

**GENERAL**

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 United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) or by travel and re-entry.

Requirements to change to 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.
4. If you are subject to a two-year home residency requirement from a previous status, you are not eligible to request a change of status from the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services. Instead, you must follow the travel and reentry procedure outlined in the last paragraph.

**APPLY WITHIN THE UNITED STATES (USCIS APPLICATION)**

1. Check, money order or online payment payable to the "Department of Homeland Security." (Check filing fee here: <https://www.uscis.gov/g-1055?form=i-539>)
2. Completed Form I-539. Include I-539A Supplemental Information for Application to Extend/Change Nonimmigrant Status, if you are including dependents in the application. (<https://www.uscis.gov/i-539>)
3. Original Form DS-2019 (sign the bottom of page 1). You must submit all parts of the DS-2019 with your application.
4. Your original I-94 card.
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 of the reason you are required to change status (eg. Your sponsor's funding requires you to hold a J-1 visa)
  - d. Your passport number and expiration date
  - e. A statement to indicate that you understand that you and your dependent(s) may become subject to the two-year home residency requirement.
7. Documentation of financial support.
8. Proof of valid, current nonimmigrant status.
9. Copy of any I-797 Approval Notices changing or extending your status.
10. Copy of your I-901 SEVIS fee receipt. The SEVIS fee must be paid online here: [www.fmjfee.com](http://www.fmjfee.com)

Please make an appointment with an advisor at ISSS if you have questions about your application.

You should keep photocopies of all documents submitted to the USCIS for your records.

For online filing, please visit the USCIS website: <https://www.uscis.gov/i539online>

OR mail all documents by Certified Mail with a Return Receipt Requested to the appropriate USCIS Lockbox facility. Be sure to use a return address that will be valid for several months. You can find an updated list of Lockbox addresses here: <https://www.uscis.gov/i-539-addresses>

**CHANGE STATUS BY TRAVEL AND REENTRY**

If you go abroad and reenter the U.S. using the new Form DS-2019, your approved re-entry will change your status. You must apply for a J-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.