

Student Center North, N203, Houston, TX 77204-3024 ☎ Phone: (713) 743-5065 ✉ Email: [isssohlp@central.uh.edu](mailto:isssohlp@central.uh.edu) 🌐 <http://uh.edu/oisss>

## CHANGING STATUS TO J-1

**BASIC DESCRIPTION:** This process only changes your visa status (e.g., your classification noted on your I-94 entry). It will not change your visa sticker (the entry sticker in your passport). If you depart from the United States and want to re-enter, you must still obtain the appropriate visa sticker in your passport. Approval of a change of status by filing inside the United States does not guarantee that you will be issued a visa sticker in your home country. *Applying for a change in status may take 6 months or longer.* In some cases it may be possible to apply for a new visa in Canada (not advisable for B-1/B-2 visa holders or those with an expired visa). These options can be discussed at your appointment with an International Student Counselor.

**NOTE:** If you are a child in a dependent visa classification (e.g., F-2, H-4, L-2, E-2, etc.) you must change your status before you turn 21 years of age (unless in dependent A1/A2 status). A J-2 who is subject to the 212(e) home residence requirement may not change from J-2 to J-1 status in the U.S. Benefits of J-1 status, including employment eligibility, are not available until the change of status application is approved by US Citizenship & Immigration Services (USCIS). Requests by an F-1 student to change to J-1 status may be denied if USCIS determines the primary reason is to enable a spouse to apply for work authorization. This can be discussed during your appointment. Other documents may be required that are not listed below.

### APPOINTMENT CHECKLIST

- Bring all your immigration documents.** Not limited to the following: Passport, visa, I-94, and any proof of status changes or documents received from USCIS (i-797 receipt notices). *If dependents will be included, bring their immigration documents as well.*
- Complete form I-539** (Parts 1-5, and if applicable, an I-539A Supplement for each family members to be included) and G-1145. Download all required forms at this link: <https://www.uscis.gov/i-539>.
- Letter of request.** (Address "To Whom It May Concern" and explain why you want a change of status. Begin the letter with a statement of request followed by the reasons. The letter should be brief and to the point.
- Evidence of financial support.** DHS examines these documents very carefully. *Examples:*
  - RA's, TA's, & Fellowships: Complete an RA/TA Verification form (available at our office).
  - Scholarships: Verified with a letter from your college or supplying agency. It should also state if you are eligible for resident tuition.
  - Funds from a sponsor or personal account (Most bank letters and internet printouts will not be accepted):
    - *Relying on your own personal funds?* Submit copies of the last three (3) personal bank statements showing debits and credits for yourself.
    - *Submitting a statement showing CD's/Mutual funds as proof of finances?* As these funds are not immediately available, submit a copy of the terms translated in English showing US currency. Explain what arrangements have been made to transfer these funds to pay for your education.
    - *Will your funds be provided by a U.S. sponsor?* Send a copy of her/his latest 1040 tax form and a copy of their W2 form along with **I-134 Affidavit of Support**. This form is available at the ISSS Front Desk or can be downloaded at: <https://www.uscis.gov/i-134>.
    - *Will your funds be provided by a sponsor in a foreign country?* Send proof they have sufficient funds (with an official translation and showing the funds in US dollars) and a letter verifying they will support you (i.e. bank statements, see note above).

**Please black out any Social Security Number and bank account number(s) on all documents.**

- If you are changing from a dependent classification (e.g., F-2, H-4, L-2, etc.):** Bring the passport, I-94 card, (or Form I-797 Notice of Action), and marriage certificate in English (spouse only) of the primary visa holder. If you are an **A-1 or A-2 dependent**, we recommend that you make an appointment to discuss the additional documentations that are needed.
- Personal check payable to U.S. Department of Homeland Security for **\$370 (filing fee) and \$85 (biometrics). (Add an additional \$85 biometric fee for each additional dependent)**
- After ISSSO counselor has created a new DS-2019**, pay a SEVIS fee of **\$220** and obtain the I-901 receipt verifying payment. You can pay the fee with a credit card, through Western Union, or by mail. The website for paying the SEVIS fee is [www.FMJfee.com](http://www.FMJfee.com). Remember to print out a receipt at the end of the procedure if paying online.

### MAILING CHECKLIST

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Your letter of request.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Completed form I-539 and G-1145.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> DS-2019 signed by the International Student Counselor and student. Your UH DS-2019 will be issued at your appointment or at a later date.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> I-901 Receipt for payment of the \$220 SEVIS fee.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Proof of financial support and documents.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> <b>I-94, copies</b> of all passports and visas of everyone involved in the application and any prior USCIS receipt notices. <b>If applicable</b>, a copy of the marriage certificate.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Personal check payable to <i>U.S. Department of Homeland Security</i> for <b>\$370 and \$85. And \$85 for each additional dependent (I-539A)</b></li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Form I-907 and separate \$1,750 fee (premium processing)</li> </ul> |
|---|--|

**ONLINE FILING NOTE:** You can and should file your application online with USCIS if you are the only applicant. If you file by paper, you will receive an additional notice to create your USCIS online account for your application. This is recommended to do as it will provide you access to your application status and any notices you may have missed.

**\*PREMIUM PROCESSING:** Students changing status to F-1 are eligible to submit a form I-907 for premium processing together with their I-539 application starting on June 26<sup>th</sup>, 2023. The costs associated with premium processing is \$1,750 on top of the other fees. The processing time of 15-30 days only begins following the biometric appointment.