



## Change of Visa Status to J-1Scholar

Global Services  
Bryan Hall 108 • Pullman, WA 99164-5110  
Phone: (509) 335-4508 • Fax: (509) 335-2373  
E-mail: [globalservices@wsu.edu](mailto:globalservices@wsu.edu) • Web: [www.ip.wsu.edu/oiss](http://www.ip.wsu.edu/oiss)

If you are currently in the U.S. in one nonimmigrant visa classification and want to change to J-1 scholar status while residing in the U.S., you must apply to US Citizenship & Immigration Services (USCIS) for the change of status. It is not necessary to obtain a new visa stamp until you need to re-enter the U.S. in your new status.

**ELIGIBILITY:** In order to change visa status, you must:

- Have been lawfully admitted to the U.S.
- Be maintaining a current valid non-immigrant status,
- File the change of status application in a timely fashion (before the current status expires).
- Individuals in J-2 status, who are subject to 212(e) 2-year home residency, are not eligible to apply for change of status to J-1 within the U.S. without first obtaining a waiver.
- Individuals attempting to change from one J-1 category to another (for example J-1 student to J-1 scholar) cannot use this process. See your exchange visitor sponsor for assistance.
- Individuals who entered the U.S. under the Visa Waiver Program (a green I-94 card issued at the port of entry) are NOT eligible for change of status within the U.S. under any circumstances.

### PROCEDURES

**Step 1** Obtain a SEVIS Form DS-2019 from WSU Global Services

**Step 2** Pay the SEVIS I-901 Fee (\$180) to *U.S. Department of Homeland Security* and obtain a payment receipt using information from your DS-2019. For SEVIS I-901 Fee information go to **[www.fmjfee.com](http://www.fmjfee.com)**.

Prepare other required documents. (Refer to Required Documents on page 2.)

**Step 3** Complete form I-539, include processing fee payment, and attach supporting documents listed on page two of these instructions. Meet with the international scholar advisor at *WSU Global Services* to review your application materials if you need assistance.

**Step 4** Mail your complete application to USCIS.

For U.S. Postal:	For Express Mail or courier deliveries:
USCIS PO Box 660166 Dallas, TX 75266	USCIS Attn: I-539 2501 S. State Highway 121 Business Ste 400 Lewisville, TX 75067

If you have an out of state address, refer to the filing chart of Form I-539 to determine your Service Center.

**Step 5** Once your application is received at the USCIS Service Center, a receipt notice is sent to the address you provided on Form I-539. With a receipt number found on the notice, you can check your application status at **[www.uscis.gov](http://www.uscis.gov)** ► click on "Case Status Online." USCIS may send you a "Request for Evidence" in case additional documentation is required prior to adjudication of your application. Contact Global Services advisor if you receive this and have any questions.

**Step 6** When your J-1 status is approved, you will receive an approval notice letter/form I-797A. Keep this for your records.

**Step 7** **Notify Global Services immediately of your J-1 status approval by providing a copy of Notice of Action, Form I-797A to the IP-GS office. Your J-1 record must be validated within 30 days of the program start date to be validated and remain active in SEVIS.**

## WHILE YOUR APPLICATION IS PENDING

Q. Can I start my program?

A. You must maintain the status you are currently holding until you are formally approved for J-1, including the rules regulating employment for your category.

To report change of address on your pending application, call *USCIS National Customer Service Center* at 1-800-375-5283.



If you need assistance with a pending application, please report your case through Global Services Help Desk on-line at [www.ip.wsu.edu/rd/help](http://www.ip.wsu.edu/rd/help) ► click on "Pending I-539 Change of Status Application."

## CAUTION

If you depart the country while your application is pending, your application will be nullified.

## DOCUMENTS for applications

- ☐ Photocopy of Certificate of Eligibility for Exchange Visitor (J-1) Status/form DS-2019 issued by WSU
- ☐ Photocopy of SEVIS I-901 Fee payment receipt.
- ☐ Completed Form I-539. (Available in PDF at [www.uscis.gov/files/form/i-539.pdf](http://www.uscis.gov/files/form/i-539.pdf))
- ☐ \$290 application fee. Personal check or money order payable to: Department of Homeland Security. Do not send cash.
- ☐ Document showing financial sufficiency to support your exchange program at WSU. For example: fellowship confirmation letter, employer letter, or bank statement.
- ☐ Letter from you, addressed to USCIS, requesting change of status. (Be sure to explain why the change is needed and why you did not enter the U.S. under J-1 status.)
- ☐ Photocopy of valid passport with most recent visa stamp.
- ☐ Photocopy of current I-94 print out from: <https://i94.cbp.dhs.gov/i94/request.html>.
- ☐ Copy of any other document showing current status such as an I-20 (for F-1 or F-2) if applicable.
- ☐ If in dependent status (i.e. F-2, H-4), provide a copy of principal's passport, I-94, visa stamp, I-20/DS-2019, etc.
- ☐ Copy of immigration documents of any dependents who will be changing status with you.

## NEED HELP?

Please contact WSU Global Services at [ip.globalservices@wsu.edu](mailto:ip.globalservices@wsu.edu) or (509) 335-4508.

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