

## **B1/B2 TO F1 CHANGE OF NONIMMIGRANT STATUS**

This change of status can be especially challenging, and it may be best to travel, apply for an F-1 visa in your home country, and reenter the U.S. in F-1 status.

### **Instructions applying change of status without departing the US.**

1. Obtain an I-20 from Office of International student services (OISS), campus center, Andrews University. You must be admitted to the Andrews University to request your I-20 from this office.
2. Decide which option you would like to use: "Travel and Reentry" or "Change Status in the U.S."
3. Prepare the required documents and follow next steps for obtaining F-1 status (details below).

### **Option 1: Travel and Reentry**

Plan your travel and F-1 visa appointment accordingly. You can enter the U.S. with your I-20 and F-1 visa no earlier than 30 days before the I-20 start date. You will be required to pay SEVIS fee for the I-20 document in the amount of US\$200. You may make that payment online at: <https://www.fmjfee.com/i901fee/desktop/index.jsp?view=desktop>. Please keep a copy of payment confirmation for the visa interview as that will be requested to show as proof of payment.

### **Option 2: Change of Status in the U.S.**

- Submit your application to U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) by preparing the following:
- Complete [Form I-539](#) (Paper application only, download from here: <http://www.uscis.gov/sites/default/files/files/form/i-539.pdf>)
- \$290 fee: check or money order payable to "U.S. Department of Homeland Security"
- Original I-94 card or photocopy of admission stamp and paper printout of [I-94 record](#) (download from online: <https://i94.cbp.dhs.gov/I94/request.html>)
- Photocopy of the visa page and identification page in your passport

- Photocopy of the signed I-20 issued in your name by the OISS
  - Detailed evidence of financial support
  - 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:
1. What did you tell the consular officer was the purpose of your visit to the U.S.?
  2. Upon entry to the U.S., what did you tell the immigration officer was the purpose of your visit?
  3. How and when did you arrive at your decision to study in the U.S.?
  4. How and when did you first contact the University, and when were you informed you have been admitted?
  5. 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?
    6. Have you been in the U.S. before? When and for what purpose?
    7. Any relatives in the U.S.? If so, what types of visas are they here on?

### **NOTES**

- **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.