



## Applying for a Change of Visa Status from H1-B to F-1

H-1B visa holders are allowed to study in an academic program with no restrictions as far as online or face to face course enrollment. Any study must be incidental to the h1-B primary objective which is employment. Below is the general guidance for H1-B visa holders who are considering changing their visa status to F-1:

- The change of status application has to be **received** by USCIS while the H1-B is still in a valid status. While there may be a general 60-day “grace period” after the completion of the H1-B status the ISSS cannot advise on the availability of any “grace period” after the H1-B status has expired. As long as the change of status application is received by USCIS while the H-1B is in status then USCIS will generally adjudicate the application even if the H-1B status expires. ***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.
- Students filing for a change of status will not be eligible for any benefits related to the F-1 visa status (i.e. employment) until the start date for the next available semester that proceeds the approval notice date.
- Once the application is filed you cannot travel outside the U.S. or your change of visa status will be considered abandoned.
- Once your change of visa status is approved, the next time you travel outside the U.S. you will be required to apply for an F-1 visa before you will be permitted to re-enter the U.S.
- You will be required to attend the next available International Student Orientation.
- You will be required to enroll in the System Student Health Insurance Plan (SSHIP) unless you meet one of the allowed waivers

## Documents Required to Change Your Status from H-1B 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](mailto: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 the H1-B principal. ***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](#)
- Copy of approval notice (if applicable), current passport (***picture and data pages only***), visa, and I-94 for any dependent (H-4 to F-2). ***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](#).
- Current letter of employment for H1-B principal confirming dates of employment OR letter verifying start date and end date for employment.
- 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](mailto: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.