

# Change of Status Guide: B-1/B-2 Visa to F-1/J-1 Visa

**DISCLAIMER:** Since 2016, the change of status process has become increasingly difficult and lengthy. It is recommended that individuals seeking to conduct a change of status obtain information from the KGI OISS *and* consult a qualified immigration attorney. KGI OISS will provide interested parties with information concerning the pros and cons of doing a change of status vs consular processing – it is up to the interested party to determine if filing a change of status is in their best interest, and that individual assumes all liability associated with any decision made. KGI OISS staff will provide regulatory and practice information as it stands at the time of the consult. Due to the fluid nature of governmental interpretation, applicants must understand that US Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) reserves the right to change their interpretation of immigration regulations or eligibility requirements for benefits at any time.

## **Change of Status Process**

Currently, change of status applications are seeing lengthy processing times; current processing times for the I-539 at the California Service and Vermont Service Centers may be viewed [here](#). This category of change of status requests is heavily scrutinized. It is therefore not recommended that a change of status be filed from B1/B2 to F1 unless you had a “prospective student” notation listed in your tourist visa **and** have consulted with an experienced immigration attorney.

Students changing from a B to an F cannot study while the change of status is pending. You must also be able to remain in the US on a valid tourist visa and must file concurrent I-539 “bridge applications” to extend your B1/B2 visa status to at least 30 days before the start date on your I-20/DS-2019 while the I-539 for the F-1/J-1 change of status is pending. Please see special instructions [here](#).

In general, it is recommended that you return home to apply for a student visa, however, if you decide to file a change of status request, you will need to gather the following:

- A completed [Form G-1145](#) found at <http://www.uscis.gov/g-1145>. This will allow you to receive electronic updates.
- A completed [Form I-539](#) found at <http://www.uscis.gov/i-539>. Complete this to the best of your ability in **black ink**. If you are unsure of an answer, leave it blank until you meet with OISS staff.
- Check or money order made payable to "U.S. Department of Homeland Security" for \$370
- A letter explaining why you decided to change visa status. You need to be able to show that you decided to attend school after you entered the US.
  - If your visa does not have a "prospective student" notation, include answers to the following questions in your letter:
    - What did you tell the consular officer was the purpose of your visit to the U.S.?
    - Upon entry to the U.S., what did you tell the immigration officer was the purpose of your visit?
    - How and when did you arrive at your decision to study in the U.S.?
    - How and when did you first contact the University, and when were you informed you had been admitted?
    - If prior to your entry into the U.S. your intention was to attend school, why didn't you apply for an F-1 student visa rather than the B-2 visitor visa?
    - Have you been in the U.S. before? When and for what purpose?
    - Any relatives in the U.S.? If so, what types of visas are they here on?

- Admission letter to our program (you need to be accepted before you can file for the change of status)
- Original I-94 or I-94 printout obtained at [CBP.gov/I94](https://www.cbp.gov/I94)
- Copies of passport picture page and visa page; do not send your passport
- Financial statements showing the amount in available funds that will be listed on the reinstatement I-20/DS-2019. It is recommended that you submit at least 3 months' worth of statements showing the availability of these funds.

After you have gathered these documents, please email [international@kgi.edu](mailto:international@kgi.edu) to arrange an appointment. We will provide you with a change of status I-20/DS-2019 during your appointment. Please bring a major credit card with you to the appointment as you will need to pay your SEVIS I-901 fee at that time. The appointment will last about 30 minutes. We will help you assemble your packet and provide instructions on mailing your packet to USCIS. It is highly advised that you obtain the services of a qualified immigration attorney to assist you on this process and do not mail your application packet until meeting with this individual.