

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 and could require additional “bridge” applications with USCIS.* 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 **\$455. (Add \$85 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. Remember to print out a receipt at the end of the procedure if paying online.

MAILING CHECKLIST

- Your letter of request.
- Completed form I-539 and G-1145.
- 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 at a later date.
- I-901 Receipt for payment of the \$220 SEVIS fee.
- Proof of financial support and documents.
- I-94, copies** of all passports and visas of everyone involved in the application and any prior USCIS receipt notices. **If applicable**, a copy of the marriage certificate.
- Personal check payable to *U.S. Department of Homeland Security* for **\$455 and \$85 for each additional dependent (I-539A)**.