Elmhurst University

Change of Status to F-1 Student Status

This handout should *only be used as a guide* to apply for a change of status (COS) to F-1 student status from the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS). We recommend any students applying for a change of status consult and complete the application with an experienced immigration attorney. Elmhurst University staff are able to review the overall process in relation to admission and status.

If it has been less than 90 days since you made an initial entry to the U.S. in your current immigration status and/or if your current immigration status will expire in the next few months, it is important that you consult with an immigration attorney before filing your application with USCIS. You also have the option to obtain F-1 student status through travel instead of remaining inside the U.S. and applying for COS with USCIS. Please consult with your admission counselor to discuss both options.

You must meet the following requirements prior to applying for a change of status (COS) to F-1 student:
- ✓ You must be admitted to Elmhurst University for a degree program
- ✓ You must have an original Elmhurst University SEVIS I-20 document
- ✓ You must have current financial documents verifying availability of adequate funds to cover tuition and living expenses. Bank letters/statements must not be older than 6 months

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PRIMARY DOCUMENTS
ALL individuals applying for a COS to F-1 student must submit the following documents to USCIS:

- ❑ Copy of **Elmhurst University SEVIS I-20 document** (all three pages)
- ❑ Copy of **current financial documents** verifying you have adequate funds to cover expenses for one academic year
- ❑ Copy of **I-94 card** (small white card in passport or printed electronic I-94: https://i94.cbp.dhs.gov)
- ❑ Copy of pages containing the following in **your passport**: name, bio-data, photograph, passport number and expiration date, and most recently issued visa (if any). Do not send your original passport to USCIS.
- ❑ A **completed I-539**. Complete the I-539. Complete the supplement only if you have a dependent spouse and/or child. Make sure that the address you list in the application is valid for at least the next 6 months since USCIS will send their response back to the address listed on Form I-539, and when applicants move, USCIS does not forward mail. You may also download this form from the USCIS website at https://www.uscis.gov/i-539
- ❑ **Money order(s) payable to the U.S. Department of Homeland Security** for the appropriate USCIS filing fee as well as the biometric fee. For the latest information, including the exact amounts, please visit USCIS link: https://www.uscis.gov/i-539
- ❑ Copy of **SEVIS Fee Receipt** showing that you paid the SEVIS fee: http://www.ice.gov/sevis/i901/index.htm. Anyone issued an "Initial Attendance - Change of Status Requested" SEVIS I-20 must show proof of payment upon submission of their COS application.
- ❑ **Evidence of Eligibility** – you must also submit additional documents to show that you have lawfully maintained your current non-immigrant status. See below for your current status and submit all of the additional corresponding documents required.

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EVIDENCE OF ELIGIBILITY

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B-1 or B-2
- ❑ Personal letter indicating reason for change of status request.
- ❑ Copy of your I-94 card print-out: https://i94.cbp.dhs.gov showing your entry information
- ❑ Copy of your biographical passport page(s) showing the validity date and most recently issued visa (if any)
- ❑ Note, if you are already attending classes in the U.S., you may not be eligible for a COS application. Please consult with an experienced immigration attorney.

E-1
- ❑ Copy of document showing you are a dependent (child/spouse) of your parent/spouse
- ❑ Original letter and from your spouse/parent's employer verifying employment and/or last pay stub
- ❑ Copy of you and your spouse/parent's I-94 card print-outs: https://i94.cbp.dhs.gov
- ❑ Copy of you and your spouse/parent's biographical passport page(s) showing the validity date and most recently issued visa (if any)
- ❑ If you parent/spouse already quit his/her job or been terminated, please consult with an experienced immigration attorney.

F-2
- ❑ Copy of your marriage certificate (and English translation)
- ❑ Original letter from your spouse's school verifying spouse is maintaining status
- ❑ Copy of you and your spouse's I-20 forms showing your name listed as the dependent
- ❑ Copy of you and your spouse's I-94 card print-outs: https://i94.cbp.dhs.gov
- ❑ Copy of you and your spouse's biographical passport page(s) showing the validity date and most recently issued visa (if any)

H-1B
- ❑ Original letter from your employer verifying employment and/or last pay stub
- ❑ Copy of the H-1B approval notice (if applicable)
- ❑ Copy of your I-94 card print-out: https://i94.cbp.dhs.gov
- ❑ Copy of your biographical passport page(s) showing the validity date and most recently issued visa (if any)
- ❑ If you have already quit your job or have been terminated, please consult with an experienced immigration attorney.

H-4
- ❑ Copy of your marriage certificate (and English translation)
- ❑ Original letter from your spouse's employer verifying employment and/or last pay stub
- ❑ Copy of you and your spouse's H-1B/H-4 approval notices (if applicable)
- ❑ Copy of you and your spouse's I-94 card print-outs: https://i94.cbp.dhs.gov
- ❑ Copy of you and your spouse's biographical passport page(s) showing the validity date and most recently issued visa (if any)
- ❑ If your spouse has already quit his/her job or been terminated, please consult with an experienced immigration attorney.

J-1
- ❑ CLEAR copy of your DS-2019 form.
- ❑ CLEAR copy of your I-94 card print-out: https://i94.cbp.dhs.gov
- ❑ CLEAR copy of your biographical passport page(s) showing the validity date and most recently issued visa (if any)
  Note, if you are subject to the 212(e) two-year home country physical presence requirement, you are not eligible to request a COS unless you have obtained a waiver from the U.S. State Department. Please consult with an experienced immigration attorney.

Office of Admission   *190 Prospect Avenue*   *(630) 617-3400 phone*
                         Elmhurst, Illinois   *(800) 697-8178 phone*   *admit@elmhurst.edu*
                         60126-3296   *(630) 617-5501 fax*   *elmhurst.edu*

L-1

- ❑ Original letter from your employer verifying employment and/or last pay stub
- ❑ CLEAR copy of the L-1A/B approval notice (if applicable)
- ❑ CLEAR copy of your I-94 card print-out: https://i94.cbp.dhs.gov
- ❑ CLEAR copy of your biographical passport page(s) showing the validity date and most recently issued visa (if any)
- ❑ If you have already quit your job or have been terminated, please consult with an experienced immigration attorney.

L-2

- ❑ CLEAR copy of your marriage certificate (and English translation)
- ❑ Original letter and copy from your spouse's employer verifying employment and/or last pay stub
- ❑ CLEAR copy of you and your spouse's L-1A/B and L-2 approval notice (if applicable)
- ❑ CLEAR copy of you and your spouse's I-94 card print-outs: https://i94.cbp.dhs.gov
- ❑ CLEAR copy of you and your spouse's biographical passport page(s) showing the validity date and most recently issued visa (if any)
- ❑ If your spouse has already quit his/her job or been terminated, please consult with an experienced immigration attorney.

Mailing Your Application & Next Steps

You should mail your application to the appropriate USCIS service center (refer to USCIS website: https://www.uscis.gov/i-539-addresses for the correct address) using a fast and trackable mailing service like Priority Express, certified USPS mail, FedEx, UPS, or DHL. We recommend that you make a copy of your entire application for your own records. Please remember to track the delivery of your application and provide your Elmhurst University Designated School Official (DSO) with a copy of the I-797 receipt notice once it arrives in the mail from USCIS.

We recommend that you make a copy of your entire application for your own records. Expect to wait about several months or longer for a decision from USCIS. Government processing times vary depending on USCIS workload. When you receive an answer from USCIS, please contact your Elmhurst University Designated School Official (DSO) to complete your international document check-in and discuss next steps.

USCIS requires all Form I-539 applicants and co-applicants to attend an appointment, where biometrics such as fingerprints will be collected. For more information on how to prepare for your biometric service appointment, please review the following link: https://www.uscis.gov/forms/forms-information/preparing-your-biometric-services-appointment. Biometrics appointments will be scheduled at a USCIS Application Support Centers (ACS). To find the ACS closest to you please use this link: https://egov.uscis.gov/office-locator/#/asc.

Travel

If you need to travel internationally while USCIS is processing your COS application, please consult with an immigration attorney before making travel arrangements. If you leave the U.S. before USCIS decides on your case, your COS application will be considered abandoned and USCIS could deny it on that basis. If you travel outside of the U.S. after USCIS approves your change to status application to F-1 student, you will need to obtain an F-1 visa in your passport from the U.S. Consulate or Embassy abroad before you will be able to travel back to the U.S. Please consult with your Elmhurst University Designated School Official (DSO) for more details.

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