CHANGE OF VISA STATUS TO F-1

Students who are studying at UT on a visa other than an F-1 may be eligible to change to F-1 visa status. A change of status to F-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 (available from ISSS or at www.uscis.gov/portal/site/uscis. Click on “Forms”).
- Passport, visa, I-94 card and any other documents verifying your current status (e.g. I-797, DS-2019, dependent I-20, etc.).
- A letter written to USCIS explaining why you are requesting a change to F-1 status (e.g. that the spouse or parent will soon complete his/her program and leave the U.S., that the dependent visa holder has been admitted as a full-time regular degree-seeking student, and/or that eligibility to accept employment related to the field of study would be beneficial). The letter should include your brief immigration history (how you originally came to the US and whether you have changed status before). The letter cannot cite employment as reason for wanting to change to F-1 status.
- Evidence of financial support that is equal to or more than the amount that will appear on your I-20. Examples include a student’s bank statement, a sponsor’s bank statement accompanied by a letter from the sponsor accepting financial responsibility for the student, a letter of appointment (for TA’s, GA’s, etc.) detailing the financial award, or a combination of any of the above.
- 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 F-1**, you will also need copies of the principal visa holder’s documentation including passport, visa, 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 F-2 status, transcript of F-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 I-20 (provided by ISSS).
- Receipt showing payment of the SEVIS Fee of $200 - payable directly to DHS on-line at www.fmjfee.com after obtaining an I-20 from ISSS (see SEVIS Fee handout for details).

We will review your application and submit it to USCIS. Processing time can take up to three months or longer. 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.
Filing a Change of status to F-1 through ELIS (Electronic Immigration System)

- Access ELIS and create your account: [http://www.uscis.gov/uscis-elis](http://www.uscis.gov/uscis-elis)
- 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 at least 3 months or longer.
- 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***