INSTRUCTIONS FOR APPLICATION FOR CHANGE OF STATUS TO F-1 STUDENT

Students who have been admitted to a degree program or who are already enrolled in a degree program may apply for change to F-1 status, provided they currently hold a valid non-immigrant visa status in another category. Newly admitted students must obtain an I-20 from the Admissions Office. Students who are already enrolled must request the I-20 at the Center for Global Services. Students are urged to meet with their international student adviser (ISA) for assistance with the application.

IMPORTANT NOTES:

- **B-2 visa holders** MAY NOT enroll in a course of study before their change of status is approved. Students in F-2 status are eligible for part-time study and must consult with their international student adviser before planning to enroll full-time.
- **F-1 on-campus employment** is not authorized until the change of status has been approved by the USCIS, the check-in procedure has been completed at the Center, and the On-Campus Employment Workshop has been attended.
- **If your change of status is not approved by the program start date** printed on the I-20 form, you **MUST** contact your international student adviser immediately to discuss deferral of the program start date.

To prepare your application, complete the steps outlined below, as appropriate for your situation:

If you are already an enrolled student at Rutgers:
1. Contact the Center to set up an initial appointment with your ISA to discuss the procedure.
2. Complete Form I-539 to the extent possible.
3. Request your undergraduate academic dean or graduate program director complete and sign the Center’s General Academic Information Form for F-1 Students.
4. Gather the items listed on the Change of Status Application Check-List (available on page 2 of this handout) and make another appointment with your international student adviser at the Center to review your application materials and to answer any further questions. Bring your application and supporting documents with you when you come to meet with your ISA.

To be left with your adviser for issuance of the new I-20:

- The Center’s General Academic Information Form for F-1 Students, completely filled out by your academic dean or graduate program director
- Evidence of financial support, as per the Center’s Proof of Financial Support handout.
- Evidence that you have purchased or applied to purchase the required health insurance for any visa dependents (i.e. spouse or child under 21) who will be changing status with you
5. Your international student adviser will review all documents and keep what is needed to issue your new I-20. You will receive an email when the I-20 is ready (this process can take up to 2 weeks)
6. After receiving the I-20 form, pay the required DHS SEVIS Fee (I-901) and retain the receipt to mail with your change of status application. Information on DHS SEVIS Fee and payment methods is available at https://www.fmjfee.com/i901fee/index.jsp
7. After this you should come during your ISA’s walk-in hours to have your application reviewed one last time.
8. Once your application has been reviewed, follow the “mailing instructions” on the page 2 of this handout.

If you have been newly admitted to Rutgers:
1. You will receive your I-20 from the Admissions Office upon providing financial documentation as requested.
2. After receiving the I-20 form, pay the required DHS SEVIS Fee (I-901) and retain the receipt to mail with your change of status application. Information on DHS SEVIS Fee and payment methods is available at https://www.fmjfee.com/i901fee/index.jsp
3. Gather the items listed on the Change of Status Application Check-List and make another appointment with your ISA at the Center to review your application materials and to answer any further questions. Bring your application and supporting documents with you when you come to meet with your ISA.
4. Once your application has been reviewed, follow the “mailing instructions” below.
Change of Status Application Check-List

- A copy of the first page and second page of form I-20 (make sure the I-20 is signed and dated)
- The filing fee. This will be a check made payable to “U.S. Department of Homeland Security”. Note: If the check is from someone other than the person applying for change of status, on the bottom left corner of the check include the name and SEVIS ID number of the person who is applying for the change of status. More information about the filing fee can be found on the USCIS website at: www.uscis.gov/i-539.
- A personal statement/cover letter, written to the USCIS adjudication officer, in which you explain why you are requesting a change to F-1 status. You will find a sample personal statement/cover letter on page 3.
- Evidence of financial support, as per the Center’s Proof of Financial Support handout.
- If your sponsor is a U.S. citizen, he/she will need to complete a form I-134, Affidavit of Support: www.uscis.gov/i-134
- Photocopies of all of your immigration documents, including the I-94 (front & back if paper, or a printout of the electronic I-94 from https://i94.cbp.dhs.gov/I94/request.html), passport biographical pages, & visa stamp.
- Photocopies of all immigration documents of the person from whom your current status is derived (i.e., your spouse or parent), including the I-94 (front & back if paper, or a printout of the electronic I-94 from https://i94.cbp.dhs.gov/I94/request.html), passport biographical information pages, visa stamp, I-20, funding and transcript or job letter and recent pay-stubs, if applicable.
- A copy of your marriage license, birth certificate, or other proof of relation to this person
- Photocopy of your transcript
- Letter of Rutgers admission, optional
- Receipt of DHS SEVIS Fee (I-901) payment. You can pay the fee at: https://www.fmjfee.com/i901fee/index.jsp (you can pay this fee only once you have your new I-20)

Mailing Instructions

- The completed and signed USCIS Form I-539, located at: http://www.uscis.gov/files/form/i-539.pdf
- Form G-1145 for E-Notification that your application has been received: http://www.uscis.gov/files/form/g-1145.pdf. The E-Notification is NOT the official USCIS receipt notice.
- Assemble your application package for submission to U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) based on the Change of Status Application Check-List.

We urge you to keep copies of all documents before mailing your application to the USCIS at the following address:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>For US Postal Service Mail Deliveries (e.g. 1st class, Priority, Express):</th>
<th>For Express Mail and Courier Service Deliveries (e.g. FedEx, DHL):</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services PO Box 660166 Dallas, TX 75266</td>
<td>U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services ATTN: I-539 2501 S. State Hwy. 121 Business, Suite 400 Lewisville, TX 75067</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

You will receive a receipt with a tracking number in a couple of weeks, and usually, a notice of approval in 1-3 months. A change of status approval consists of a Notice of Action (I-797), which includes a new I-94. You MUST notify the Center for Global Services when you receive your change of status approval. You can do this by coming to the Center with your I-797 or by mailing or faxing a copy of it to the Center.
Sample Change of Status Personal Statement/ Cover Letter

Dear U.S. Department of Homeland Security Official:

I am currently in the U.S. holding a _____ visa and would like permission to change my visa to F-1 student. I entered the U.S. in a non-student status in order to __________________ (describe your activity/intention at the time of entry.) I decided to apply for admission to Rutgers University in _______________ (month/year) and was admitted for graduate/undergraduate study in ______________ (month/year).

I intend to enroll full-time and would like to complete my (BA/MS/PhD) degree in _________________ to ________________. I do not wish to leave the US at the present time to change my status because I would suffer the following hardship: _________________________________.

Please find my I-539 application, I-20, I-94, and supporting materials.

I fully intend to abide by all regulations governing the F-1 status. After the completion of my program of study I expect to return to my home country and apply the knowledge gained towards ____________

Your assistance and prompt attention to this matter is appreciated.

Sincerely,

(Signature)