Change of Status from H-4 to F-1: Frequently Asked Questions

Overview
What is a Change of Status (COS)?
A Change of Status is an application mailed to USCIS requesting a change of immigration status. Change of Status applications can take approximately six months to be approved, so students should discuss with an International Student Advisor when to apply in advance.

Step 1: Request Dependent I-20
How do I start the Change of Status process?
Students must first request an I-20 indicating "Change of Status." To request an I-20, contact an International Student Advisor by e-mailing ISSO at isso@iastate.edu.

How do I pay the SEVIS fee?
The SEVIS fee can be paid on https://www.fmjfee.com/ using the SEVIS number on the new F-1 I-20.

Step 2: Gather Documents
Students are encouraged to make an appointment with an International Student Advisor to review documents for the final Change of Status application. Students must bring the following documents to the appointment:

- New ISU F-1 I-20 indicating Change of Status
- Copy of all previously issued Forms I-797, H-4 Approval Notices
- Completed Form I-539 (typed)
- Completed Form G-1145 (typed)
- Personal check or money order for $370 payable to U.S. Department of Homeland Security
- 3 months of financial documentation to cover tuition, fees, and living expenses
- Personal statement detailing request to change to F-1 status
- I-94 record (find at www.cbp.gov/i94)
- Copy of the visa page and passport
- F-1 SEVIS fee payment receipt
- Letter of admission to ISU or proof of enrollment
- Photocopies of principal H-1B's following documents:
  - I-797 Approval Notice
  - I-94 record
  - Visa page and passport
  - Proof of employment (Job offer letter and three most recent paystubs)

Step 3: Mailing Application
What steps should I take if I want ISSO to mail the application?
Complete the Document Mailing and Collection e-form found in Cystart.
What steps should I take if I want to mail the final application myself?

- Put the final application together in the order listed above, ensuring the check is on top
- Review the final application one last time to ensure there are no errors and all documents are signed
- Send a scanned copy of your application to ISSO at isso@iastate.edu
  - Include copies of all documents included in the final application as ISSO would need to reference these if USCIS sends a Request for Evidence (RFE) to follow-up on your Change of Status application
- Mail by Fed Ex to the appropriate address found here.

Pending Change of Status Application

Can I stay in the U.S. while my Change of Status application is pending?
Yes, applicants who have submitted a Change of Status application legally may remain in the U.S. while the application is being processed. If the application is denied, the applicant must leave the U.S.

How will I know my application has been received?
Applicants who submit the G-1145 will first receive a text or e-mail within 2 weeks of submission. USCIS will send an I-797 receipt notice to the address listed on the I-539.

- If an applicant has not received an e-mail or text message after 2 weeks, they should first contact their bank to ask if their check for the Change of Status application fee has been cashed by USCIS. Second, if necessary, contact ISSO by e-mail at isso@iastate.edu.

What if there is an error on my receipt notice?
Contact ISSO at isso@iastate.edu.

How can I check the case status of my application?
Applicants can use the receipt number found on the receipt notice to check application case status here.

How will I know my application has been approved or denied?
USCIS will send a formal approval or denial notice to the address listed on the I-539.