



Princeton University – Davis International Center

Application for Student Change of Status to F-1 or J-1

NOTE: This is only general guidance and is not intended to replace legal advice. Depending on your current immigration status, the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) may require additional documents that are not on this list. If you believe your application is complex, we strongly advise you to consult with a reputable immigration attorney.

At the minimum, we recommend that you submit the following to the USCIS:

ORIGINAL DOCUMENTS:

- **Letter addressed to the USCIS detailing the reason(s) why you wish to change your current status.** For example, if you are currently in h1B status you may want to write that you are changing your status to F-1 so that you can terminate your current employment and engage in full-time studies at Princeton University. *Make sure to sign the letter.*
- **Form I-539, Application to Extend/Change Nonimmigrant Status.** This form is available from the USCIS website: <http://www.uscis.gov/i-539>.
- **Application Fee: check or money order in the amount \$370** made payable to the U.S. Department of Homeland Security.
- **SEVIS Fee Payment Receipt.** You can print out a receipt after paying the fee at: <https://www.fmifee.com/>

PHOTOCOPIES:

- **Form I-20** (if you are changing status to F -1) or **DS-2019** (if you are changing status to J-1) issued by Davis IC. To receive an I-20 or DS-2019, please go here <https://davisic.princeton.edu/forms-resources> and fill out the correct Application for a Visa Certificate (AVC) so we can issue one of these documents.
- **Proof of financial support** that matches financial information on your I-20 or DS-2019 (Princeton support, personal bank statements, etc.).
- **Most recent admission (I-94) record** obtained from <https://i94.cbp.dhs.gov>. If you were issued a paper I-94 Arrival/Departure card, submit a copy of both the front and the back of the card.
- **Proof that you are currently in legal immigration status** (e.g., current I-94 admission record printout).
- **Proof of Princeton admission** (if you are applying for change of status prior to starting your program) **or continued attendance in the form of a transcript** (if you are a current student).
- **Following pages of your passport:** bio page (showing the expiration date), the most recent entry visa stamp (Canadian citizens are exempt) and the most recent admission stamp.

davisic.princeton.edu

Should you have any additional questions, please contact the Davis International Center at (609) 258-5006 or puvisa@princeton.edu

FILLING TIPS:

- You must currently be in a valid immigration status in order to receive a change of status approval.
- USCIS processing times vary and it may take up to several months to receive the approval. Please plan accordingly and submit your application as soon as you are eligible to apply.
- After your application is complete and before you send it to the USCIS, make an electronic copy of the entire application for your record.
- We recommend that you mail your application to the USCIS by certified mail, return receipt requested or by express mail/courier services that will confirm delivery. For the mailing address and instructions, refer to the USCIS website: <http://www.uscis.gov/i-539>

WHILE CHANGE OF STATUS APPLICATION IS PENDING:

- You must not travel outside of the U.S. while your change of status application is pending. Leaving the U.S. will cause USCIS to consider your petition for a change of status to be abandoned. If you must travel, please contact the Davis IC to discuss the F-1/J-1 visa application process.
- Upon receiving the change of status approval notice from the USCIS, please bring the notice to Davis IC so that we can activate your F-1/J-1 SEVIS record.
- If your change of status application is not approved by your program start date, please notify your Davis IC advisor immediately. Depending on your current immigration status, you may need to defer the start of your program. The SEVP Sheet on *Nonimmigrants: Who Can Study* (<https://www.ice.gov/doclib/sevis/pdf/Nonimmigrant%20Class%20Who%20Can%20Study.pdf>) explains who is allowed to study full-time in the U.S. However, please double check this information with your current visa sponsor.
- Unless your current immigration status allows you to work on Princeton campus, please note that you **will NOT be able** to begin any on campus employment until the change of status application is approved. This includes an Assistantship in Instruction (AI) and Assistantship in Research (AR).
- Please immediately notify the Davis IC and/or an immigration attorney **IF**:
 1. you receive a Request for Evidence (RFE) from the USCIS,
 2. your application is denied, or
 3. your application is not approved before the expiration of your current status or before the program start date listed on your I-20/DS-2019.

AFTER YOUR CHANGE OF STATUS APPLICATION IS APPROVED:

- When you receive the approval notice, make sure to check the date when your new status will take effect. Please note that from this date on, you will no longer have the previous status. With the expiration of that status, all the associated benefits end as well.
- In order to return to the U.S. from a future trip abroad (except for trips to Canada, Mexico or Adjacent Islands that are 30 days or less in duration), you must apply for an F-1 or J-1 student visa at the U.S. Embassy/Consulate. Please consult with Davis IC about travel abroad and re-entry: <https://davisic.princeton.edu/immigration/students/travel-guidance>
- You are subject to the F-1 or J-1 immigration regulations. Please familiarize yourself with rules and responsibilities. Please consult Davis IC website for detailed information: <https://davisic.princeton.edu/immigration/students>

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