

Change to F-1 Visa Status

Congratulations on your admission to Seattle Colleges! The information below will help you understand the process of changing from your current visa status to F-1 (student) visa status in the United States.

Although you can submit the change of status application on your own, advisors at Seattle Colleges recommend that you consider seeking legal assistance for guidance on the change of status application and on the “bridge” application requirement.

Changing to F-1 Status

The change of status application you will submit to the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) service center is a request to change from your current visa status to F-1 status. The status change will affect your current stay in the United States: it will allow you to study as a full-time student until you have completed your intended program of study. Approval of your request will not give you an F-1 visa. If you choose to leave the United States after your change of status has been approved, you must plan to apply for an F-1 visa at a U.S. consular post before you can return to the United States in F-1 status. If you already know that you will travel outside the United States within the next 6-9 months, changing status may not be a useful option. If your request is denied, USCIS will ask you to leave the United States as soon as possible.

The Application Process

To begin preparing your application for F-1 status, please visit the [Study In The States webpage](#) on change of status. You should plan to prepare and submit all documents listed there. If your current visa status will expire more than 30 days prior to the first day of the quarter for which you applied, USCIS requires you to also submit a “bridge” application. Information on this requirement can be found on the [USCIS website](#).

Within 2-4 weeks of submitting the change of status application, you should expect to receive notice from the USCIS service center confirming receipt of the application. If you do not receive notification within that time, please contact our office for guidance. Once the receipt notice has arrived, you may remain in the United States until USCIS makes a final decision on the change of status request. USCIS may contact you during this time for additional information needed to make a decision about your request.

Student Responsibilities During Change of Status Process

During the change of status process, students should:

- Maintain full-time enrollment, beginning the quarter for which you applied, unless your current status does not allow you to pursue a program of study (for example, B1/B2 visa holders).
- Submit an Application Deferral Request Form to the Admissions office by the first day of the quarter if the change of status has not been approved by the time the quarter begins. Continue to submit deferral requests for each subsequent quarter until the change has been approved. ***This is very important, as your SEVIS record may auto-cancel if we do not receive your deferral request.***

If you have questions about the change of status process, including enrollment requirements, plans for travel, or concerns about the application, please contact an international student advisor in our office.