**Change of Non-immigrant Visa Status**

If you are currently in the U.S. under a visa status that does not allow full-time or part-time study, you may need to change your visa status. Contact an international student advisor at the Office of International students & Programs (ISP) or send your inquiry to csabis@csub.edu to learn if a change of visa status is needed to study at CSUB.

Many students learn that they need to be on an F-1 or J-1 visa in order to be a full-time student. You must be lawfully maintaining your current visa status in order to be eligible for a change of visa status. The procedures outlined below describe what is needed to change from one non-immigrant visa status to an F-1 or J-1 visa status.

To be eligible for a change of status to F-1, you must first have been admitted to a degree program at CSUB, and have received a “Certificate of Eligibility for Nonimmigrant (F-1) Student (I-20 form)” from the Office of International Students & Programs. **Remember, you can not take classes towards a degree at CSUB before the approval of change of status to F-1 from USCIS.**

There are **two basic ways** of becoming an F-1 student in the United States. To apply for a change to F-1 or J-1 status, you may either:

1. **Travel out of the U.S.**, apply at a U.S. Embassy or Consulate for a new type of visa, and then re-enter the U.S. using the new visa classification.
2. **Mail a Change of Status application to a USCIS Service Center while remaining within the U.S.** You can apply while remaining in the U.S. unless you are a J-1 visa holder who is subject to the **two-year home residence requirement**. If you are subject to this two-year home residency rule, you must travel out of the U.S. to change your status or get a waiver of the requirement. Make an appointment with an international student advisor to discuss your options.

If you file for a change of status inside the U.S., you should not leave the U.S. while the application is pending. Leaving the U.S. may cancel the application.

**If you will be changing status inside the U.S.**, the items listed below are required for your application. It is strongly recommended that you meet with an advisor at ISP to review and mail your application.

1. A letter from you, requesting the change of status and explaining your circumstances and plans. It is recommended that an international student advisor review your letter before you mail your packet to the USCIS.
2. Completed **Form I-539, Application to Extend/Change Nonimmigrant Status.** An international student advisor can help you with items you don't understand. Remember to complete both sides of the form, answer question Part 4, item 3, on a separate page when necessary, and complete the mailing label.

3. Your **original** SEVIS I-20 (F-1) or DS-2019 (J-1) for the new status. If you are a current CSUB student, please contact the Office of ISP. New students will be issued an I-20 once admitted.

4. Photocopies of your immigration documents for all current and previous visa statuses:
   - Picture page and name page of your passport
   - Expiration date of your passport
   - Visa page of your passport
   - BOTH sides of your I-94 card
   - Approval Notices you have received in the past concerning your current and previous visa statuses
   - If you are an F-2 or J-2 dependent, all current and previous I-20s or DS-2019s

5. If you are currently in a dependent visa status, provide photocopies of the immigration documents of the primary spouse or parent:
   - Picture page and name page of his/her passport
   - Expiration date of your passport
   - Visa page of his/her passport
   - BOTH sides of his/her I-94 card
   - Approval Notices he/she has received in the past concerning a current and previous visa statuses
   - If the primary is an F-1 or J-1, all current and previous I-20s or DS-2019s

6. Financial documentation: evidence of funds for the full amount of expenses listed on your I-20 or DS-2019 (scholarships, personal or family bank statements and/or letter from your academic department describing your assistantship);

7. Fee of $290: personal check made payable to the Department of Homeland Security;

8. Receipt of SEVIS fee payment ($200).

It is strongly recommended that you meet with an advisor in person or by phone to review and mail your application. Please allow one to three months to process the application.