

## Changing to F-1 Visa Status

To change your U.S. visa status, you can either **a)** travel out of the U.S., apply at a U.S. consulate for the new visa type, and re-enter the U.S. in the new status **OR b)** apply for a change of status within the U.S. by sending an application to an immigration service center as described in this handout. To apply within the U.S. to change to F-1 student visa status, complete the application packet below and mail the items listed in the application to the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS). Review your complete application with your international student counselor before you mail it to USCIS. USCIS will take approximately 6-12 months to approve your change of status application.

### Items to give to your international student counselor:

1. Financial documentation: evidence which supports section 8 of your I-20 (a personal or family bank statement and/or letter from your department describing your assistantship).
2. Copies of passport, most recent I-94, and I-797A or visa to prove current immigration status. If in F-2 status, also provide a copy of your F-2 I-20.

### ITEMS IN APPLICATION TO the appropriate USCIS office as stated in the I-539 instructions:

1. A letter from student requesting the change of status and explaining his/her circumstances and plans.
2. Completed Form I-539, Application to Extend/Change Nonimmigrant Status (download this form from [www.uscis.gov/i-539](http://www.uscis.gov/i-539)).
3. **APPLICATION FEE of \$370:** Check the I-539 form instructions for the appropriate fee amount. Please write your check or money order payable to the “Department of Homeland Security.” Write the I-94 card number and the type of application being requested on the check or money order.
4. **BIOMETRICS FEE of \$85:** Please write your check or money order payable to the “Department of Homeland Security.” We suggest writing separate checks or money orders for the \$370 and \$85 fees.
5. Receipt showing payment of I-901 fee: <https://www.fmjfee.com/i901fee/index.html#>
6. The F-1 I-20 created by ISSS. Send the original—not a copy.
7. Financial documentation
8. If you are currently a dependent of another status, such as F-1 or H-1B, please include photocopies of the following to prove your spouse's immigration status:
  - a. ID page of spouse's passport
  - b. Page in passport showing expiration date if different than ID page;
  - c. I-797A change of status approval or copy of visa and I-94
  - d. If your spouse is in H-1B status, we recommend including copies of the past three paychecks. If spouse is in F-1 status, include a copy of her/his F-1 I-20.
9. Photocopies of the applicant's current immigration status (the person changing to F-1 status):
  - a. ID page of her/his passport;
  - b. Page in passport showing expiration date if different than ID page;
  - c. visa page or other documentation of visa status, such as I-797A
  - d. I-94
  - e. If in F-2 status, include a copy of your F-2 I-20

\*Your ISSS counselor will issue and F-1 I-20 once you have provided financial documentation and documentation of your current immigration status.

Paperclip or staple all of the items together (keep a copy for your records) and mail by certified mail to the appropriate USCIS address as stated in the I-539 instructions. NOTE: After your change of status has been approved and you have received a new I-94, please email copies of these documents to your international student counselor.

**Mail documents to:**

**USCIS Dallas Lockbox Facility**

U.S. Postal Service (USPS):

USCIS  
PO Box 660921  
Dallas, TX 75266

Express mail and courier deliveries:

USCIS  
Attn: I-539  
2501 S. State Hwy. 121 Business  
Suite 400  
Lewisville, TX 75067

For more information, please see: <https://www.uscis.gov/i-539-addresses>

**Disclaimer:** Applications for changes of status are personal immigration applications. ISSS will issue the I-20 and look over the materials, at the student's request, but we can take no responsibility for the denial or approval of these applications.