

GENERAL

If you have completed your studies, or you no longer wish to be a student, you may apply to change status from student (F-1 or J-1) to dependent (F-2 or J-2) so that you can remain in the United States with your spouse. Both you and your spouse must be in valid J-1 or F-1 status at the time that you request the change of status. You may change status through the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS), or by leaving and reentering the United States. Both procedures are outlined below. If you are in J-1 status and you are subject to the two-year home residency requirement, you are not eligible to change status through the USCIS.

APPLY WITHIN THE UNITED STATES (USCIS APPLICATION)

1. Check, money order or online payment payable to the "Department of Homeland Security." (Check filing fee here: <https://www.uscis.gov/g-1055?form=i-539>)
2. Completed Form I-539. Include I-539A Supplemental Information for Application to Extend/Change Nonimmigrant Status if including dependents. (<https://www.uscis.gov/i-539>)
3. A newly-completed I-20 or DS-2019 listing you as the F-2 or J-2 dependent.
4. A letter from you to the USCIS (To Whom It May Concern) containing:
 - a. Your address and telephone number
 - b. Your request to change status to F-2 or J-2, including a statement that you no longer want to be a full-time student and that you are requesting the change of status to remain in the U.S. with your spouse
 - c. Passport numbers and expiration dates for both you and your spouse
 - d. Signatures of both you and your spouse, with your printed names beneath each signature.
5. Printout of your I-94 from www.cbp.gov/i94 or photocopy of your I-94 card (front and back).
6. Photocopies of your I-20(s) or DS-2019(s)
7. Photocopy of the identity and visa page from your passport, including passport expiration date.
8. Photocopies of your spouse's I-20(s) or DS-2019(s) and a photocopy of the front and back of your spouse's Form I-94 (or printout of your spouse's I-94 from www.cbp.gov/i94).
9. Financial documentation. If you are supported by a personal sponsor, include a Form I-134 completed by your sponsor.
10. A copy of your marriage certificate. If the certificate is not in English, you may translate it, make a written attestation that you have made an accurate translation to English, and have a Notary Public witness your signature to the attestation.
11. Photocopy of any previously issued I-797 Approval Notice changing or extending your status.

Please make an appointment with an advisor at ISSS if you have questions about your application.

You should keep photocopies of all documents submitted to the USCIS for your records.

For online filing, please visit the USCIS website: <https://www.uscis.gov/i539online>

OR mail all documents by Certified Mail with a Return Receipt Requested to the appropriate USCIS Lockbox facility. Be sure to use a return address that will be valid for several months. You can find an updated list of Lockbox addresses here: <https://www.uscis.gov/i-539-addresses>

CHANGE STATUS BY TRAVEL AND REENTRY

Your spouse should request an I-20 or DS-2019 with you listed as a dependent. You must apply for a J-2 or F-2 entry visa while you are outside of the United States. Your approved re-entry to the U.S. using the new visa and I-20 or DS-2019 will finalize the change of status. Please be aware that it may take several days, and even weeks, for your visa application to be processed. Furthermore, it might be difficult, if not impossible, to get an entry visa outside of your country of citizenship or permanent residence. Finally, there is never a guarantee that a new visa will be issued to you when you travel.