

## **Change of Status to F-1/F-2**

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**I WANT TO CHANGE MY IMMIGRATION STATUS TO F-1/F-2. HOW DO I APPLY?** Please schedule an appointment with and advisor for International Student Programs to determine whether or not you are eligible to file for a change of status in the United States. Some general guidelines are listed below:

- You must be maintaining your current status in order to change to F-1/F-2.
- If you are a child dependent in H-4, E-1, E-2, L-2, etc. status, you are required to submit a change of status application to F-1 before your 21<sup>st</sup> birthday.
- If you are currently in B-1/B-2 status, you cannot attend school legally without first being approved for a change of status to F-1. Unless you have prospective student indicated on your visa or I-94 card, it is extremely difficult to change your status in the United States. We recommend that you return home and apply for F-1 status at the United States Consulate with your UCR initial attendance I-20 Form.
- If you are currently in F-2 status, you cannot attend school full time without first being approved for a change of status to F-1.
- If you are currently in J-1/J-2 status and are subject to the 2-year physical presence requirement, you must first obtain a waiver. Without a waiver, you are not eligible to change your status in the United States.

### **HOW LONG DOES IT TAKE TO FILE A CHANGE OF STATUS TO F-1/F-2?**

Currently, it takes approximately 90 days for a Change of Status application to be adjudicated by the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) California Service Center. The process takes longer if USCIS requests further evidence on your case after it has already been submitted. The USCIS California Service Center often requests further evidence.

### **I PAY RESIDENT TUITION FEES WITH MY CURRENT IMMIGRATION STATUS. WILL I HAVE TO PAY NON-RESIDENT TUITION FEES IF I CHANGE MY STATUS TO F-1?**

Yes, once you are approved for a change of status to F-1, you must pay non-resident tuition fees. For more information regarding fees for tuition purposes, please contact the Office of the Registrar @ <http://www.registrar.ucr.edu/>.

### **CAN THE INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION CENTER ASSIST ME WITH A CHANGE OF STATUS APPLICATION?**

We can assist you in the following ways:

- Providing this information
- Issuing an I-20 Form for your change of status to F-1 upon submission of the appropriate supporting documents. Please see our I-20 Request Form.
- Providing you with a list of documents required for a Change of Status application (see below)
- Reviewing your completed Change of Status application before you send it to USCIS. Please note that although we are happy to review your paperwork, the final decision regarding what is sent is yours. You are responsible for the completed application and for filing the application in a timely manner. You also have the option of hiring an immigration attorney to file your change of status request.

### **WHAT DOCUMENTS DO I NEED IN ORDER TO FILE FOR A CHANGE OF STATUS TO F-1 or F-2?**

Generally, USCIS likes to see the documents listed below submitted with a change of status application. This list is not exhaustive. The immigration officer adjudicating your case reserves the right to ask for additional information.

Everyone requires the following:

- A completed I-539 Form. This Form can be downloaded from the following website <http://www.uscis.gov/files/form/i-539.pdf>. It is also available in our office.
- Paid SEVIS fee and print out receipt for change of status to F-1 or J-1 (See SEVIS fee information sheet).
- A check for \$300 dollars made out to the Department of Homeland Security
- A short letter from individual requesting change of status and the reason for the request

- Financial Support Documentation (A bank letter from your bank or a letter from your department indicating your total amount of financial support). Individuals who are sponsored by parents or other individuals must also submit a Confidential Financial Statement (CFS). CFS Forms are available in our office.
- Four (4) most recent bank statements
- Copy of your I-94 Card (front and back) & your principal's (if applicable)
- Copy of passport picture page with photo and passport validity dates & your principals (if applicable)
- Copy of visa in the passport & your principal's (if applicable)
- Proof of residence in your home country (home country driver's license, property, residency cards etc.)

Additional information required:

#### **Spouses & Children in F-2 Status**

- Marriage certificate (for spouses only)
- Birth Certificate or equivalent (for children only)—this is sometimes requested
- Copy of principal's I-20 Form
- Proof of principal's status (good standing letter)

#### **Spouses & Children in L-2, H-4, E-2 etc.**

- Marriage Certificate (for spouses only)
- Proof of principal's status (Copy of principal's last three pay stubs, most recent W-2 Form and a letter from the employer confirming current employment).

#### **Individuals in J-1/J-2 Status**

- A waiver is required if you are subject to the 2 year physical presence requirement
- Proof of current status. If you are a student, provide a copy of your DS-2019 and a good standing letter from your school (your spouse's school if you are a J-2). If you or your spouse is a research scholar etc., proof that you are currently employed: a copy of your last 3 pay stubs, a letter from your employer and copy of your most recent W-2 (sometimes requested).
- If you are married and in J-2 status, you must also submit a marriage certificate

#### **Helpful Hints**

- Provide Certified Translations of items that are not in English. The translator must certify that the translation is true and correct, and sign and date the translated document.
- Submit an organized application: Place tabs at the bottom of your paperwork so that the immigration officer adjudicating your case can easily navigate the paperwork. The easier it is for them, the better.
- **Have your application reviewed before submitting it.**

#### **WHAT DO I DO AFTER I HAVE GATHERED ALL THE INFORMATION?**

Make an appointment for a review of your change of status application with and advisor for International Student Programs. If you are working with a lawyer, simply provide them with your I-20 Form. They will tell you what other documents are required.

#### **WHERE DO I SEND MY CHANGE OF STATUS APPLICATION?**

##### **Certified Mail: USCIS**

**California Service Center  
P.O. Box 10539  
Laguna Niguel, CA 92607-1053**

##### **Express Mail: USCIS**

**California Service Center (I-539 COS)  
24000 Avila Road, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, Rm 2302  
Laguna Niguel, CA 92677**

#### **IS THERE ANY WAY TO TRACK THE PROGRESS OF MY APPLICATION?**

Yes, once you submit an application, USCIS will send you a receipt notice confirming that they have received your application. On your receipt notice, there will be a number assigned to your case. This number is referred to as a WAC #. You can use this WAC # to track the status of your application online at <https://egov.uscis.gov/cris/jsps/index.jsp>