

PROCEDURES FOR CHANGE OF STATUS DEPENDENT TO STUDENT

You may change your status if you are admitted to an academic program at the University of Illinois. You may change your status by application to the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) or by travel and re-entry. In either case, **you must receive approval for F-1 or J-1 student status prior to beginning any program of study.**

Requirements to change to F-1 or J-1 status:

1. You must be admitted to a full-time academic program at the University of Illinois.
2. Except in certain specific instances, you must be prepared to take a full load of courses (12 hours) each fall and spring semester while you are enrolled at the UIUC.
3. You must have a Form DS-2019 issued by the UIUC or your J-1 program sponsor (for J-1 status) or I-20 (for F-1 status), issued by the UIUC.
4. If you are in J-2 status and you are subject to a two-year home residency requirement, you are not eligible to request a change of status from USCIS. Instead, you must follow the travel and reentry procedure outlined in the last paragraph.

Change of status through the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services. You must assemble the documents listed below in the order that they appear, and send them to the USCIS by mail

1. Check or money order for \$370.00, payable to the "Department of Homeland Security".
2. Completed Form I-539.
3. Original Form I-20 for F-1 status (sign the bottom of page 1), or DS-2019 for J-1 status (sign the bottom of page 1). You must submit all parts of the I-20 or DS-2019 with your application.
4. Printout of your I-94 from www.cbp.gov/i94 or photocopy of your I-94 card (front and back).
5. Photocopy of the identity and visa page from your passport, including passport expiration date.
6. A letter from you to the USCIS (To Whom It May Concern) containing:
 - a. Your address and telephone number
 - b. Your request to change status
 - c. A statement that you will be a full-time student and therefore you must change your status
 - d. Your passport number and expiration date
 - e. For J-1 status, include a statement to indicate that 1) you understand that you may become subject to the two-year home residence requirement and 2) that your spouse may be unable to later change status to J-2 to stay with you.
7. Documentation of financial support. You must also include a **Form I-134 Affidavit of Support if you receive funds from a personal sponsor.** You should also include copies of your last four bank statements.

8. Proof of valid, current nonimmigrant status.
9. Copy of any I-797 Approval Notices changing or extending your status.

Make an appointment with an advisor at ISSS to review your application.

Before mailing your application, you must also pay the SEVIS fee. The cost of the fee is \$180 (J-1)/ \$200 (F-1). You can pay this one-time fee at www.fmjfee.com or by submitting form I- 901 with a check or money order drawn on a U.S. bank and payable in U.S. currency. You should include a copy of your SEVIS payment receipt with your application.

You should keep photocopies of all documents submitted to the USCIS for your records. Mail all documents by Certified Mail with a Return Receipt Requested to the USCIS Dallas Lockbox facility:

For US Postal Service:
USCIS
P.O. Box 660166
Dallas, TX 75266

For Express mail and courier deliveries:
USCIS
ATTN: I-539
2501 S. State Highway 121 Business
Suite 400
Lewisville, TX 75067

Use a return address that will be current for several months.

Change of status by leaving the United States and reentering: If you go abroad and reenter the U.S. using the new Form DS-2019 or I-20, your approved re-entry will change your status. You must apply for a J-1 or F-1 entry visa while you are outside the U.S. Please be aware that it may take several days, and even weeks, for your visa application to be processed and that you will be required to pay the SEVIS fee well in advance of applying for your new entry visa. The U.S. embassies will not process any visa applications without verification that the SEVIS fee has been paid. Furthermore, it might be difficult, if not impossible, to get an entry visa outside of your country of citizenship or permanent residence. Finally, please note that you are never guaranteed to get a new entry visa.

Please be sure to stop by ISSS with your approval for change of status. We are required to keep current photocopies of your documents on file at ISSS.