CHANGE OF STATUS TO F-1

Eligibility
- Admission to the University of Nevada, Reno
- Maintained lawful status in current non-immigrant status

Important Information
- It may take more than 6 months for the Form I-539 to be processed.
- **Students may not begin employment and use an assistantship until the change of status (COS) to F-1 is effective unless your current immigration status permits study and/or employment.** The Office of International Students and Scholars (OISS) recommends that you study if you are eligible to study while your change of status application is pending in order to be able to activate your record in the Student and Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS) once the change of status is approved and effective.
- OISS recommends you maintain your current status until the F-1 student status is approved.
- Your current nonimmigrant status may not expire more than 30 days before the start date on your I-20 if applying for a COS in the U.S.
- When you get your approval you must make an appointment to see an OISS advisor and bring to the appointment a copy of the approval notice from USCIS so that we can register your change of status with the Student and Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS).
- Travel out of the country while a change of status application is pending is considered an abandonment of the application and will cancel your change of status application. Please meet with an OISS advisor if you want to travel out of the country while your change of status application is pending.
- If the change of status has not been approved by the add/drop date of the semester the program starts, contact an OISS advisor to determine if the program start date should be deferred.
- With an approved change of status in the U.S., students will need to apply for an F-1 or J-1 visa if they travel out of the country. Visa approval is not guaranteed.
  - **NOTE:** Canadian citizens are exempt from having an F-1 of J-1 visa to enter the U.S. but travel and re-entry with Form I-94 is required to obtain F-1 or J-1 status.
- If you have filed for an immigrant status (Permanent Resident), your COS may be denied.
- If you apply for a COS soon after arriving in the U.S., your application may be denied due to false representation of your non-immigrant intent upon entry.

It is the student’s responsibility to keep track of the change of status to F-1 application and to keep OISS updated of any changes.

Application Documents for OISS
- Copy of admission letter to the University of Nevada, Reno (University) if OISS does not already have it.
- **Student I-20/DS-2019 Request Form** or if newly admitted to the University, email to oiss@unr.edu requesting a change of status.
- Copies of the bio page of the passport (include extension page if applicable), current visa and Form I-94 (front and back if you have the card) for applicant and dependent(s) (if applicable).
- Proof of funding: **Original** financial institution documents and/or graduate assistantship offer letter and/or scholarship offer letter showing financial support for self and family (if applicable) to cover amount required for 1 academic year (check with OISS for the required amount). The original documents should have been issued within 6 months of the change of status application. If the proof of funding is from a financial institution not under the applicant’s name, submit a Financial Data Form.

APPLY OUTSIDE THE U.S. (Recommended)

An alternative to changing your status within the U.S. would be to travel outside the country and apply for an F-1 student visa. OISS recommends you travel to your home country to apply for the F-1 visa. Students will obtain an I-20 from OISS then pay the SEVIS I-901 fee before applying for the F-1 visa. Go to U.S. Visas to get information on applying for a visa to study in the U.S.
The student must report to the University OISS with their I-20, passport, visa and I-94 card within 10 days of their arrival to the U.S. to have their SEVIS record activated. Students may not enter the U.S. more than 30 days before the program start date listed on the I-20.

**APPLY WHILE IN THE U.S.**

Submit the Following Documents to USCIS:
- **OPTIONAL:** You may attach Form G-1145 (E-Notification of Application/Petition Acceptance) from to the first page of the application to request an e-Notification of the receipt of the application at the USCIS Lockbox facility. There is no filing fee for this service.
- Letter of explanation of why you are applying for a change of status, your intent to return to your country after program completion, and explaining proof of residence in your home country. Include a checklist of the documents you are including in the application.
- *Money order, personal check, cashier’s check, or credit card using Form G-1450, Authorization for Credit Card Transactions* in U.S. currency for the filing fee payment of $370 plus an additional $85 biometric services fee.
  - Make checks and money orders payable to the U.S. Department of Homeland Security with “Change of Status to F-1” in the memo line. When filing at a USCIS Lockbox facility, you may also pay by credit card using Form G-1450, Authorization for Credit Card Transactions.
- **Original** Form I-539 available. Read the instructions carefully to fill out the form.
  - Consult an OISS advisor before E-Filing Form I-539.
- **Copy** of new SEVIS I-20 issued by the OISS at the University. Make sure to sign the original before copying.
- Receipt for payment of SEVIS fee (pay the fee after receiving new F-1 I-20).
- **Copy** of your letter of admission to the University.
- ** Copies** of the bio page of the passport (include extension page if applicable), current visa, and I-94 for you and your dependent(s) (if applicable).
- **Original** financial documents and/or original graduate assistantship offer letter and/or original scholarship offer letter showing financial support for self and family (if applicable) for amount indicated on the I-20.
  - If sending bank statement(s), provide 3 consecutive months’ worth of statements.
- **Copy** of residence abroad – may include current: telephone/utility bills, mortgage statements, or rental agreements.
- Children changing to their own status: certified copy of your birth certificate. Provide an English translation certified by the translator if it is in another language.

**F-2 to F-1 Additional Document(s)**
- **Copy** of all your spouse’s F-1 SEVIS I-20s and **copy** of all your F-2 SEVIS I-20s.
- **Proof** of F-1 principal’s status maintenance such as official transcript or employment letter if on post-completion OPT.
  - **Full-time study is not authorized while the change of status from F-2 to F-1 application is pending.**

**J-1/J-2 to F-1 Additional Document(s)**
- Waiver of two year home residency requirement (if applicable).
- **Copy(ies)** of DS-2019.
- **Proof** of J-1 principal’s status maintenance such as official transcript or employment letter if on post-completion AT.
  - **Full-time study is authorized while the change of status from J-1/J-2 to F-1 application is pending as long as J-1/J-2 status is maintained.**

**H-1/H-4 to F-1 Additional Document(s)**
- **Copy** of H-1B and H-4 Form I-797 Approval Notice.
- **Confirmation** of H-1B’s continued employment.
  - **Full-time study is authorized while the change of status from H-1/H-4 to F-1 application is pending as long as H-1/H-4 status is maintained.**
B-1/B-2 to F-1 Additional Document(s)

- Letter certifying that the applicant did not intend to study when they entered as B-1/B-2 and explaining why they now want to change status. B-1/B-2 visa holders should not change status within the first two months of entry.

*Study is not authorized while the change of status from B-1/B-2 to F-1 application is pending.*

Copy the entire packet you send to USCIS for your records and send the applicable abovementioned documents to either one of the address below. Request tracking information for your mailing:

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<th><em>U.S. Postal Service (USPS) deliveries</em></th>
<th><em>FedEx, UPS, and DHL deliveries</em></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>USCIS</strong></td>
<td><strong>USCIS</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>PO Box 660166</td>
<td>ATTN: I-539</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dallas, TX 75266</td>
<td>2501 S. State Highway 121 Business</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Suite 400</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Lewisville, TX 75067</td>
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* Filing fee and delivery addresses subject to change. Check the instructions for Form I-539 to verify the filing fee and delivery address.

**Note:** In 2 to 4 weeks you will get your Form I-797C, Notice of Action (Receipt Notice) with a Receipt Number confirming that USCIS has received your OPT application. This **does not** indicate approval. Go to USCIS to check the status of your application under “Check your Case Status”. You may sign up to receive email updates on your case at this website by creating an account. Once your change of status application is approved, you will get the Form I-797A, Approval Notice in the mail. You will have to complete the OISS Class Registration requirements to enroll in classes and register your SEVIS record.

❖ **IF YOU RECEIVE A REQUEST FOR EVIDENCE (RFE) OR REQUEST FOR INFORMATION (RFI) FROM USCIS, IMMEDIATELY CONTACT AN OISS ADVISOR BEFORE RESPONDING ❖