



**ENGLISH** as a Second Language

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## INFORMATION FOR CHANGE OF STATUS APPLICANTS

**Do I need a change of status?** Individuals in other immigration statuses who want to study full-time may wish to change their status to F-1 to be eligible for certain student benefits. Change of status applications are submitted to and adjudicated by the U. S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (previously INS). You must make an appointment to meet with the School Director to discuss your individual case.

**Can anyone apply for a change of status?** If your I-94 form has expired you cannot apply for a change of status. You must leave the United States to apply for your desired status at the U.S. Embassy. Also, if you are in WT (visa waiver) status or in J status with a two year home residency requirement you may not apply for a change to F-1 student status in the United States. Lastly, if you are in C, D, K or M status, you are not eligible for a change of status to F-1.

**What happens if I plan to travel outside of the United States?** You can also change your immigration status by traveling to another country (preferably your home country). You will need to get an F-1 visa stamped in your passport from a U.S. Consulate by providing them with an I-20, an unexpired passport, and financial documents. *Even if you get a change of status approved within the U.S., you will need to apply for an F-1 visa the next time you travel outside the United States. Having a change of status approved is no guarantee that you will be granted an F-1 visa the next time you travel outside the United States. It is highly recommended that you seek legal advice to discuss travel plans.*

**What should I do while I'm waiting for an answer from USCIS?** Individuals in B-1/B-2 or F-2 status must wait to begin full-time classes until their change of status is approved, so as not to violate their current status. Those holding other immigration statuses can attend full-time classes while their application is pending at USCIS. *(You MUST register to be a full-time student within 30 days once your change of status is approved. You are not eligible for any benefits of F-1 status until your application is approved.)* B-1/B-2 visa holders also need to maintain their status by submitting tourist status extension applications every six months.

**Are there any special circumstances I need to know?** If you are applying to change from B-1/B-2 status to F-1 status, you will need to prove to USCIS that your intention to become a student happened AFTER you arrived in the United States. **Applications for a change of status filed before you have been here for 2 months arouse suspicion that you misrepresented yourself by failing to reveal your intention to study when applying for a visa to enter the United States.** Your cover letter should clearly explain how and when you decided to go to school. USCIS will occasionally ask the school to verify when a student first contacted us.

**What financial documents are required?** You must submit recent bank statements (no more than 3 months old) that show either you or your sponsor has at least \$10,800 for 6 months of school and living expenses, or \$21,600 for one year. Overseas sponsors must complete the Overseas Sponsor Form, and US-based sponsors must complete form I-134, Affidavit of Support.

