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

Individuals in the F-2 visa may apply for a change of status to F-1 as long as the F-1 principal is in a valid F-1 status. Effective May, 29, 2015, F-2 dependents may enroll in a part-time program even if the course of study done on a part-time basis leads toward or counts toward a degree or completion of a program. Study as an F-2 may only be part-time and below is the definition for part-time study. F-2 dependents may not begin study on a full-time basis until their change of visa status has been approved:

- Eleven (11) semester credit hours each fall and spring semester and three (3) semester credit hours each summer session for undergraduate students
- Six (6) semester credit hours each fall and spring semester and three (3) semester credit hours each summer session for graduate students

F-2 dependents will be required to complete check-in with the ISSS and attend the International Student Orientation. F-2 dependents will also be required to be enrolled in the System Student Health Insurance Plan unless they meet an allowed exception per the A&M System policy for all non-U.S. citizens.

Please keep in mind the following:

- The change of status application has to be *received* by USCIS while the F-2 is still in a valid status. Remember that the F-2 is in a valid status as long as the F-1 principal remains in a valid status. As long as the change of status application is received by USCIS while the F-2 is in status then USCIS will generally adjudicate the application even if the F-2 status expires. *Please note this is at the discretion of USCIS.*
- While USCIS general processing times are 2-3 months, most change of statuses will take much longer. Many change of status applications have taken up to nine (9) months for USCIS to process and some schools 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.*
- Applicants 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 go to USCIS Expedite. The ISSS cannot intervene with USCIS to request an expedite.
- Applicants filing for a change of status will not be eligible for any benefits related to the F-1 visa status until their change of status is approved.
- Applicants will not be eligible for on-campus employment until the start date of the next available semester after the approval notice effective date for the change of status.
- 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

Documents Required to Change Your Status from F-2 to F-1

Below is a checklist of all documents required for the change of status (COS). It is your responsibility to provide all documents as listed below. Incomplete applications will not be reviewed or processed. ***Before the ISSS can process a change of status to F-1 the individual must first be admitted to a degree program or the English Language Institute.*** Please email the following documents to Intl.Stu@tamuc.edu. DO NOT copy any alternate email or drop your documents off in person at the ISSS.

- ➢ Copy of **ALL** I-20's, visa, and I-94 for F-2 applying for the COS **AND** F-1 principal.
    - o If paper copy I-94 then we will need a copy of both sides.
    - o If electronic I-94 record you may access this at www.cbp.gov/I94.
- ➢ Copy of passport photo page and data page (that includes address in home country) for F-2 applying for the COS and F-1 principal.
- ➢ Copy of EAD card if F-1 principal is on OPT (if applicable)
- ➢ Copy of any previous change of status approval notice (if applicable)
- ➢ Proof of funding for one year of study which equals an estimated $20000 for ELI, $26000 for graduate student, and $28000 for undergraduate student plus $3000 per dependent:
    - o Proof of funding may be a bank statement (checking or savings account) or certificate of deposit and will to cover the **previous 3 months**.
    - o A letter from a bank, employment letter (for F-1), or Admission Purposes Only financial guarantee ***will not be accepted***.
    - o Applicants must need include the ISSS sponsor statement (for sponsors *outside* the U.S.) or the Form I-134 (for sponsors *within* the U.S.) at Funding Requirements for I-20.
- ➢ Letter stating reason for change of status.

==*Incomplete applications will not be reviewed or processed and it is your responsibility to provide all documents listed above via email to Intl.Stu@tamuc.edu.*==

The ISSS will review all documents and issue the F-1 I-20 for the COS if eligible within 10 business days. Once your COS has been processed you will be emailed the copy of the COS I-20 along with instructions to file online electronically or by mail. Students will only receive a copy of the COS I-20.

Please note that once the application is processed the person applying for COS will need to pay the $200 SEVIS I-901 fee at https://www.fmjfee.com/i901fee/index.jsp. Be sure to keep a copy of your payment receipt for your records and to submit with your online application (I-539). This fee is non-refundable once payment is made.