SOUTHERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY EDWARDSVILLE

Office of International Affairs
International Student and Scholar Services
Email: isss@siue.edu

Change of Immigration Status
F-2 to F-1

Considerations

1. You and your primary F-1 visa holder must still be maintaining status on the date that you file the change of status application.
2. You are not eligible to enroll in a full-time program until the change of status application is approved. However, you are eligible to study part-time.
3. F-1 on-campus employment may not be authorized until the change of status has been approved by USCIS.
4. If your change of status is not approved by the program start date on your form I-20, you must contact your international student advisor to discuss deferral of the program start date.
5. Adjudication times vary. Check the most current estimates here.
6. Do not travel outside of the U.S. while your application is pending. If you leave the country, USCIS will consider your application abandoned.

Procedure

Step 1: Request a Change of Status I-20 from ISSS
- Make an appointment with your immigration advisor to discuss change of status application eligibility and procedures by emailing isss@siue.edu.
- Request a new I-20 by completing the Change of Status I-20 Request Form. New students must be fully admitted to SIUE and have submitted financial documents to International Admissions before ISSS can issue your I-20.

Step 2: Choose a Filing Option
- USCIS allows for online or paper filing of Form I-539 to change your status to F-1. We recommend that you keep a copy of your USCIS I-539 application and supporting documents for your records. This is true whether you file your application online or by paper.

Option 1: ONLINE FILING
You can file online to change your status from F-2 to F-1 using Form I-539, Application to Extend/Change Nonimmigrant Status. You will need to create an online USCIS account. Follow the instructions and complete each step in the order they are presented to you. You will need to have digital copies of the requested documents to upload as part of your online application. Check out the USCIS Tips for Filing Forms Online.

Option 2: PAPER FILING

1. A completed Form I-539. Indicate in Part 2 that the purpose of the form is a change of status.
2. Form G-1145
3. Checks or money orders payable to *the Department of Homeland Security* for the I-539 filing fee and biometrics fee. Check for updated fee amounts here.
4. Photocopy of the I-20 created for you by ISSS for the purpose of change of status which you have signed and dated.
5. Copies of your passport, visa, F-2 I-20, and a printout of your I-94.
6. Copies of the F-1 holder's passport, visa, I-94, current I-20, and transcripts proving they have been maintaining status.
7. Financial documentation showing one year of tuition, fees, and living expenses dated within the past 6 months.
   a. If your sponsor is not your parent and is either a U.S. citizen or permanent resident, he or she must fill out a Form I-134 Affidavit of Support.
8. A copy of your I-901 SEVIS Fee payment receipt. This can only be paid after your I-20 is issued.
9. A letter of explanation indicating why you want to change status. The letter should contain the following:
   a. That you are requesting to change status from F-2 to F-1
   b. Your signature at the bottom of the letter
   c. The reason why you want to change status
   d. That you have followed all the F-2 regulations and are currently in status

Once you receive your new change of status I-20 and if you live in Illinois, mail your change of status application with all required documents to the following USCIS Service Center.

U.S. Postal Service (USPS)	FedEx, UPS, and DHL deliveries
USCIS Attn: I-539 P.O. Box 4010 Carol Stream, IL 60197-4010	USCIS Attn: I-539 (Box 4010) 2500 Westfield Drive Elgin, IL 60124-7836

If you live outside of Illinois, please go to the following website to find the correct address to mail your change of status application: https://www.uscis.gov/i-539-addresses

Step 3: **Monitor Your Case Status**

You will receive a Form I-797C Receipt Notice from USCIS. It is a formal notice that your application has been received and is now pending USCIS review. You can check the status of your application with your receipt number at https://egov.uscis.gov

Please contact your international student advisor if you receive an I-797 approval notice, a denial notice, or a request for evidence (RFE) from USCIS.