

## **ELIGIBILITY**

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If you are planning to change your status to F-1, you should make an appointment with an international student adviser to discuss your options and next steps. More information can also be found on our website [www.njit.edu/global](http://www.njit.edu/global).

You may be able to change status if:

- You are maintaining your current status.
- You are eligible for the new F-1 status.
- Your current status does not prohibit change of status in the U.S.

You generally cannot change status if your period of authorized stay has already expired or if you have otherwise violated the conditions of your current status. There could be other restrictions as well, such as individuals admitted under the Visa Waiver Program. Contact an international adviser for more information.

## **HOW TO CHANGE YOUR STATUS:**

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There are **two ways** to change your status to F-1:

1. Request an **Initial I-20**. Travel to your home country and apply for an F-1 visa. Reenter the U.S. with your F-1 visa and I-20.
2. Request a **Change of Status I-20**. Apply for a change of status through USCIS. USCIS takes 6-12 months to process the request. There is no guarantee of approval.

## **INSTRUCTIONS**

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**STEP 1: Request an I-20 form. Decide if you will request an Initial I-20 or a Change of Status I-20. See above.**

- 1) If you are a recent admit, you will receive your I-20 from the Office of Admissions. If you are a continuing student on a different visa, make an appointment with an OGI adviser.
- 2) Submit a copy of your **admission letter, financial statement and proof of sufficient funding, copy of the biographical page of your passport, current visa and I-94.**
- 3) If your spouse or child (ren) will be your dependents in the U.S., submit copies of their passports.

*If you will apply for a change of status through USCIS:*

**STEP 2: Pick up your new I-20 and mail a complete application to USCIS**

- 1) Form I-539
- 2) Filing fee: check or money order made out to U.S. Department of Homeland Security.
- 3) Form G-1145 (optional) if you would like to receive an electronic receipt that your application was received.
- 4) Copy of valid and properly signed Form I-20: Don't forget to sign your new I-20. Submit a copy and keep the original form.
- 5) Proof of payment of the SEVIS I-901 fee: go to [www.fmjfee.com](http://www.fmjfee.com) to pay and print your receipt.

- 6) Copy of Form I-94: You can print it by going to go [www.cbp.gov/I94](http://www.cbp.gov/I94)
- 7) Copies of current immigration status documents, visa stamp, and passport ID pages
- 8) Copies of financial support documents: use the same kind of financial support information used to obtain an F-1 visa.
- 9) Dependent family member documentation: if dependent family members currently in the U.S. plan to change their status as well, their information should be included in Form I-539, they should each be issued SEVIS dependent I-20s, and documentation showing the validity of their current immigration status, including their Forms I-94, should be included.
- 10) Letter from the student explaining why he or she wants to change status to F-1. (Optional) A strong letter can help convince USCIS of the student's temporary intent as well as persuade USCIS that the student did not have a pre-conceived intention to study in the U.S.

### **YOUR LETTER TO USCIS**

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Your letter to USCIS is very important to this application; this is your chance to explain to the government why you decided to change your status. This information is meant to serve as guide; you may or may not use these suggestions to write your letter.

Your letter does not need to be long or complicated; it can be divided into 3 main paragraphs:

**Paragraph 1:** Explain why you came to the U.S. and what you have been doing since you arrived.

**Paragraph 2:** Explain why you want to change your status to F-1 or F-2 (dependent).

**Paragraph 3:** Explain the reason you will be returning to your home country after completion of your studies or your spouse/parent's studies if you are changing status to F-2. If you were employed back home, explain how your studies will affect returning to that employment. If you were not employed back home, describe how your studies in the U.S. will help prepare you for a career back home (this is not applicable to changes to F-2 status).

### **MAILING INSTRUCTIONS**

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You must mail your application package to the USCIS Service Center having jurisdiction over the district of your residence. We highly recommend that you make copies of all documents before sending them to USCIS. If you live in New Jersey, your documents must be sent to:

**For Express mail and courier deliveries (DHL, FedEx or UPS):**

USCIS  
Attn: I-539  
2501 S. State Hwy. 121 Business  
Suite 400  
Lewisville, TX 75067

**For U.S. Postal Service (USPS):**

USCIS  
PO Box 660166  
Dallas, TX 75266

Use a receipt-based mailing option such as certified mail, so that there will be evidence that the documents were received by USCIS.



**PERSONAL INFORMATION**

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Name as it appears on passport: \_\_\_\_\_ NJIT ID: \_\_\_\_\_

U.S. address: Street \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Home country address: Street: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ Country: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Birth (Month/Day/Year) \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_ @njit.edu

Personal email: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone number: \_\_\_\_\_

Current immigration status: \_\_\_\_\_

**I am applying for a:**

\_\_\_ **Initial I-20.** I will travel to my home country and apply for F-1 visa.

My travel dates are \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_ **Change of Status I-20** I will apply for change of status through USCIS. Processing time is 8-15 months.

**ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

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**I have read and understand the following information:**

- During this waiting period I may begin studies only if my current visa status allows it. If my visa status allows full time study, I must be registered full time while my change of status is pending. I may not begin employment (research, teaching assistantship, etc., or any other on-campus or off-campus employment) until my change of status is approved. Exceptions may apply depending on my current status.
- USCIS might mail me a Request for Further Evidence asking for additional documentation. I will contact OGI as soon as I receive it so they can assist.
- Receiving an I-20 from NJIT does not guarantee that my Change of Status will be approved.
- USCIS will consider that I have abandoned my petition if I travel outside the U.S. while my application is pending. I will consult with my adviser if I must travel abroad.
- I will be considered in lawful status as long as I submitted my application in a timely manner.
- If USCIS has not approved my application by the start date on my I-20, I will contact OGI immediately so they may defer my start date.
- I will contact OGI as soon as my application is approved or denied, and provide copies of any documents received.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

<b>OFFICE OF GLOBAL INITIATIVES ONLY</b>	
Received on _____	by _____
Banner entered on _____ by _____	