



If you are currently in the United States in a nonimmigrant status (B-1/B-2, F-1, F-2, H-1B or H-4) and would like to change to a different nonimmigrant status (F-1, F-2, J-1 or J-2) there are two options:

Option 1: You may travel outside of the U.S., apply for a visa at a U.S. Embassy with all required materials, and reenter the U.S. in the new status. This option is often referred to as *Consular Processing*.

Option 2: You may apply to U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) to change your status without leaving the U.S. by completing form I-539 (Application to Extend/Change Nonimmigrant Status). This process can take between 3 and 6 months and it is recommended that you do not travel while your application is in process.

Please note, if your Change of Status application is approved by USCIS, you will be in your new status, but you will not have a corresponding visa reflecting the new status. As a result, you will need to apply for a new visa stamp the next time you travel outside of the U.S. in order to reenter the U.S. in your new status.

Special considerations when changing to F-1 status

In order to be eligible to change your status to F-1, your current status must be valid until 30 days before the start of your academic program and you must continue to maintain your current status until your change of status is approved. Applicants in B-1/B-2 status cannot enroll in classes until the change of their status to F-1 is approved.

Nonimmigrant visa holders in the following categories are not permitted to change to F-1 status from within the U.S. and must change status through Consular Processing:

- M-1 students
- C, D, and K nonimmigrants
- WT and WB visitors admitted under the Visa Waiver Program
- J-1 physicians admitted to receive graduate medical education or training
- J nonimmigrants subject to the 212(e) 2-year foreign residence requirement

When in F-1 status, you must be enrolled full-time (12 credits for undergraduate students and 8 credits for graduate students) in on-ground courses each term and you cannot work without prior authorization from the Office of Global Services (OGS).

Applying to change your status to F-1 within the U.S.

To request the change of status within the U.S., you must submit Form I-539 (Application to Extend/Change Nonimmigrant Status) to USCIS. To learn more about the application process, please visit: uscis.gov/i-539. When completing this form, answer all questions that pertain to your case and mail this form, along with the suggested documents below, to USCIS by U.S. mail.

Suggested documents to enclose along with your completed I-539 application:

- Personal statement, addressed to USCIS, from you, describing why you would like to change your status
- Copy of Form I-20 reflecting the change of status notation for your program of study
- Copy of I-901 SEVIS fee receipt (which can be paid at fmjfee.com)
- Check or money order made out to the *U.S. Department of Homeland Security*



- Copy of your letter of admission or original certificate of enrollment at Northeastern University
- Electronic version of I-94 card (cbp.gov/i94)
- Copy of the biographical page of your current passport
- Copy of most the recent visa and full immigration documents for the principal visa holder (if you are holding a dependent visa, such as H4, L2, E2, F2, etc.). You may also need to provide a copy of documentation meeting or waiving the 212(e) requirement, if applicable, or copies of 3 recent paystubs for the principal visa holder, if applicable. Please discuss these specifications with the immigration lawyer of your spouse.
- Financial documentation demonstrating how you will cover your living expenses and tuition and fees indicated on your new I-20. If the name of the account holder on your financial documents is different from your own, include a financial affidavit of support.
- G-1145 E-Notification Request (optional)

Helpful Tips:

- If you are applying for **F-2 or J-2 status**, you will need to upload your I-20/DS-2019, your marriage certificate or birth certificate (with English translation, if applicable), and copies of the principal visa holder's documents.
- If you are currently in **A or G status**, you must first have Form I-566 approved by the Department of State.

After you have submitted your Change of Status application and you have obtained a verification of successful receipt from USCIS

Send an email with your receipt number to the OGS advisor who signed your I-20/DS-2019. You may check the status of your application online at egov.uscis.gov/cris/jsps/index.jsp by entering your receipt number.

If USCIS needs any additional information from you, you will receive a Request for Further Evidence (RFE) notice. Please contact the OGS so that we may help you respond to the RFE in a timely manner. You will receive a paper receipt and then a decision notice (Form I-797A, Notice of Action) by mail. Please email a copy of your approval notice to the Office of Global Services. You will need to complete the OGS Check-In e-form which you will receive by email during the first week of classes so that your SEVIS record can be properly registered. If your application is not approved before the start date of your program, please contact the OGS to discuss your options.

If you move while your application is pending: Please note that if you change your mailing address, the postal service will not forward mail sent to you by USCIS. Any changes to your address while your application is pending must be updated on myNEU as well as USCIS online at egov.uscis.gov/coa/displayCOAForm.do.

Questions?

If you have questions about your pending application with USCIS, feel free to reach out to National Customer Service Center at USCIS directly by dialing: 1.800.375.5283.

If you have questions or concerns after you have received your I-20 or DS-2019, please contact the Office of Global Services to make an appointment with an advisor.