



Applying for a Change of Visa Status from B-2 to F-1

Individuals in the B-2 visitor visa may apply for a change of status to F-1 but they will need to be aware that the change of status application from B-2 to F-1 are often reviewed more closely by USCIS than other COS applications and there may be greater chance of the application being denied.

Eligibility to Apply:

Generally, the B-2 visa status will need to be valid up until the start date for the COS I-20 or the application may be denied. Please note the following:

- USCIS will allow a gap of no more than 30 days between the end date for of the I-94 (B-2 status) and the program start date for the I-20 (first day of semester).
- Change of status applications have taken up to nine (9) months for USCIS to process and some schools in Texas have reported a processing time of over twelve (12) months. Individuals should plan for a minimum processing time of between four (4) and nine (9) months.
- B-2 visas are generally issued for no more than 6 months with limited extensions allowed. The change of status application from B-2 to F-1 carries a high risk of being denied by USCIS due to the extended processing timeframe. There are very limited requests to expedite.
- Even if the application is delayed by USCIS, if the I-94 expires while the change of status application is pending then USCIS will deny the application (exception if I-20 start date is within 30 days of I-94 expiration). While this policy generally does not apply to other change of status situations USCIS has consistently enforced this policy for change of status applicants from B-2 to F-1.

Due to the significant risks associated with the change of status from B-2 to F-1 the ISSS ***strongly*** recommends the individual consider traveling outside the U.S. to change their visa status. Please review our change of status website for more information about traveling to change your visa status.

Eligibility to Begin Studies:

B-2's ***MAY NOT*** begin their studies in their academic program while their application is pending with USCIS.

- If the COS is approved after the beginning of a semester then the student will be required to begin their studies for their academic program or English Language Institute studies the following semester.
- Individuals here in the U.S. as a B-2 or who have a pending application to F-1 ***MAY NOT*** complete the ELI program and receive the English proficiency waiver for admission to a degree program at A&M-Commerce.
- Study ***may only be for recreational purposes*** and not for completion of a degree or program or count toward the completion of a degree or program.

Please note that once the change of status application has been filed:

- Change of statuses have taken up to nine (9) months for USCIS to process and some schools in Texas have reported a processing time of over twelve (12) months. Students should plan for a minimum USCIS processing time of between four (4) and nine (9) months.
- Students may contact USCIS after 90 days from their application receipt notice date to inquire about their application. There are very limited options to request an expedite for an application and to learn more about USCIS's expedite policy you may Google search *USCIS, help center, expedite*.
- Students filing for a change of status will not be eligible for any benefits related to the F-1 visa status (i.e. employment, study) until their change of status is approved

- Once the application is filed you cannot travel outside the U.S. or your change of visa status will be considered abandoned
- Once your change of visa status is approved, the next time you travel outside the U.S. you will be required to apply for an F-1 visa before you will be permitted to re-enter the U.S.
- You will be required to attend the next available International Student Orientation
- You will be required to enroll in the System Student Health Insurance Plan (SSHIP) unless you meet one of the allowed waivers

To apply for a change of status you will need to follow the steps below:

- 1) Be admitted into the English Language Institute or a degreed program at A&M-Commerce. Email the ISSS once you have been admitted so we may begin to review your admission file.
- 2) Once admitted you will need to provide the following documents to the ISSS via email to Intl.Stu@tamuc.edu or drop them off at the ISSO in Halladay 104. On the email subject write Change of Status application
 - a) Copy of passport, visa, and I-94 for B-2 applying for the change of status. Electronic I-94 records may be accessed at www.cbp.gov/I94. If there will be any dependents (spouse or children) included in the application we will also need copies of their documents.
 - b) Copy of passport, visa, and I-94 for any dependents (spouse, children) who will be included in application for change of status. Electronic I-94 records may be accessed at www.cbp.gov/I94. If there will be any dependents (spouse or children) included in the application we will also need copies of their documents.
 - c) Proof of funding for one year of study- \$20000 for ELI, \$26000 for graduate student, and \$28000 for undergraduate student plus \$3000 per dependent. The proof of funding may be a bank statement (checking or savings account) or certificate of deposit and *will need to include the previous 3 months*. A letter from a bank, financial institute, or Admissions Purpose Only financial guarantee will not be sufficient. Students will need include the ISSS affidavit (sponsors outside the U.S.) or the I-134 (sponsors in the U.S.) at <http://www.tamuc.edu/CampusLife/CampusServices/internationalStudentServices/documents/InternationalStudentServicesStatementofFinances.pdf>.
 - d) Letter stating reason for change of status
- 3) The ISSS will review all documents and issue the F-1 I-20 for change of status if eligible within 10 business days.
- 4) There is a \$290 application fee with USCIS for the change of status application. Students will need to include a money order (no cash, personal check) made out to Department of Homeland Security.
- 5) Once the I-20 has been issued, the person applying for the change of status will need to pay the SEVIS I-901 fee at <https://www.fmjfee.com/i901fee/index.jsp>. A payment receipt for the I-901SEVIS fee is required with your application to USCIS.