CHANGE OF VISA STATUS TO J-1

Students who are studying at UT on a visa other than a J-1 may be eligible to change to J-1 visa status. A change of status to J-1 can be filed to the USCIS with the assistance of the UT International Office.

To apply for a Change of Status, please bring the following to the International Office:

- **Form I-539**
- Passport, visa, **Form I-94** and any other documents verifying your current status (e.g. I-797, DS-2019, dependent I-20, etc.).
- A letter (maximum 1 page) written to USCIS explaining why you are requesting a change of J-1 status. The letter should include your brief immigration history including your original purpose for coming to the United States, your original visa status upon entry, and if you have changed status previously you must explain why. Also, please include a general statement that you have not worked without authorization in the United States and that you are not deportable on any grounds, if applicable.
- Evidence of financial support, showing an amount that is equal to or more than the amount that will appear on your DS-2019. Examples of suitable evidence include a bank statement, a salary letter from your employer, a letter of appointment from The University of Texas at Austin, a scholarship or grant letter, or a combination of any of the above. Please note that if the bank statement that you provide is not in your name, a signed letter indicating an agreement to financially sponsor you is required from the person who provided the bank statement.
- If you are currently a student, transcript or enrollment letter. If you are a new student, acceptance letter.
- If changing from H-1B or L-1 status, letter verifying current employment and paystubs for the last 3 months of employment.
- If changing from a dependent status to J-1, you will also need copies of the principal visa holder’s documentation including passport, visa, **Form I-94** and any other type of immigration form (e.g. I-20, DS-2010, I-797, etc.). Additional documents that may be required include marriage certificate (if dependent spouse) or birth certificate (if dependent child)
  - If currently in J-2 status, transcript of J-1 student.
  - If changing from H4 or L2, letter verifying current employment and paystubs for the last 3 months of employment of the primary visa holder (H-1B or L1)
  - If changing from E2 proof of business ownership of the primary visa holder
- Check or money order made out to “Department of Homeland Security” for $290.00.
- Form DS-2019 (provided by ISSS).
- Receipt showing payment of the **SEVIS Fee** of $180 after obtaining a DS-2019 from ISSS (see SEVIS Fee handout for details).

We will review your application and then you will submit it to USCIS. Processing time can take 2 - 5 months. We will contact you when the documents have been returned to our office. Please note that applicants from B-2 and F-2 status may not start classes until the change of status application has been approved. In addition, on-campus employment cannot begin until your Change of Status has been approved.
CHANGE OF VISA STATUS TO J-1

Filing a Change of Status to J-1 through ELIS (Electronic Immigration System)

- Access ELIS and create your account
- Follow instructions to input data based on your Form I-539 draft. Upload all supporting documents listed on the front side of this handout and pay I-539 filing fee via electronic check or credit card at the end of the ELIS process. The only supporting document that you do not have to upload is the Form I-539 (ELIS integrates Form I-539 into the application).
- Processing time through ELIS can be slightly faster than submitting a paper-version Change of Status application (possibly 1-2 weeks faster); however, be prepared to wait 2 - 5 months.
- Provide the ISSS with a copy of your ELIS Change of Status application and the ELIS email confirmation reflecting your receipt number, which you will receive immediately upon submitting your application. Please email this to the international student advisor who assisted you.

***REMINDER: Use the address of the International Office for your mailing address in ELIS***