

For persons currently in the US in another nonimmigrant status, there are two ways to obtain J-1 status:

1. You may obtain a J-1 visa via travel abroad.
  2. You may obtain a J-1 status by applying to US Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) for a change of status (COS) without departing the US.
- Both methods require that your purpose be to increase mutual understand between people of the U.S. and people of other countries by means of educational/cultural exchanges. You must also demonstrate that you intend to leave the US after completing your program of study or that you do not plan to stay in the US indefinitely.

**Part I. Student Information**

1. Your Name \_\_\_\_\_ 2. Address \_\_\_\_\_  
 3. Email \_\_\_\_\_ 4. Your Immigration Status \_\_\_\_\_ 5. Academic Department \_\_\_\_\_

**Part II. Procedure**

6. Call International Services (IS) to set up an appointment and bring the following documents with you:

- Your admission letter.
- Completed and signed [Form IS-200](#) (Request for Form DS-2019 for J-1 Scholar) or [Form IS-201](#) (Request for Form DS-2019 for J-1 Students).
- Financial documents.
- Passport.
- Form I-94.

During your appointment, an International Services Advisor will generate a DS-2019 for your use (if you meet the requirements).

7. Pay SEVIS fee at <https://www.fmjfee.com/index.jhtml> (if you pay the SEVIS fee online, you can print the receipt immediately).

8. If you are going to travel abroad to apply for a visa, please set up an appointment with a U.S. Embassy or Consulate prior to your departure. Please visit <http://www.usembassy.gov/> for more information.

9. If you are going to apply for a change of status (COS) without departing the US, you will need to submit the following to USCIS. *Please note that your application should be received by USCIS before your current immigration status expires.*

- Application fee of \$300.00 (This should be a check payable to the "Department of Homeland Security.")
- Completed, signed and dated [Form I-539](#), Application to Extend/Change Nonimmigrant Status.
- A cover letter from you addressed to USCIS, requesting a change of status, explaining your circumstances.
- A copy of your admission letter.
- A copy of your electronic SEVIS fee receipt, verifying that you have paid the SEVIS fee.
- Your original form DS-2019.
- Copies of your previous form DS-2019(s), if applicable.
- Your financial documentation.
- A copy of your Form I-94 (both sides).
- A copy of the biographic and picture pages of your passport.
- A copy of your U.S. visa stamp.
- If you hold a dependent status (e.g. F-2 or J-2), a copy of your spouse's/parent's F-1 or J-1 documents (form I-20 or form DS-2019, biographic and picture pages of passport, visa and form I-94).

Make a complete copy of your documents for your record prior to mailing.

Mail your application to the following address by a trackable mailing service to:

USCIS  
P.O. Box 660166  
Dallas, TX 75266

If you do not live in SC, please visit [USCIS website](#) for your filing address.

**Part III. Important Notes**

- We recommend that you schedule an appointment with an International Services Advisor to review your completed application before filing it with the USCIS.
- Estimated [processing time](#) for USCIS is between two and six months.
- You will receive an I-797 receipt notice from USCIS approximately one month after filing your application. You may [check the status of your application](#) on-line using the receipt number found on the Form I-797 Receipt Notice.
- If you receive a Request for Further Evidence (RFE) from USCIS, consult with IS and/or your immigration attorney before responding.
- You may not be able to attend school while your change of status application is pending at USCIS, depending on your current immigration status. Furthermore, you may also not be able to begin an assistantship, or engage in on-campus or off-campus employment of any kind until your change of status has been approved by USCIS.
- After you have changed your status from within the US, you may need to obtain a new visa stamp for your new status on your next trip abroad. This will necessitate a visit to a US embassy or consulate during that trip. Consult with IS about this process well before your trip.
- International Services would like to remind students that a change of status application is the responsibility of the applicant. IS has provided the above information as a courtesy and recommends that persons with complex applications consult a competent immigration attorney before proceeding.