Change of Status to F-1

(These are the ELIS online application instructions. Also see the mail-in option instructions)

Any student who wishes to change to F-1 status must prove evidence of full admission to a degree program, funding to support the duration of study and intent to enroll full-time. Upon request, the International Student Advisor will review your documents prior to uploading them to the USCIS ELIS system.

Step 1 – Obtain the I-20 from OIP
Submit information regarding finances and admission to the OIP.

Step 2 – Pay SEVIS Fee (Form I-901)
The SEVIS fee is a $200 onetime fee for those who wish to obtain F-1 status. The fee may be paid by mail or online. Information may be obtained at http://www.FMJfee.com.

Step 3 – Create a USCIS ELIS account
Complete the information at: https://elis.uscis.dhs.gov/cislogin/createOnlineAccountAction.do

Step 4 – Complete the online application through your ELIS account

Step 5 – Upload the below listed required documents on the ELIS evidence screens*.
1. Letter from student requesting change from current status to F-1
2. Copies of visa, passport, I-94 card
3. Copies of previous I-20s/DS-2019s if in F-2 or J-2 status
4. Copy of letter of admission to Graduate School (graduate students only)
5. Documentation of financial support (award letters, bank statements, etc.)
6. Documentation of spouse’s/parent’s legal status (if changing from dependent status)
   o Copies of I-94, visa, passport, I-20/DS-2019
   o Copy of transcript if spouse/parent is in student status
   o Copy of employment verification letter/last 3 pay check stubs if spouse/parent is in a work classification
7. Copy of marriage certificate (if prior status was based on dependency of spouse) or birth certificate if prior status was based on dependency of parent
8. I-901 SEVIS fee receipt
9. Copy of the I-20 issued for F-1 status with line 11 completed by the student

*The system allows you to submit five documents at a time. Each submission should contain documents for the same person. For example, submit the I-94, visa page and I-20 for the principle applicant separate from the I-94, visa page and I-20 of anyone else included in the petition.

Step 6 – Pay the $290 filing fee using credit card or bank account from U.S. institution

Important Guidelines
No F-1 benefits may be performed, paid or unpaid, until the status has been approved by USCIS and documentation of approval is received.

Nonimmigrants holding the following status may not change to F-1 status while in the US: M-1 students; C,D,K nonimmigrants; J-1 physicians; J nonimmigrants subject to 212(e); Aliens admitted as visitors under 212.1(e); WT and WB visitors admitted under the Visa Waiver Program.

A visitor in F-2 or B-2 status is not permitted to begin a course of study until USCIS approves the change of status application, even if the visa bears the notation “prospective student”.