



East Central University

Change of Status

B1/B2 to F-1

Changing from a B1/B2 Tourist visa to F-1 Student visa can be especially challenging, and it may be best to travel, apply for an F-1 visa abroad, and reenter the U.S. in F-1 status. Once the below ECU documents are completed an "Initial" I-20 will be issued to the applying student for filing with the *United States Citizenship and Immigrations Services*. **Note: As immigration filing instructions and fees are subject to change, applicants are advised to verify the accuracy of filing procedures and costs by visiting the USCIS website <https://www.uscis.gov/> directly.**

STEP #1

Submit the following to the USCIS:

1. Completed [Form I-539](#) (obtain from USCIS website here <http://www.uscis.gov/portal/site/uscis>, type I539 in search bar)
2. Check or money order for filing fee made payable to "**Department of Homeland Security**"
3. Form I-94 (<https://i94.cbp.dhs.gov/i94/request.html>)
4. Photocopy of the Visa page AND identification page in your Passport
5. Photocopy of I-20 issued by ECU
6. Evidence of financial support - *valid within last 6 months*. (i.e., official, original bank letter and bank statement showing minimum estimate of expenses covered. See below)
 - Refer to the [International Application Packet](#) for the current estimated cost to attend amounts
7. Photocopy of proof of payment of [SEVIS Fee](#) (<http://www.fmjfee.com/>)
8. Detailed letter requesting and explaining the need to change status
 - If your B-1/B-2 visa is endorsed "prospective student," you should have little difficulty changing to student status. If your visa does not have a "prospective student" notation, include answers to the following questions in your letter:
 - *What did you tell the consular officer was the purpose of your visit to the U.S.?*
 - *Upon entry to the U.S., what did you tell the immigration officer was the purpose of your visit?*
 - *How and when did you arrive at your decision to study in the U.S.?*
 - *How and when did you first contact the University, and when were you informed you had been admitted?*
 - *If prior to your entry into the U.S. your intention was to attend school, why didn't you apply for an F-1 student visa rather than the B-2 visitor visa?*
 - *Have you been in the U.S. before? When and for what purpose?*
 - *Any relatives in the U.S.? If so, what types of visas are they here on?*

STEP #2

Send the documents from Step #1 to the most current USCIS filing address as listed on <https://www.uscis.gov/i-539-addresses>.

NOTE: The regulations prohibit beginning a full course of study until the change of status to F-1 is approved. F-1 status cannot begin earlier than 30 days before the start date on your I-20. You should submit your application several months in advance, and you must be able to maintain your current B-1/B-2 status until 30 days before the I-20 start date. If your tourist status will expire prior to 30 days before your I-20 start date, your application will most likely be denied. Even though you are allowed to stay in the U.S. while the application is pending, if your application is likely to be denied, it will be better for you to travel, obtain an F-1 visa abroad, and reenter the U.S. in F-1 status. You can check your status at <http://www.uscis.gov/portal/site/uscis> using the receipt number provided by USCIS.