



Guidelines for Change of Status to J-1 Scholar rev. 03/19/2012

ASSEMBLING THE APPLICATION

The prospective J-1 scholar should then prepare and gather the following forms and documents:

1. Form I-539 Application to Extend/Change Nonimmigrant Status. This fillable form is available without charge on the USCIS forms website. Click on <http://www.uscis.gov/> and follow the link to Forms. Dependents can be included on the supplement.
2. A personal check or money order for \$290.00 made out to U.S. Department of Homeland Security (written out in full).
3. Letter from applicant explaining circumstances for requesting a Change of Status. If filed late, careful explanation for late-filing.
4. Copy of DS-2019 for scholar and any dependents signed by international services coordinator and prospective J-1 scholar.
5. Copy of proof of payment of SEVIS fee (www.FMJfee.com).
6. If funding coming from source other than UC Denver, evidence of financial support. If funding coming from UC Denver, copy of offer letter.
7. Photocopy of both sides of entry Form I-94 card (USCIS will generate a new I-94 card as part of application).
8. Photocopy of any additional immigration documents (if applicable) verifying current status, visa stamp(s), and passport ID page(s) showing date of expiration. If changing from F-1 status, photocopy of all current and previous I-20 forms (pages 1 and 3), as well as a photocopy of EAD card if on optional practical training (OPT).
9. If family members also changing status, include dependent family member(s) documentation and proof of relationship (marriage certificate for spouse, marriage certificate and birth certificate for children).
10. To request that the application be expedited because of a job offer, include a bright colored cover sheet asking that the application be expedited because of the starting date of your job.

FILING THE APPLICATION

Make a copy of Form I-539 and all the attachments, including the check.

Send to the USCIS by some sort of mail or courier service from which you will receive proof that the application was received and on what date. We recommend either Express Mail with a return receipt or Federal Express.

If sending through the US Postal Service, use this address:

USCIS
PO Box 660166
Dallas, TX 75266

If sending by FedEx or DHL, use this address:

USCIS
Attn: I-539
2501 S. State Highway 121 Business
Suite 400
Lewisville, TX 75067

WHAT TO EXPECT

A few weeks after sending the application to USCIS you should receive an I-797 receipt notice with your case number. Please do not lose this form. The case number will assist you in tracking your application process online. Online case status can be found at www.uscis.gov.

If you do not receive a receipt notice from USCIS, contact your bank to obtain a copy of the cancelled check you sent to USCIS. The case number will be stamped on the back of the check. With this case number you can contact customer service at 1-800-375-5283 and request a duplicate receipt.

If you move while your application is pending, you must change your address with USCIS immediately. You can do this by calling the customer service line at the number above. If you know that you will be moving while the application is pending, we recommend that you use an address care of a friend or relative who will not be moving.

When you receive any notice from USCIS please let ISSS know. We can assist if USCIS needs more information about your case and would need to know of the delay in the process. ISSS will also need to see the DS-2019 and the approval notice with your new I-94 card on the bottom, once your application has been approved. ISSS is required to update your SEVIS record after your application is approved, so it's important to let us know the case status as soon as possible to avoid any issues with your new status.

TWO YEAR HOME RESIDENCE REQUIREMENT

Some J-1 Exchange Visitors are subject to a requirement that they return to their home country for two years before being eligible for H-1B, L-1, or permanent resident status: those whose skills are wanted by their home country; whose program is funded directly by their home government or by the U.S. government. The J-1 applicant should be aware of this requirement and whether or not the requirement applies before filing the application.

The first step in applying to change to J-1 status is to obtain a DS-2019 Certificate of Eligibility for Exchange Visitor (J-1) Status form. The DS-2019 is issued by ISSS once the University of Colorado Denver host academic department has submitted all required documents. Once ISSS has issued Form DS-2019, the prospective J-1 scholar should sign the bottom of the form.

The scholar should then go on line and pay the SEVIS fee with a credit or debit card: <https://www.fmjfee.com/i901fee/>. A copy of the receipt will be required with the application.

Caveat: Please note that ISSS international services coordinator are assisting you with your application in an advisory role only. We cannot provide you with legal advise and do not guarantee that your application will be approved by the US Department of Homeland Security. You are welcome to use the services of an immigration attorney.

Note that applying for a change of status does not provide you with a new "visa." Travel abroad will require obtaining a new visa before you can return to the U.S. in J-1 status.