etc. and a copy of marriage certificate or parents paperwork. If the J-1 has the two year home residency requirement so does the J-2. To change to J-1 the J-2 must have a waiver – (if applicable)
7. If H-4 changing to F-1/J-1, copy of your spouse's H-1B Approval Notice, passport, visa, and I-94, and a copy of your marriage certificate
8. Completed form I-539 – (applicant) (<http://www.uscis.gov/files/form/i-539.pdf>)
9. Fee of \$290 – (applicant –make check payable to *U.S. Department of Homeland Security*)
10. I-901 SEVIS Fee (<https://www.fmjfee.com/index.jhtml>) – receipt of payment of fee must be added to Change of Status Application (if applying online, print out 2 copies of receipt – include one in your package)

*If you are traveling out of the U.S., take the SEVIS I-20 or DS-2019 form with you and obtain the F-1 or J-1 visa in your passport at a Consulate outside the U.S. and enter the U.S. as an F-1 or J-1 student status.