

Change of Immigration Status to F-1/J-1

If you are currently in a lawful non-immigrant status (except a J who is subject to a two year home residency requirement) you may be eligible to change your status to F-1/J-1 in the United States. Change of status applications are adjudicated by the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS). This handout will help you understand what is necessary to change your immigration status. For most students the F-1 student visa is appropriate for studying at Brown University.

Please note that persons in B-1/B-2 status should not attempt to change their immigration status in the U.S. unless their visa is annotated with "prospective student." USCIS regulations require that F-2 dependents must change their status before enrolling in classes in order to maintain their lawful status in the U.S.

STEP 1: Getting a SEVIS I-20/DS-2019

In order to process a change of status to F-1/J-1 you will first need the following documents:

- Current documentation of funding (in the form of a letter from your academic department and/or personal bank statements).
Please note that in order to be eligible for a DS-2019, J-1 applicants need to provide proof of substantial nonpersonal funding. Please be aware that J nonimmigrants may become subject to the two year residency requirement either based on the exchange visitor skills list or government funding sources. For further information check the Department of State website at <http://exchanges.state.gov/education/jexchanges/>
- Copy of your current immigration status approval notice (if applicable)
- Admissions letter into a degree-seeking program at Brown University
- Completed Request for SEVIS I-20/DS-2019 Form from the Office of International Student & Scholar Services (OISSS)
- Copy of passport bio page, current U.S. visa, I-94 card (front and back)

Once you bring in the above mentioned items the an international student advisor will create a new SEVIS I-20/DS-2019 for you. Please allow 5 business days for processing before your new SEVIS I-20/DS-2019 is ready for pick up/mailing.

STEP 2: Paying the SEVIS Fee

Once you have your SEVIS I-20/DS-2019 you will need to pay the SEVIS fee to the Department of Homeland security (DHS) prior to applying for your Change of Status to F-1/J-1.

You will need to complete the following steps in order to pay your SEVIS fee:

- Locate your SEVIS I.D number which is located in the upper right hand corner of your SEVIS I-20/DS-2019.
- The Department of Homeland Security has set up a website for electronic payment of Form I-901/SEVIS fee using a credit card.
Go to www.fmjfee.com. Follow the on-line instructions.
- Print out the payment screen to verify your payment.
- You will receive an actual receipt for the SEVIS fee in the mail.

For more detailed information on the fee payment process go to the SEVP Web site www.ice.gov/sevis and review the I-901 Fee Frequently Asked Questions. That site also contains a link to the PDF version of Form I-901.

STEP 3: Preparing Your Application Package

Once you have paid the SEVIS fee please call the OISSS front desk at (401) 863-2427 and set up an appointment with an International Student Advisor (personal or phone appointment). Have the following documents ready for the appointment:

- Completed I-539 Form
- Proof of financial support (original bank statement or departmental support letter)
- Your SEVIS I-20/DS-2019 Form
- Copies of Certificates of Eligibility/Past Approval Notices (I-20, DS-2019, H-1B) for applicant and spouse/parent
- Copy of I-94 card (front and back) for applicant and spouse/parent
- Copies of visa and unexpired passport biographical pages for applicant and spouse/parent
- SEVIS fee receipt
- Check for \$300.00 made out to Department of Homeland Security
- Marriage certificate if it has been translated into English (if applicable)
- Verification of status letter for primary visa holder (H-1B from employer and J-1 from school)
- Admission letter

OISSS will assist you with the preparation of your change of status application. Once your application is complete, you should send it to the Service Center having jurisdiction over your state of residence. If you are currently residing in New England, you should mail your application via certified mail to the Vermont Service Center.

U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services
Vermont Service Center
75 Lower Welden Street
Saint Albans, Vermont 05479

Please be aware that it can take USCIS several months to process a change of status.

Visa/Travel

You Should Not Travel Outside the U.S. While Your Change of Immigration Status is Pending

A change of status is not a change of visa. F-1/J-1 visas are not issued in the U.S. If USCIS grants your change of status application, you may stay in the U.S. and study for as long as you maintain your F-1/J-1 lawful status. Once your change of status is approved and if you ever decide to travel internationally, you must apply for an F-1/J-1 visa in order to return to the U.S.