

Disclaimer: Applications for changes of status are personal immigration applications. ISSS will issue the I-20, but we can take no responsibility for the denial or approval of these applications.

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 USCIS as described in this handout.

To apply within the U.S. to change to F-1 student visa status, prepare the documents below and then create an account with USCIS online and submit your application online. If you prefer not to apply online, then you will need to mail the items listed in the application to the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS).

Make sure that you obtain an F-1 I-20 from your international student counselor, before filing your application.

For current processing times, please go to the following page: <https://egov.uscis.gov/processing-times/>

We recommend that you submit your application online, instead of submitting a paper application.

Please go to the following page for more information on filing the I-539 application to change your status: <https://www.uscis.gov/forms/explore-my-options/change-my-nonimmigrant-status>

Provide the following to your international student counselor. They cannot issue an F-1 I-20 for you without this information:

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.
3. Permanent address in your home country and your current U.S. address.

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
 - a. To apply online: <https://uscis.gov/i539online>
 - b. To submit a paper application, download this form from <https://www.uscis.gov/i-539>
3. **APPLICATION FEE OF \$370:** Check the I-539 form instructions for appropriate fee amount.
 - a. If applying online, you will pay this electronically by debit card or credit card at the end of your application.
 - b. If submitting the paper application, 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:**
 - a. If applying online, you will pay this electronically by debit card or credit card at the end of your application.
 - b. If submitting the paper application, 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 if submitting the paper application.
5. Receipt showing payment of I-901 fee: <https://www.fmjfee.com/i901fee/index.html#>
6. The F-1 I-20 created by ISSS. If submitting the paper application, send the original—not a copy. If applying online, you will upload an electronic copy. Please be sure to sign your I-20 before submitting it with your application.

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
in F-2 status, include a copy of your F-2 I-20

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

Online application:

You will upload electronic copies of your supporting documents when prompted while completing the online application.

Paper application:

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 for paper application to:

USCIS Dallas Lockbox Facility

If mailing through U.S. Postal Service (USPS):

USCIS
PO Box 660166
Dallas, TX 75266

If mailing through express mail and courier deliveries (FedEx, UPS, DHL):

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>