

Change of Status: B-1/B-2 Tourist to F-1 Student

A change of status is a change of one's primary purpose for being in the United States. There are two ways to change your immigration status. One way is to travel back home or outside the U.S., apply for a new visa at a U.S. Consulate, and then re-enter the United States in the new status. The other way is to submit a change of status application to the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services while remaining here in the United States. The USCIS will review applications for changes of status based on the applicants' ability to document and justify a change of primary purpose for being in the U.S. and verify that you have maintained lawful nonimmigrant status up to the time the application has been filed.

To apply for a change of status, the following must be submitted to the USCIS Service Center having jurisdiction over place of residence

- Pay the **SEVIS fee** – see our handout related to the SEVIS Fee Requirement
- Change of status (I-539) **application fee of \$300**. This check should be made payable to “Department of Homeland Security”. Write your 11-digit “admission number” from your I-94 card on the front of your check.
- A **cover letter** from you address to the USCIS requesting a change of status from B-1/B2 to F-1 student. This letter should explain your circumstances and include why you entered the U.S. as an B-1/B-2 Tourist. You should include why and how your intentions have changed after arrival in the U.S. and any other information relevant to your decision to study in the U.S. It is also helpful to include how your education will help you in your future return to your home country.
- **Form I-539**: “Application to Extend/Change Nonimmigrant Status”. Copies are in our office, however, you can also download this from the USCIS website at <http://www.uscis.gov/portal/site/uscis>
- A copy of your **SEVIS fee receipt**.
- **Your original I-20** from the Foreign Student Advisor signed by you and the advisor.
- A copy of **the financial documentation** you submitted for your I-20.
- A copy of the front and back of your I-94 card with a legible date stamp. Note: USCIS will generate a new I-94 card as part of the change of status approval notice.
- A copy of your **passport** and **U.S. visa stamp**.

It is recommended that you schedule an appointment with the Foreign Student Advisor to review your completed materials before submitting it to the USCIS.

All application materials will be submitted to the USCIS at
U.S. Department of Homeland Security
U.S. Citizenship & Immigration Services
Vermont Service Center
75 Lower Welden Street
St. Albans, VT 05479

NOTE: It is recommended that you send your application using a receipt-based mailing option.

Processing Time Estimated processing time will be from 2 – 6 months. Please report the response of your change of status to the International Student & Scholars Office as soon as you receive notification from USCIS.

NOTE – You may not begin attending classes until your change of status has been approved.