

Change of Status Instructions to J-1

Please make an appointment with an ISSFS advisor for assistance.

Eligibility: In order to change visa status, you must:

- b) be maintaining a current non-immigrant status
- c) have a valid passport (valid for at least 6 months from application date), if a passport is required
- d) apply BEFORE the current authorized stay expires. At least 90 days before is recommended.

Directions to Change to J-1:

1. Receive a Change of Status DS-2019 from the ISSFS.
2. Complete [Form I-539](#) (download from the website: <http://uscis.gov/graphics/index.htm>)
 - Use the International Programs Office address for the applicant's address
International Programs Office, PO Box 1250, Moscow, ID 83844-1250
3. Write a cover letter addressed to USCIS requesting the change and explaining why the change is needed or requested
4. Make an appointment with an advisor in ISSFS to finalize application
5. Bring all the necessary documents (see "CHECKLIST" below) to scheduled appointment

Checklist: Please bring all the following documents to a scheduled appointment (be sure all copies (especially Port of Entry stamps) are readable):

- Original DS-2019 prepared for the Change of Status (COS) to J-1
- Copies of passport identity pages that show expiration dates (must be valid)
- Copy of I-94 Arrival/Departure Record
- Copy's of I-94's for any dependents who will be changing status also
- A copy of all previous I-20 or DS-2019 documents
- Proof of financial support
- [Form I-539](#) (download from the website: <http://www.uscis.gov/portal/site/uscis> and click on the "immigration forms" tab then scroll down to the I-539 link. Links to form and instructions are at the bottom of the page.
- Cover letter addressed to USCIS explaining why the change is needed or requested
- Proof of current legal status (If on a dependent visa, also provide photocopies of primary visa holder's legal status, such as: 1-94 and 1-797, DS-2019 or 1-20 and proof of family relationship to the primary visa holder such as a copy of a marriage certificate)
- Fee of \$300 made payable to: **Department of Homeland Security**
- Complete the online Form I-901 at: www.FMJfee.com. Pay \$200 fee using a credit card and print receipt for COS application.

If the pending student or scholar is in a status in which they are not authorized to work (i.e., F-2), they may not work until they receive notification from USCIS that the J-1 status has been officially changed. The pending student or scholar also may not attend school full-time (if changing from F-2) until the J-1 status is approved. This process can take up to three months, so it is essential to apply for the change of status as soon as possible once you have been admitted. If awarded a scholarship or assistantship, requests for expediting the process may be granted.

Send all application documents to: USCIS California Service Center
P.O. Box 10539
Laguna Niguel, CA 92607-1053