

Change of status from F-2 to F-1

VERY IMPORTANT: Start this process as soon as possible because F-2 visa holders cannot attend school while the change of status is pending. It may take as long as 7 months, possibly longer. Check this USCIS website to see how long the processing of applications is taking:

<https://egov.uscis.gov/cris/processTimesDisplayInit.do>

It may be faster to leave the USA, apply for an F-1, and re-enter in initial status.

Retain copies of all documents sent to and received from the US Citizenship and Immigration Service. Note: This change of status application does not grant you a visa. The next time you travel outside the U.S., you will be required to go to a U.S. consulate or embassy abroad to apply for an F-1 visa.

things you'll need:

- Copy of I-94 (download at <https://i94.cbp.dhs.gov/I94/#/home>)
- Copies of your immigration documents (Passport with photo page, expiration page, visa page)
- Form I-20- from Randolph College
- Form I-901 (payment of SEVIS fee) receipt: See <https://studyinthestates.dhs.gov/2013/08/print-your-i-901-sevis-fee-receipt>
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- Form I-539 Available online at: <https://www.uscis.gov/i-539>
- Copies of financial documents (Proof of Finances for tuition, fees and living expenses)
- Copies of the immigration documents of the original F1 Visa holder (Passport with photo page, expiration page, visa page; I-94; I-20; EAD card if F-1 is on OPT)

1. Check that you have a current F2 visa and passport. Your form I-94, which lists your arrival and departure dates, also lists an expiration date for your stay. If you have expired documents, you will not be able to change your status without leaving the country, in most circumstances.

2. Get your new F-1 SEVIS I-20 from Randolph College.

3. Use the SEVIS ID number located on the top left of your I-20 form to fill out your SEVIS I-901 form and pay the required fee. You can do this online. As of May 2017, the fee is \$200.

4. Write a letter explaining why you wish to change your visa status from F2 to F1. Include details of your study plans. The letter should state that you are requesting to change from F-2 to F-1, the reason why you want to change status, and that you have followed all the F-2 regulations. Your signature should be at the bottom.

5. Fill out form I-539 to change your nonimmigrant status from F2 to F1. The filing fee is \$370 as of May 2017. The form asks for information such as your name, address, arrival date, current visa status, your I-94 number and passport details.

6. Gather all your supporting documentation. Include your original I-20 form from Randolph, the receipt for your SEVIS I-901 fee, your letter explaining your study plans and your completed I-539 form. Include photocopies of your immigration documents such as your F2 visa, your passport picture page, your current dependent I-20 form, your I-94, and financial documents that show you have the funds to cover your education and living expenses. Include photocopies of the immigration documents of the original F1 Visa holder.

7. Keep copies of all forms, receipts and immigration documents for your records and store them in a safe place.

8. Mail your documents to the USCIS office below. The USCIS recommends that you mail your documents at least 60 days before the expiration date on your current F2 visa.

USCIS Dallas Lockbox

U.S. Postal Service:

USCIS
P.O. Box 660166
Dallas, TX 75266

OR:

USPS Express Mail/Courier:

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

9. When you receive your Notice of Action Approval Form (I-797A) with the change to F-1 status, bring it with your passport to Randolph's ISS office for copying to our files.

Disclaimer: These materials have been prepared for general information purposes only. They do not constitute legal advice or serve as a substitute for legal counsel.