Change of Status to F-1 Visa

All applicants who plan to change their visa status to F-1 must meet with an UTSA international student advisor to determine their eligibility and discuss application requirements. Unmarried dependents who hold non-immigrant visas may not be older than 21 years old to apply for a change of status.

Eligibility Requirements
To apply for a change of status to F-1 visa, you must be admitted to a UTSA academic program which meets the full time enrollment requirement.

Methods
There are two ways to change visa status:
1. Remain in the U.S. and apply by mail to the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS)
2. Depart the U.S. and apply in person at a U.S. Embassy or Consulate

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Method 1: Apply inside the U.S.</th>
<th>Method 2: Apply outside the U.S.</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Things to Consider:</strong></td>
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<td>• It will take approximately 3-5 months, possibly longer, for USCIS to process a change of status application. USCIS processing time information can be found on the USCIS website: <a href="http://www.uscis.gov/">www.uscis.gov/</a>.</td>
<td>• It may require 2 to 6 weeks to schedule for an F-1 visa interview. Applicants should verify interview time by contacting the U.S. embassy/consulate they plan to use.</td>
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<td>• Applicants must be in valid visa status at the time they apply for change of status.</td>
<td>• Applicants cannot re-enter the U.S. more than 30 days before the program start date listed on the I-20 form.</td>
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<td>• Applicants must maintain their current visa status up until the start date requested in the change of status application.</td>
<td>• If you are not a citizen of Canada or Mexico, changing status in those countries can be problematic. Some consulates do not process visas for third country nationals. Security checks can cause delays and you could be refused re-entry to the U.S. if your status change is denied.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Applicants currently in a status that does not allow full time study (e.g. F-2, B-1, B-2, etc.) must wait for a change of status to be approved by USCIS before beginning their program of study.</td>
<td>• Your embassy visit should be no later than the program start date on the Form I-20.</td>
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<td>• If applicants holds dependent status (e.g. F-2, H-4, etc.) must provide evidence of the validity of the status of the principal (e.g. F-1, H-1, etc.) since their status is dependent on the status of the principal.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Applicants with the following visa status are not permitted change status to F-1 while in the U.S.:</td>
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<td>o M-1 students</td>
<td>o Those who are admitted as visitors under 8 C.F.R. § 212.1 (e)</td>
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<tr>
<td>o C, D, K, and S visa holders</td>
<td>o WT and WB visitors admitted under the Visa Waiver Programs</td>
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<tr>
<td>o J-1 physicians admitted to receive graduate medical education or training</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Method 1: Applying inside the United States

Application Process
1. Submit all required documents listed in the “Required Documents” section for issuance of a Form I-20 to an international student advisor.
2. The international student advisor issues a Form I-20 with the remark “Initial Attendance - Change of Status Requested” within 2 business days.
3. Return to the International Student Services to pick up the Form I-20.
4. Pay the SEVIS I-901 fee and print a receipt. All individuals applying for change of status to F-1 visa must pay the SEVIS I-901 fee. The payment can be made online at https://www.fmjfee.com/i901fee/index.jsp.
5. Assemble the application. In addition to the documents submitted for issuance of the Form I-20, the applicant must include the following:
   - Photocopy of a valid Form I-20 issued by UTSA signed by the international student advisor and applicant.
   - Proof of payment of the SEVIS I-901 fee: The payment can be made online at https://www.fmjfee.com/i901fee/index.jsp.
   - Letter from the International Student Services regarding the benefit start date of your F-1 visa status.
6. Mail the application to USCIS. The applicant is responsible for mailing the application to the USCIS Services Center.

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<tr>
<th>For U.S. Postal Services</th>
<th>For express mail and courier deliveries</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>USCIS</td>
<td>USCIS  Attn: I-539</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P.O. BOX 660166</td>
<td>2501 S. State Highway 121 Business, Suite 400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dallas, TX 75266</td>
<td>Lewisville, TX 75067</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

7. USCIS mails a receipt in 2-4 week. Upon receiving the receipt, submit the copy to International Student Services.
8. If approved, USCIS mails the approval notice with a new Form I-94.
9. Bring the approval notice to International Student Services for mandatory immigration check-in.

Required Documents
Below are the required documents for issuance of the Form I-20 for a change of status inside the U.S.
   - UTSA letter of acceptance (for new student)
   - Letter from the academic advisor (for current student) on department letterhead stating the following:
     i. The student’s major and minor if any
     ii. The student’s academic standing
iii. The specific program requirements remaining
iv. The student’s expected date of graduation

- Confirmation of Financial Resources (CFR) form: available on our website at http://international.utsa.edu/forms/confirmation-of-financial-resources/
- Proof of financial resources: Current evidence of all sources of financial support for the applicant. For detailed information about acceptable proof of financial resources, go to http://international.utsa.edu/forms/confirmation-of-financial-resources/
- Photocopy of Form I-94 (front and back): If the applicant is admitted under the electronic I-94 system, he or she should print out a copy of the I-94 Arrival/Departure Record from the Customs and Border Protection (CBP) website at https://i94.cbp.dhs.gov/I94/request.html
- Photocopies of all immigration documents including the passport, visa stamp, Employment Authorization (EAD), and USCIS approval notice.
- Dependent family member immigration documents: If dependent family members currently in the U.S. plan to change their status as well, their information should be included. Their documents should show the validity of their current visa status.
- Original Form I-539: available at http://www.uscis.gov/portal/site/uscis
- Personal Statement: addressed “To Whom It May Concern” a) stating that the applicant is in legal status, b) requesting that the applicant’s status be changed to F-1, and c) stating the reasons the change is desired or necessary.
- $290 application fee: money order or personal check payable to U.S. Department of Homeland Security
- Additional documents listed below.

**Additional Documents**

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<th>H-1 or L-1</th>
<th>• Proof of status: copies of last three pay stubs, employment verification letter on company letterhead</th>
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| F-2        | • Proof of F-1 spouse/parent’s status: copies of I-94, visa, passport, Form I-20, status verification letter, transcripts  
            | • Copy of proof of relationship to F-1 visa holder: Copy of marriage certificate for spouse, copy of birth certificate or equivalent for child |
| H-4        | • Proof of H-1 spouse/parent’s status: copies of I-94, visa, passport, last three pay stubs, employment verification letter on company letterhead  
            | • Copy of proof of relationship to H-1 visa holder: Copy of marriage certificate for spouse, copy of birth certificate or equivalent for child |
| J-2        | • Proof of J-1 spouse/parent’s status: copies of I-94, visa, passport, Form DS-2019, status verification letter, transcripts (if spouse is J-1 student)  
            | • Proof of no residence requirement: if visa shows individual is subject 212 (e) residence requirement, include copy of visa waiver |
### Important Notes

- An applicant who travels abroad while his or her change of status application is pending is considered to have abandoned the application. USCIS will deny the application if they become aware of the applicant’s departure.
- If a change of status to F-1 is granted by USCIS, the applicant obtains F-1 status, but not an F-1 visa. Next time she or he leaves the U.S., she or he must apply for an F-1 visa at a U.S. embassy or consulate to re-enter the U.S. as an F-1 visa student.
- Applicants whose current nonimmigrant status does not allow them to enroll in studies should not begin study until a change of status application is approved (F-2 dependents and B visitors).
- F-1 visa benefits (such as on-campus employment) are not available until applicants are approved for change of status to F-1.

### Method 2: Applying outside the United States

**Application Process**

1. Submit all required documents for issuance of a Form I-20 to an international student advisor.
   - UTSA letter of acceptance (for new student)
   - Letter from the academic advisor (for current student) on department letterhead stating the following:
     - The student’s major and minor if any
     - The student’s academic standing
     - The specific program requirements remaining
     - The student’s expected date of graduation

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<th>Status</th>
<th>Required Documents</th>
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| L-2    | - Proof of L-1 spouse/parent’s status: copies of I-94, visa, passport, last three pay stubs, employment verification letter on company letterhead  
- Copy of proof of relationship to L-1 visa holder: Copy of marriage certificate for spouse, copy of birth certificate or equivalent for child |
| E-1/E-2| - Proof of E-1/E-2 status: copies of I-94, visa, passport, articles of incorporation, business account bank statement  
- Copy of proof of relationship to E-1 visa holder if the applicant is E-2: Copy of marriage certificate for spouse, copy of birth certificate or equivalent for child |
| TN/TD  | - Proof of TD/TN status: copies of I-94, visa, passport, Form I-129 approval notice  
- Copy of proof of relationship to TN visa holder if the applicant is TD: Copy of marriage certificate for spouse, copy of birth certificate or equivalent for child |
- Confirmation of Financial Resources (CFR) form: available on our website at [http://international.utsa.edu/forms/confirmation-of-financial-resources/](http://international.utsa.edu/forms/confirmation-of-financial-resources/)
- Proof of financial resources: Current evidence of all sources of financial support for the applicant. For detailed information about acceptable proof of financial resources, go to [http://international.utsa.edu/forms/confirmation-of-financial-resources/](http://international.utsa.edu/forms/confirmation-of-financial-resources/)
- Overseas address
- Photocopy of Form I-94 (front and back): If the applicant is admitted under the electronic I-94 system, he or she should print out a copy of the I-94 Arrival/Departure Record from the Customs and Border Protection (CBP) website at [https://i94.cbp.dhs.gov/I94/request.html](https://i94.cbp.dhs.gov/I94/request.html)
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2. The international student advisor issues a Form I-20 within 2 business days.
3. Return to the International Student Services to pick up the Form I-20.
4. Pay the SEVIS I-901 fee and print a receipt.
   All individuals applying for change of status to F-1 visa must pay the SEVIS I-901 fee. The payment can be made online at [https://www.fmjfee.com/i901fee/index.jsp](https://www.fmjfee.com/i901fee/index.jsp).
5. Schedule a visa appointment at a U.S. Embassy or Consulate following the procedures on how to get an F-1 visa on the U.S. Department of State website: [http://travel.state.gov/visa/temp/types/types_1268.html](http://travel.state.gov/visa/temp/types/types_1268.html)
6. Depart the U.S. and attend your visa appointment.
7. Within 10 days of re-entering the U.S., bring to International Student Services your immigration documents including passport, visa, I-94 and I-20.
8. Complete F-1 Orientation. International Student Services removes ‘Change of Status: Check-in’ hold on your student account and activate your F-1 record.