



Change of Status: H-4 Dependent 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.

NOTE: You can begin your program of study while your change of status is pending – however – you MAY NOT be an assistantship or engage in on-campus employment until your change of status has been approved.

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 “USCIS”. 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 H-4 dependent to F-1 student. This letter should explain your circumstances and include why you entered the U.S. as an H-4 dependent, 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 International Students & Scholars Office – please be sure to sign page 1.
- 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.
- Copies of your spouse's/parent's H-1B documents, to include, picture page of passport, visa & I-94 card and H1B approval notice.

All application materials will be submitted to the USCIS Service Center that covers the area in which you live and it is recommended you mail your materials using a receipt based mailing option.

<p>If you live in - AK, AZ CA, CO, GU, HI, ID, NV, IL, IN, IA, KS, MI MN, MO, MT, NE, ND, OH, OR, SD, UT, WA, WI or WY</p>	<p>Note: If you are outside the service area for the Vermont Service Center – you may use my address on your application.</p>	<p>If you live in - AL, AK, CT, DE, FL, GA, KY, LA, ME, MD, MA, MI, NH, NJ, NM, NY, NC, OK, PA, PR, RI, SC, TN, TX, VT, VA, VI, WV, or DC</p>
<p>USCIS California Service Center PO Box 10539 Laguna Niguel, CA 92607-1053</p>		<p>USCIS Vermont Service Center 75 Lower Welden Street St. Albans, VT 05479</p>