

## Change of Status from F-1 to F-2

To change from an F-1 dependent status to an F-2 student status, your F-1 spouse or parent must be in the United States and maintain his or her F-1 status throughout the time your application is pending. If you are looking to change the purpose of your visit while in the United States, there are two options to choose from:

A. travel out of the U.S., apply for the new visa type at a U.S. consulate, and re-enter the U.S. in the new status

Or

B. apply for a change of status within the U.S. by sending an application to the USCIS.

### Option A: Travel and Reentry

To update your immigration status, leave the U.S., apply for a new visa at a U.S. consulate, and return with the approved visa. Your new status takes effect upon re-entry, and this method is often quicker and involves less paperwork than changing status within the U.S. Despite its advantages, there are potential drawbacks, including possible delays in visa processing, potential denial of visa, and the associated travel and ticket expenses.

### Steps for Option A:

To use this option, follow these steps:

Checklist	Instructions	Link
<input type="checkbox"/>	Complete and submit the "I-20 Request Form" along with supporting documents (see the last page of this guide). The International Affairs Office will issue your initial Form I-20 after reviewing the provided documents.	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Receive your new F-2 student Form I-20, review it, and sign and date it on page 1 as indicated.	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Travel outside the U.S.	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Apply for an F-2 visa at a U.S. embassy/consulate. Be aware that the visa application process may involve security clearance, potentially causing delays in issuance.	

Checklist	Instructions	Link
<input type="checkbox"/>	Re-enter the U.S. with the new visa and the updated I-20. Keep in mind that re-entry should not occur more than 30 days before the program start date mentioned on your I-20.	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Report to the International Services Office promptly upon returning to ATS. Bring your passport, I-94, and I-20. Failing to do so promptly may result in the cancellation of your SEVIS record.	X

### Option 2: Change Status in the U.S

This method allows for a new status without receiving a visa, which is only issued outside the U.S. when returning to your home country. You can remain in the U.S. during processing, but this may take three to six months. It's important to note that leaving the U.S. during processing cancels the application. Additionally, you need a matching visa stamp for your status when traveling outside the U.S. The main drawback is the potential for application denial, requiring a quick departure from the U.S.

To apply for a change of status within the United States review the [Change of Status instructions](#) and gather the following documents in addition to any other documents indicated in the instructions to be sent to the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS):

Checklist	Instructions	Link
<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>Complete Form I-539</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Make sure you are using the most recent version. Print and send all pages</li> <li>• If questions do not apply to you, write "n/a" or "None"</li> <li>• When signing or filling out any sections by hand, write clearly and use black ink.</li> <li>• As of May 2019, you can file online (check for eligibility at <a href="https://www.uscis.gov/i539online">https://www.uscis.gov/i539online</a>)</li> </ul>	<a href="#">I-539</a>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Complete Form G-1145</b> – To receive a notification by email and/or text message informing you that USCIS has accepted your application or petition you need to complete and submit this form.</li> </ul>	<a href="#">G-1145</a>

Checklist	Instructions	Link
<input type="checkbox"/>	<p><b>Request a dependent I-20</b> through the Office of International Affairs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fill out the Financial Certification form</li> <li>• Attach a copy of the dependent's passport</li> <li>• Attach a copy of the marriage license</li> <li>• If including children in the application, attach a copy of each child's passport and a copy of the child's birth certificate</li> </ul> <p>F-1 primary signs each I-20 even the one for a spouse</p>	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<p><b>Gather all required documents for the I-539 application</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Proof of financial capability, provide bank statements or financial guarantee</li> <li>• Proof of family relationships (marriage license or certificate)</li> <li>• Passport pages that show identity, visa, and latest entry stamps (both spouses)</li> <li>• Printed <a href="#">I-94</a> for both spouses</li> <li>• Copy of primary, F-1 student's I-20</li> <li>• Applicant's new dependent I-20, signed by F-1</li> </ul>	<a href="#">I-94</a>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<p><b>Pay the \$370 fee</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pay by check or money order: Payee is "U.S. Department of Homeland Security"</li> <li>• Attach check or money to the Form I-539 application</li> <li>• Pay by credit card: Go to <a href="https://www.uscis.gov/g-1450">https://www.uscis.gov/g-1450</a></li> </ul>	X
<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>Write a letter requesting the change of status and explain why you did not originally enter the U.S. in the status you are now requesting. A change of circumstances or intention should be explained fully and well documented. The letter is optional but can help the USCIS in the adjudication of the application.</p>	Example Attached

After preparing the documents above, please set up an appointment to review your application with the non-immigration office. Once you have met with the non-immigration office to review your application, make copies of your application and send your application to the following address:

Certified Mail:  
U.S. Postal Service  
USCIS P.O. Box 660166  
Dallas, TX 7526

Express Mail:  
USCIS ATTN: I-539  
2501 S. State Highway 121 Business, Suite 400  
Lewisville, TX 75067

**IMPORTANT NOTES:**

- You must currently be in the US in legal status
- Your passport must be valid for at least 6 more months
- Your status is dependent on your spouse's (the F-1 visa holder's) status
- You are permitted to stay in the U.S. only during the same time your spouse is permitted to stay (you cannot stay longer).
- Dependents are free to go in and out of the U.S. without their spouses (while their spouses are in F-1 status).
- **You CANNOT work and you CANNOT attend school**

## Change of Status – F2 to F1 - Sample Letter

The letter included in change of status application is very important because it provides a context for the USCIS representative reviewing your case. It is very important that you are clear about why you are requesting a change of status and that it is compliant with federal rules and regulations. The sample letter below is intended to provide a starting point and help with the letter writing process. Every student's situation is different and the letter should be unique to you.

Your Name  
Street Address  
City, State, Zip Code  
Date

United States Citizenship and Immigration Service  
ATTN: I-539  
75 Lower Welden Street  
St. Albans, VT 05479

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 the Asbury Theological Seminary, in \_\_\_\_\_ (month/year) and was admitted for graduate study in \_\_\_\_\_ (month/year).

I intend to enroll full-time and would like to complete my (MA,MDIV,ThM, 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. My permanent address abroad is: \_\_\_\_\_. My current address is: \_\_\_\_\_.

Your assistance and prompt attention to this matter is appreciated.

Sincerely,

(Signature)

Printed Name