



University at Buffalo  
The State University of New York

Office of International Education  
International Student and Scholar Services

## CHANGE OF STATUS: F-1 STUDENT TO F-2 DEPENDENT

### What is a Change of Status?

A change of status is a change in one's primary purpose for being in the U.S. There are two ways to change one's immigration status. One way is to travel back home or outside the U.S., apply for a new visa at a U.S. Consulate, and then re-enter the U.S. in the new status.\* The other way is to submit a change of status application to U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services ("USCIS") while remaining in the U.S. The USCIS reviews applications for changes of status based on the applicant's ability to document and justify a change of primary purpose for being in the U.S. since having arrived in the U.S.

\* ***NOTE:*** *There are always risks associated with applying for a new visa. These risks include mandatory interviews, lengthy background checks, the requirement to prove non-immigrant intent, etc. Such risks may not only cause delays, but may also result in visa denial.*

### How do I apply for a change of status from F-1 to F-2?

Submit the following to the USCIS Service Center:

- **Application Fee of \$300.** This should be a check payable to the "USCIS". Write the 11-digit "admission number" from your I-94 on the front of the check.
- A cover letter from you addressed to the USCIS requesting the change of status and explaining your circumstances. Include why you entered the U.S. as an F-1 student, why and how your intentions changed after arrival in the U.S. and any other relevant information.
- Form I-539: "Application to Extend/Change Nonimmigrant Status" (*form attached*).
- Your **original, new "Dependent" I-20** received from ISSS
  - To get a dependent I-20, **your spouse will need to submit new financial documentation** to ISSS, verifying that he/she has enough funds to support his/her educational expenses and both of your living expenses. (*See attached guidelines for acceptable "Financial Documentation"*)
- A photocopy of your current I-20 and all previous I-20's

- A photocopy of your spouse's current I-20 and all previous I-20's
- A photocopy of your financial documentation
- A photocopy of your marriage certificate (or official "family record")
- A photocopy of the front and back of your I-94 card with a legible date stamp
- A photocopy of your passport biographic / picture page and visa stamp
- Photocopies of your spouse's passport biographic / picture page, visa stamp, and front and back of his/her I-94 card

**We recommend that you schedule an appointment with an International Student Advisor to review your completed application before submitting it to U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services.**

### **Where do I send my application?**

Mail your completed application by an overnight, reliable mail delivery service to:

**U.S. Department of Homeland Security  
U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services  
Vermont Service Center  
75 Lower Welden Street  
St. Albans, VT 05479-0001**

*Please make a photocopy of your entire application and supporting documents for your files before sending them to the USCIS.*

### **How long will processing at the USCIS take?**

Estimated processing time can be anywhere from 2-6 months. When you receive a response from the USCIS, please report the outcome to International Student and Scholar Services. Send or bring a photocopy of your I-20, I-797 "Approval Notice" and new I-94 card to ISSS, 210 Talbert Hall.