

CHANGE OF VISA STATUS

Application Procedures from within the United States

You may wish to apply for a change of visa status to F-1. This is possible provided your current visa status allows for a change and has not already expired. Processing time at the Nebraska Service Center (which serves our region) varies. The staff at OISSS can give you the current processing times. While your application is pending, you may not accept any benefits associated with F-1 status (on-campus or off-campus employment, assistantships, travel outside the U.S.). Please note that if you are granted a change of visa status within the United States, you will **NOT** be given a new visa. This means that if you travel in the future outside of the United States, other than to Canada or Mexico for fewer than 30 days, it will be necessary for you to apply for an F-1 visa in your home country. Note as well that a successful application to change your visa status does not guarantee that you will be given an F-1 visa when you apply for one outside the U.S.

If you have already been admitted to Portland State, then you'll need to give us the following documentation. Please see the reverse of this page for an explanation of each document:

1. Documentation of source and amount of financial support, with a statement of support if you have a sponsor. An official I-134 must be filed if that sponsor resides in the United States. This form can be downloaded from the CIS website www.uscis.gov (click on Forms, then on All Forms).
2. Form I-20 (we will issue the I-20 after we have verified your financial documents).
3. SEVIS fee receipt. Please go to www.fmjfee.com once we have e-mailed you your SEVIS ID and the PSU School Code to pay the fee. You will need a credit or debit card to process this transaction and **MUST** print out a receipt.
4. CIS Form I-539 and the accompanying fee - \$300.00 (please check the USCIS website above for the most current fee).
5. Photocopies of the identity page in your passport, the page which shows the expiration date of your passport, and your visa.
6. Your *original* I-94 form (you should keep a photocopy for your records).
7. If you are currently in a dependent status (F-2, J-2, H-4, etc.), you must also include copies of those items mentioned in #5 above for the principal status holder (F-1, J-1, H-1B), as well as a photocopy of the I-94 form, front and back. If you are in H-4 or H1-B status, you must include a current letter from the company sponsoring the H1 B which states that the H1B visa holder a current full-time employee and a recent pay stub.
8. Cover letter (see reverse for a detailed explanation)

If you choose to file this application without the assistance of the Office of International Student and Scholar Services, please mail it to the following address:

US Citizenship and Immigration Services
California Service Center
PO Box 10539
Laguna Niguel, CA 92607-1053

Explanation of forms and documents

CIS Form I-539. This is the form used to request a change of status. Blank forms are available from the Office of International Student and Scholar Services (ISSS) or you can download one from the web: www.uscis.gov (click on Forms, then on All Forms, and search for I-539).

\$300 Processing Fee. This fee must accompany form I-539. The CIS does not accept cash, so you must send either a money order or a personal check made payable to the CIS. A personal check is the best option because your file number will be stamped on the back of the cancelled check. Having this number is extremely helpful if anything should happen to your Receipt Notice. HOWEVER, bouncing a check with the CIS a serious offense and will almost certainly result in your application being denied. If you write a check, be absolutely sure that sufficient funds will be in place to cover it for the next 4 weeks.

Photocopies. If you do not have access to a photocopier, you can make these photocopies in our office. If you do them yourself, please make sure the photocopies are clear, that all dates and places named are legible, and that you include the page(s) showing the expiration date of the passport. Do not cut them up so that they are smaller than 8.5 x 11".

Financial support documentation. This documentation may take the form of bank statements, letters from your sponsor(s), or other proof that you have sufficient financial support for the first year of your academic program. Please note, if you are being sponsored by someone who resides in the United States, your sponsor must complete a form I-134 Affidavit of Support. Blank forms are available from ISS.

Form I-20. This Certificate of Eligibility will be issued by ISS once you have been formally admitted to Portland State University and have provided sufficient financial documentation.

\$200 SEVIS Fee: You can find additional information at this website on the SEVIS Fee : <http://www.ice.gov/graphics/sevis/i901/faq.htm>.

Cover letter. In this letter you must explain to the CIS your reasons for wishing to change your status. It is important for you to clarify why you entered the United States in a status other than student and wish to change now. It is not possible for our office to supply you with a template as each individual situation is very unique. We will, however, read your letter before your application is submitted and give you suggestions if you wish.