Change of Status from F-1 to F-2: 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?
The spouse who is not seeking a Change of Status within the United States must first request a dependent I-20 from their school. ISU students may request a dependent I-20 electronically through Cystart. Students may log in to Cystart using their NEtID and password. Complete and submit the Dependent I-20 request found under the F-1 Student Services tab.

What is the approximate timeline for ISSO to process this request?
For students requesting a dependent I-20 from ISSO, it can take up to 10 working days once the e-form has been submitted. Once the request is approved, ISSO will send an e-mail to the ISU e-mail address on file notifying the student to pick up their dependent I-20. ISSO recommends sending an e-mail to isso@iastate.edu if an e-mail has not been received within 10 working days.

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:
- Completed Form I-539 (typed)
- Completed Form G-1145 (typed)
- Copy of F-2 I-20
- Copy of F-1 I-20
- 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 switch to F-2 status
- I-94 record (find at www.cbp.gov/i94)
- Photocopy of the following documents:
  - All previously issued I-20s
  - Visa page and passport
  - Proof of family relationship to F-1 (e.g. photocopy of marriage certificate, if spouse; photocopy of birth certificate, if child)

Step 3: Mailing Application
What steps should I take if I want ISSO to mail the application?
Complete the Mailing Authorization 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?

Students must maintain their current status while a Change of Status application is pending. If a student’s current status expires before the Change of Status application is approved, they must leave the U.S. Students in this situation are encouraged to speak with an immigration attorney.

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.

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.