



Applying for a Change of Visa Status from Other Visa Categories to F-1

Individuals within the U.S. through other visa categories may be eligible to change their visa status to F-1. For more information go to [Who can study?](#) Whether an individual can study or be employed while awaiting their change of status to F-1 approval will depend upon to regulations related to their current visa status. For more information you may email Intl.Stu@tamuc.edu or visit the Office of International Student & Scholar Services during [Advising Hours](#).

Please keep in mind the following:

- The change of status application has to be **received** by USCIS while your current visa status is still in a valid status. If the applicants is here as a dependent then their visa status is valid status as long as the principal visa holder's status is valid. As long as the change of status application is received by USCIS while the applicants current status is valid then USCIS will generally adjudicate the application. ***Please note this is at the discretion of USCIS.***
- While USCIS general processing times are 2-3 months, most change of statuses will take much longer. Many change of status applications have taken up to nine (9) months for USCIS to process and some schools have reported a processing time of over twelve (12) months. ***Students should plan for a minimum USCIS processing time of between four (4) and nine (9) months.***
- Applicants may contact USCIS after 90 days from their application receipt notice date to inquire about their application. There are very limited options to request an expedite for an application and to learn more about USCIS's expedite policy go to [USCIS Expedite](#). The ISSS cannot intervene with USCIS to request an expedite.
- Applicants filing for a change of status will not be eligible for any benefits related to the F-1 visa status until their change of status is approved.
- Applicants will generally not be eligible for on-campus employment until the start date of the next available semester after the approval notice effective date for the change of status.
- Once the application is filed the applicant cannot travel outside the U.S. or the change of visa status will be considered abandoned.
- Once the change of visa status is approved, the next time the applicant travels outside the U.S. they will be required to apply for an F-1 visa before they will be permitted to re-enter the U.S.
- All applicants will be required to attend the next available International Student Orientation and will be required to enroll in the System Student Health Insurance Plan (SSHIP) unless they meet one of the allowed waivers.

Documents Required to Change Your Status from F-2 to F-1

Below is a checklist of all documents required for the change of status (COS). It is your responsibility to provide all documents as listed below. Incomplete applications will not be reviewed or processed. ***Before the ISSS can process a change of status to F-1 the individual must first be admitted to a degree program or the English Language Institute.*** Please email the following documents to Intl.Stu@tamuc.edu. DO NOT copy any alternate email or drop your documents off in person at the ISSS.

- Copy of approval notice (if applicable), current passport (***picture and data pages only***), visa, and I-94 for individual applying for the change of status and the principal visa holder. ***DO NOT provide copies of every page of the passport.***
 - If paper copy I-94 provide a copy of the front and the back
 - If electronic record I-94 you may print a copy at [I-94 Arrival/Departure Record](#)
- Proof of funding for one year of study which equals an estimated \$20000 for ELI, \$26000 for graduate student, and \$28000 for undergraduate student plus \$3000 per dependent:
 - Proof of funding may be a bank statement (checking or savings account) or certificate of deposit and will to cover the ***previous 3 months***.
 - A letter from a bank, employment letter (for F-1), or Admission Purposes Only financial guarantee ***will not be accepted.***
 - Applicants must need include the ISSS sponsor statement (for sponsors ***outside*** the U.S.) or the [Form I-134](#) (for sponsors ***within*** the U.S.) at [Funding Requirements for I-20](#).
- If the visa status for the principal visa holder is based on employment then a current letter verifying the principal visa holder's employment is required.
- Letter stating reason for change of status.

DO NOT submit the following documents or any additional documents not listed above:

- i) W-2's or tax returns
- ii) Marriage license
- iii) SSN card
- iv) Driver's license
- v) I-539

Incomplete applications will not be reviewed or processed and it is your responsibility to provide all documents listed above via email to Intl.Stu@tamuc.edu.

The ISSS will review all documents and issue the F-1 I-20 for the COS if eligible within 10 business days. Once your COS has been processed you will be emailed the copy of the COS I-20 along with instructions to file online electronically or by mail. Students will only receive a copy of the COS I-20.

Please note that once the application is processed the person applying for COS will need to pay the \$200 SEVIS I-901 fee at <https://www.fmjfee.com/i901fee/index.jsp>. Be sure to keep a copy of your payment receipt for your records and to submit with your online application (I-539). This fee is non-refundable once payment is made.