



GUIDELINES FOR CHANGE OF STATUS TO F-1 STUDENT STATUS

(Changing from another non-immigrant status to F-1)

Students should meet with an ISO Advisor to discuss their individual case when changing status in the U.S. After receiving your GW I-20, if you wish to change your non-immigrant status to F-1 while remaining in the U.S., you will need to apply to the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) for a change of status. New students to GW will begin the change of status process by coordinating with the admissions department to request an I-20 from the ISO. Current GW students who are eligible to study in their current immigration status will work directly with the ISO to get an I-20.

Important: Your change of status could take a few months to process once the USCIS receives the application. **If you are changing from a B-1/B-2 or F-2 status, attending school before your change of status has been approved will place you in violation of your status.** In addition, if you are applying for change of status you are *not* eligible for any F-1 benefits such as on campus employment, RA, or TA until you have received documentation that the change of status has been approved by the USCIS.

ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

- You must be maintaining your present lawful non-immigrant status when the application is filed and that status must be valid up until the date that the new status is requested to begin
- You must have an I-20 issued by the institution you plan to attend (GW).

APPLICATION PROCEDURES

- Step 1:** Accept offer of admission (new student) or be enrolled in a GW degree program (continuing students)
- Step 2:** New students should submit required documents to obtain an I-20 to the admissions office of the academic school where you will study. Current GW students should submit a request for the I-20 to the ISO
- Step 3:** Discuss change of status details with an ISO advisor through afternoon walk-in advising or by a morning appointment
- Step 4:** Prepare necessary documents to support your application (see USCIS website referred to on pg. 2)
- Step 5:** Receive I-20 from your admitting school (new students) or the ISO (continuing students)
- Step 6:** If necessary, visit an ISO advisor prior to mailing application
- Step 7:** Make copies of all documents for your records
- Step 8:** Mail your application to USCIS for adjudication through certified mail or with delivery confirmation
- Step 9:** Receive fee receipt notice from USCIS that your application has been accepted for processing. Please provide a copy of the fee receipt to the ISO and keep the original in a safe place for your records and for referencing the status of your application
- Step 10:** Track status of your application on USCIS website (<https://egov.uscis.gov/cris/jsps/index.jsp> - Case Status Online) using the receipt number located in the upper left corner of your receipt notice.
- Step 11:** Come to the ISO during afternoon walk-in advising and see an advisor when you receive ANY correspondence from USCIS. If your change of status has not been approved before the start of classes, please speak with an ISO advisor.
- Step 12:** Once you receive the I-797 Approval notice, visit the ISO to complete F-1 Check In and get registered in SEVIS



REQUIRED DOCUMENTATION

- Please see the updated list of required documentation to submit with your application at <http://www.uscis.gov/i-539>

MAILING YOUR APPLICATION

PLEASE DISCUSS WITH AN ISO ADVISOR AS TO WHERE TO MAIL YOUR CHANGE OF STATUS APPLICATION.

We recommend sending your application by one of the following methods, so that you will be notified when the USCIS receives your documents:

· **Certified mail, return receipt.** You will receive a signature card by mail when the documents arrive at the USCIS.

· **Priority mail, delivery confirmation.** You can log onto the Postal Service web site and document that the application arrived at the USCIS, then print out the delivery confirmation page as proof.

Please remember that an ISO advisor is available to meet with you at any step throughout the process to answer questions or address concerns.