



## QUALIFICATIONS

A non-immigrant alien who is already in the U.S. may apply for a change of status if s/he has maintained lawful immigration status up to the time the application is filed and adjudicated (i.e. approved or denied).

ISSS at Vanderbilt University assists with change of status application procedures for prospective Vanderbilt students who request a change of status to F-1, F-2, J-1, J-2.

Change of status applications are not guaranteed for approval. USCIS (United States Citizenship & Immigration Services) adjudications officers are alerted as to whether the applicant possesses a "preconceived intent" to study in the U.S., particularly when the applicant is requesting a change from B-2 tourist status to F-1. Please visit the USCIS website for more information regarding eligibility: [www.uscis.gov](http://www.uscis.gov).

## RESTRICTIONS TO PENDING STATUS

You are not in legal F-1 or J-1 status until your application for change of status is approved. You must abide by the immigration restrictions of your current (visa status you are changing from) immigrant or non-immigrant status.

Changing to F-1 status from J-1 status: J-1 physicians admitted to receive graduate medical education or training and J non-immigrants subject to the I.N.A. § 212(e) 2-year foreign residence requirement are not permitted to change status to F-1 within the U.S. These individuals must obtain a change of status is by exiting the U.S., applying for an F-1 visa, and re-entering the U.S.

School attendance: An applicant for change of status to F-1 or J-1 may not begin a full-time academic program before the application is approved, unless authorized by your current immigration status.

Employment benefits: No F-1 or J-1 employment benefits are available until the change of status is approved.

## TRAVEL

Travel abroad before approved change of status: If you depart the U.S. after filing the change of status application but before it is approved, you will need to obtain a new I-20/DS-2019 and to apply for your student visa at a U.S. consulate for reentry to the U.S.

Travel abroad after approved change of status: If you depart the U.S. after the change of status is approved, you will need to apply for your student visa at a U.S. consulate for reentry to the U.S.

## HOW TO APPLY

Please make an appointment with your International Student Adviser and bring the following documents with you to your appointment. Please check with International Student Adviser to verify all documents needed for your application.

- Completed [G-1145](#) Form
- \$290 personal check made payable to [U.S. Department of Homeland Security](#) for I-539 application fee
- [I-539](#) (download the fillable pdf form: <http://www.vanderbilt.edu/iss/forms.html#Student>)
- Original I-20 or DS-2019 (issued by an ISSS International Student Adviser)
- I-901 Receipt of SEVIS fee payment: <https://www.fmjfee.com/index.jhtml> (to be paid after I-20 issued by ISSS)
- Copy of I-94 Card (front and back)
- Copy of Passport identification pages (including expiration date)
- Copy of Visa
- Proof of Financial Support
- Dependent Family Member Documentation (I-20, passport, visa, I-94), if applicable
- Personal Letter (optional, see suggestions below)
- OTHER: as advised by your International Student Adviser

## SUGGESTIONS FOR PERSONAL LETTER

A strong letter explaining why you want to change status can help convince USCIS of your non-immigrant intent as well as persuade USCIS that the student did not have a pre-conceived intention to study in the U.S.