

# Change of Status Handout

Individuals intending to change to F-1/J-1 or F-2/J-2 status

Revised: 4/19/2018

---

An individual currently in the U.S. who wishes to change to F-1/J-1 or F-2/J-2 visa status may have two options available. Any individual intending to change their status is required to meet with an ISS advisor to discuss the following options before ISS can issue any documentation.

---

## OPTION 1:

**TRAVEL & RE-ENTER U.S. WITH NEW I-20/DS-2019-** document issued by ISS; a decision made by U.S. State Dept.

- Must travel outside of the U.S. and re-enter with the new I-20/DS-2019
  - Must apply for an F-1/J-1 or F-2/J-2 student visa at a U.S. Embassy/Consulate
- Cannot re-enter the U.S. more than 30 days prior to new I-20/DS-2019 program start date
- Must enroll full-time upon first semester of re-entry, even if that is summer
- Change to F-1/J-1 status: ISS check-in and orientation are required. Bring original immigration documents to ISS.

## OPTION 2:

**CHANGE OF STATUS WITHIN U.S.-** a decision made by U.S. Citizenship & Immigration Services (USCIS)

Processing may take an average of five months, although times may vary at USCIS

### ◇ Eligibility for change of status:

- Currently maintaining valid non-immigrant status
  - Should be valid for at least 30 days before the requested I-20/DS-2019 start date
- Applicant has no record of repeated violations
- F-1/J-1 intends to pursue a full-time course of study
- Applicant is not engaged in unauthorized employment
- Applicant is not deportable on any grounds
- Current status is not: M-1, C, D, K, S, J-1 Physician, J non-immigrant subject to 212(e), WT or WB Visa Waiver Program

### ◇ While change of status is pending:

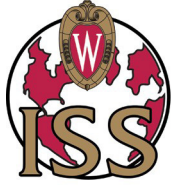
- Abide by your current non-immigrant visa study restrictions
  - Current F-2 visa holders may study only part-time
- Defer the start date of your I-20/DS-2019 with ISS if the change of status is not approved by program start date
  - New I-20/DS-2019 will be issued. Must mail a copy of the I-20/DS-2019 to USCIS with a copy of the receipt notice.
- Recommended: Should maintain your current non-immigrant visa status at least 30 days prior to I-20/DS-2019 start date
- Do not engage in any benefits of the status for which you are applying until approval is granted
- Refrain from any employment not authorized under your current non-immigrant status
- Refrain from travel outside of the United States. Departure from the U.S. may be considered an abandonment of your request for a change of status and therefore lead to the denial of your request.

### ◇ If change of status is approved:

- Notify ISS advisor immediately. (You will receive an official approval notice from USCIS via mail.)
- ISS will confirm your current F-1/J-1 or F-2/J-2 status. You may be issued a new I-20/DS-2019.
- Change to F-1/J-1 status: ISS check-in and orientation are required. Bring original immigration documents to ISS.

### ◇ If change of status is denied:

- Consult with an ISS advisor immediately. (You will receive an official denial notice from USCIS via mail.)
- Your current non-immigrant visa may be automatically canceled
- You may be required to depart the U.S.



# Change of Status Handout

Individuals intending to change to F-1/J-1 or F-2/J-2 status

Revised:4/18/2018

## APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS

If you have selected Option 1: Travel & Re-enter U.S. with New I-20/DS-2019, follow instructions in Step 1 below.

If you have selected Option 2: Change of Status within U.S. , follow instructions in Step 1 and Step 2 below.

### STEP 1:

- **Change to F-1/J-1:** Submit the ISS Change of Status Request form to ISS with appropriate financial documentation
- **Change to F-2/J-2 :** Submit the ISS Dependent Request form to ISS with appropriate financial documentation
  - Processing times may vary; consult ISS on current document processing times
  - You will be contacted via email when your new I-20/DS-2019 is available for pick-up at ISS

**STEP 2:** (You must mail the following documents to USCIS to officially request a change of status)

- **Change to F-1/J-1**
  - Photocopy of signed/dated I-20/DS-2019 issued by ISS for the purpose of requesting change of status
  - Photocopy of passport identity and expiry page(s)
  - Photocopy of current visa page(s) and entry stamp
    - If you had changed your status within the U.S. you must include a photocopy of your I-797A
  - Print-out of I-94 ([cbp.gov/i94](http://cbp.gov/i94)) or photocopy front and back of original I-94 card in passport
  - Photocopies of all dependent documents (passport, visa, I-94), if applicable
  - Official, sealed transcripts from all schools attended in the U.S., if applicable
  - Original, signed USCIS Form I-539: Application to Extend/Change Non-immigrant Status
  - USCIS Form I-539 filing fee in the amount of \$370 USD (personal check, cashier's check, or money order)
    - Made payable to: U.S. Department of Homeland Security
  - Financial support documentation
  - Written statement from applicant to USCIS, which includes the following:
    - Address the letter to USCIS adjudicating officer
    - State the current visa status, visa status for which you are applying, and why you are seeking a change of status
    - Convincingly state that you had no preconceived intention to study in the U.S. when you entered in your current non-immigrant status if that status does not allow full-time study
    - Convincingly state that you have strong ties to your home country
    - Thank the USCIS adjudicating officer for their time in considering your request
    - Sign and date the letter
  - SEVIS I-901 fee payment receipt ([www.fmjfee.com](http://www.fmjfee.com))
- **Change to F-2/J-2**
  - All of the above, except SEVIS I-901 fee payment (required for F-1 and J-1 students only)
  - Photocopies of all F-1/J-1 documents (I-20/DS-2019, passport, visa, I-94, proof of F-1/J-1 SEVIS I-901 fee payment)
  - Official, sealed transcripts from all schools attended in the U.S. by F-1/J-1 (request through Student Center)
  - Proof of familial relationship (for example, certified copy of a marriage license or birth certificate)
    - Certified English translation required if the original document is not in English

**Make a copy of the entire USCIS application package & request a tracking number before mailing:**

Via U.S. Postal Service Standard Delivery:  
USCIS  
P.O. Box 660166  
Dallas, TX 75266

Via Express Mail & Courier Deliveries (FedEx or UPS, for example):  
USCIS (Attn: I-539)  
2501 S. State Hwy, 121 Business  
Suite 400  
Lewisville, TX 75067