**Procedures to apply for Change of Status to F-1**

**International Student and Faculty Office**

**Northern Illinois University**

1. Please provide our office with a letter of financial guarantee from your bank or from the bank of your sponsor. This must be on bank letterhead, stating that you or your sponsor has the necessary funds to support you during your first academic year on F-1 status at NIU. The ISFO Office will inform you of the current costs. If the bank account is not yours, in addition we need to have a letter from the account holder stating that he or she is willing to provide these funds to you for your studies. If you have a graduate assistantship award from NIU, please include a copy of the award letter.

2. Once we receive that document, along with confirmation of your enrollment at NIU, we will be able to issue you a Form I-20.

3. Please complete Form I-539, which is available at this website: [http://www.uscis.gov/files/form/i-539.pdf](http://www.uscis.gov/files/form/i-539.pdf)

4. Please pay the I-901 fee, which supports the SEVIS system. You will need to have your new I-20 with you when you do this. When you pay online, using a credit card, you will be able to print a receipt. This receipt must be enclosed with your application to change status. To pay the fee, please go to this address: [https://www.fmjfee.com/index.jhtml](https://www.fmjfee.com/index.jhtml)

5. Please gather the following documents:
   - proof of your enrollment at NIU, or proof of your admission to NIU
   - the completed I-539
   - the receipt for the I-901 fee payment
   - photocopies of your identification page and your visa page from your passport
   - photocopy of your passport expiration page, if that is shown separately from your identification page
   - photocopy of your current I-94, front and back (even if there is nothing written on the back)
   - photocopies of any previous Forms I-797 (Approval Notice)
   - proof that you continue to maintain your current status
   - personal letter requesting change of status; this should explain why you did not enter the US in F-1 status, and why you now seek F-1 status. You
should also explain the hardships that you would experience if you did not convert to F-1 status.

- Money order for $290 made payable to "Department of Homeland Security"
- Copy of the financial document mentioned in #1 above
- If you have been in J-1 or J-2 status, copy of the Approval Notice of the waiver of your two-year home residency requirement
- Other documents will be needed if you have been in a status other than F-2; please consult an ISFO advisor for more details.

6. Please put all these documents together with the new original I-20 (please retain a copy for your files). Please make a copy of this full petition for your personal files and then send the documents to the following address:

Express mail and courier deliveries: For U.S. Postal Service:

USCIS USCIS
Attn: I-539 P.O. Box 660166
2501 S. State Highway 121 Business Dallas TX 75266
Suite 400
Lewisville TX 75067

Please send the complete petition using Express Mail from the USPS, a courier service such as FedEx, or some other form of mail in which you will get a receipt of the package when it arrives at USCIS. You can expect to get an official Receipt Notice from USCIS within a couple of weeks; on the Receipt Notice they will estimate how long the adjudication process will take. They will also provide you with an identification number (your "LIN" number) which you can use to track your application on either the 800 phone number or the website which they will give you.

If you would like, International Student and Faculty Office could review your documents once you have gathered them all.

Please note that if you are changing from F-2 or B-2 status to F-1, you must not enroll for any courses at NIU until your Approval Notice arrives.

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