



Cornell University International Students and Scholars Office

B-50 Caldwell Hall
Ithaca, New York 14853-2602
Telephone: 607.255.5243
Fax: 607.255.2778
Email: isso@cornell.edu
Web: <http://www.isso.cornell.edu>

CHANGING TO J-1 Student VISA STATUS

To change from another visa status to J-1 Student status, complete the J-1 Student Request form (available at the ISSO or on line at <http://www.isso.cornell.edu/immigration/j1student/jstudentreq.pdf>.) Once you receive your DS-2019 from the ISSO, you can change your visa status either by 1) traveling out of the U.S., applying for a J-1 student visa stamp, and re-entering the U.S. in J-1 student status or by 2) applying for the change of status within the U.S. as described below. [Please note that you can NOT change from another J status (such as researcher or professor) to J student status within the U.S. but must change by travel described above.]

To apply for the change of status within the U.S.: mail the items listed below to the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS). Review your complete application with an ISSO advisor before you mail it to USCIS. USCIS will take approximately 1 to 3 months to approve your application.

ITEMS IN APPLICATION TO the appropriate USCIS office as stated in the I-539 instructions:

- 1) Receipt showing that you have paid the “SEVIS fee” which you can print when you pay the fee: www.FMJfee.com.
- 2) A letter from you, requesting the change of status and explaining your circumstances and plans. It is recommended that an adviser at the ISSO look at your letter before you mail your packet to the USCIS.
- 3) Completed Form I-539, Application to Extend/Change Nonimmigrant Status (download this form from www.uscis.gov). The ISSO adviser can help you with items you don't understand; remember to fill out both sides of the form, answer questions in Part 4 item 3 on a separate page when necessary.
- 4) **APPLICATION FEE:** Check the I-539 form for the appropriate fee amount. Please write your check or money order payable to the Department of Homeland Security. Write your I-94 card number & the type of application you are requesting on your check or money order.
- 5) Your Cornell DS-2019. Send the original – not a copy. Sign your name on the bottom of page 1.
- 6) Photocopies of your immigration documents:
 - ID page of your passport;
 - page in passport showing expiration date if different than ID page;
 - visa stamp (F1 or whatever other visa status you entered the U.S.)
 - I-20 (if currently in F-1 or F-2 status: if F-2 also need to send copies of F-1's documents)
 - BOTH sides of your I-94 card.
- 7) Financial documentation: evidence which supports section 5 on your DS-2019.

Staple all of the items together (keep a copy for your records) and mail by certified mail to the appropriate USCIS address as stated in the I-539 instructions. **NOTE:** After your DS-2019 and new I-94 are returned to you, send or bring a photocopy of the documents to the ISSO.