CHANGING STATUS TO F-1

BASIC DESCRIPTION: This process only changes your visa status (e.g., your classification noted on your I-94 card). It will not change your visa sticker (the entry sticker in your passport). If you depart from the United States and want to reenter, you must still obtain the appropriate visa sticker in your passport. Instead of applying for a change of visa status in the U.S., you may prefer to apply for a new visa sticker in your home country. 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 up to 120 days or longer. Ask International Student and Scholar Services (ISSS) about current processing times. 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, R-2, etc.) you must change your status before you turn 21 years of age. A-1/A-2 dependents should confer with their consulate and the U.S. Department of State regarding the age they need to change status. Other changes in status (e.g. F-1 to F-2) may require additional documents not listed below. This can be discussed at your appointment.

APPOINTMENT CHECKLIST

- Bring your form I-20, passport, visa, and I-94. For H-1B or H-4 or other visa types, please bring proof of your status (e.g. I-797 Notice of Action). If family members are changing status with you, please bring their passports and I-94 cards.
- Complete forms 1-539 (Parts 1, 4, 5, and if applicable, Supplement 1 which is for family members who are dependents) and G-1145. The forms can be downloaded at: http://www.uscis.gov/files/form/i-539.pdf and http://www.uscis.gov/files/form/g-1145.pdf.
- 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 the 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 (Bank letters or 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. Bank letters or internet printouts will not be accepted.
    - 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 OISSS Front Desk or can be downloaded at: http://www.uscis.gov/files/form/i-134.pdf.
    - Will your funds be provided by a sponsor in a foreign country? Send proof they have sufficient funds (with 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 Social Security Number and bank account number(s) on any 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 applications that are needed.
- Pay a SEVIS fee of $200 using form I-901 and obtain a receipt verifying payment. For more information, visit: https://www.fmjfee.com/i901fee/students/student/help.htm. 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. When you use the internet remember to print out a receipt at the end of the procedure.

MAILING CHECKLIST

- Your letter of request.
- Completed form I-539.
- I-20 signed by the International Student Counselor and student. If you do not have a UH I-20, it will be issued at your appointment or may need to pick it up 5 days later.
- Receipt for payment of the $200 SEVIS fee.