



CHANGE OF VISA STATUS FROM B-2 TO F-1

A change of visa status from B-2 to F-1 may be requested when the individual in B-2 status has a valid (not expired)* Form I-94 (Arrival/Departure card in passport) and has made the *decision* to apply to the University of North America at least 60 days (preferably 90 days) **after** arrival in the United States and has been accepted to attend a UoNA program.

WARNING: The US Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) maintains that an individual who enters the US as a tourist but intends to study is in violation of their stated intention to visit the U.S temporarily for pleasure. USCIS is particularly suspicious of changes from the B-2 tourist to F-1 student status. Even a B-1/B-2 visitor who decides later to attend a full-time educational program raises questions about his/her original intentions at the time of entry. If USCIS determines that there has been a violation of the terms under which the visitor was admitted, the change of status will be denied.

PROCEDURE: First, you must apply to and be accepted to a UoNA program. Once you decide to attend UoNA, you must complete the Request for Form I-20 and Statement of Financial Ability forms. Both forms can be found on UoNA's website at <http://www.uona.us/downloads/downloads.html>. Issuance of the I-20 is based upon the applicant showing sufficient funds to support his/her studies for at least the first year. Present procedures require that you provide bank account records no more than three (3) months old. If the applicant is to be supported by a sponsor, that individual must complete the Sponsor's Affidavit of Financial Support.

Upon receipt of the financial verification, the I-20 will be issued and the applicant notified to contact the International Student Affairs Office to make an appointment to complete the rest of the Change of Status application.

The applicant must complete the Form I-539, Application for Change of Non-Immigrant Status. (The form is available in the International Office or on-line at <http://www.uscis.gov/portal/site/uscis> and click on Forms)

In addition to the I-20 and the I-539, the following supporting documents are required

- SEVIS fee receipt (SEVIS fee of \$200)
- Form I-94 (copy) (Arrival/Departure card in passport). If there are dependents in the U.S., attach copies of their I-94(s). Dependents in B-2 status are to be included on I-539 Application. I-94's cannot have expired*. Passport copies must be provided – identification page and latest expiration date and tourist visa.
- Check or money order for \$300.00, payable to Department of Homeland Security.
- Additional documentation as recommended by the International Student Advisor.

The advisor will review the application but the student is responsible for sending the documents to the USCIS Service Center for adjudication. Processing takes a minimum of 12 weeks, but sometimes takes much longer. The applicant will be notified when a decision is received. *The applicant is not permitted to enroll in school until the application is approved.*

*The application must be received by USCIS *before* the I-94 expires. Thereafter, the applicant is permitted to remain in the US while the application is pending even after the expiration date of the I-94.

Important Notes:

- If your I-94 has already expired, you are an “**overstay**” and are **ineligible** to apply for a change of status within the U.S. You will be required to leave the U.S. and apply for the F-1 visa in your country of citizenship.
- An approved application changes only your status; it does not put a visa in your passport. The next time you travel outside the U.S. you will have to apply for the F-1 visa from a U.S. Consulate office using the I-20 approved by USCIS
- ELIGIBILITY FOR EMPLOYMENT IS SUBJECT TO F-1 REGULATIONS. See your International Student Advisor for more information.