



INSTRUCTIONS TO OBTAIN F-2 STATUS FOR DEPENDENT(S) OF F-1 STUDENTS

Obtaining F-2 Status

In order to obtain F-2 status, dependent will either have to obtain an F-2 visa abroad and enter the U.S. in F-2 status, or file for a change of status in the U.S.

For either procedure, the dependent will first need to obtain a Form I-20 (F-2) from the Department of International Student and Scholar Services (ISSS).

Option 1: Travel

Dependent may:

1. Apply for an F-2 visa at a U.S. embassy or consulate abroad. ISSS recommends applying for the visa in the country of citizenship or permanent residence.
2. Enter the U.S. in F-2 status by presenting the Form I-20 (F-2), passport, and F-2 visa at the U.S. port-of-entry. Upon entry, F-2 may access the [Form I-94](#) record of arrival and departure, indicating F-2/DS.

Option 2: Change of Status to F-2 while in the United States

To apply for a change to F-2 status in the U.S., the dependent must collect the following documents and [file Form I-539](#) with the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS).

1. Photocopies of F-1 student's and dependents Form I-20s.
2. If applicable, photocopy of F-1 student's EAD, proof of employment.
3. Copy of F-1 student's [Form I-94](#) and dependent's [Form I-94](#).
4. Evidence of financial support documents for both dependent and F-1 student.
5. Letter written by dependent and addressed to U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS), requesting the change of status and explaining why the change is needed.
6. Photocopy of F-1 student's and dependent's passports (include photo page, biographical page, expiration date page, entry visa page, and page bearing stamp of last entry to the U.S.).

7. Change from F-1 Status to F-2 Status:
 - Copies of Forms I-20, school transcript or diploma. If authorized for OPT, photocopy of employment authorization document (front and back) and proof of employment.

8. Change from H-1 or H-4 to F-2 Status:
 - Copies of all previously issued Forms I-797 showing H status.
 - For H-1: Evidence that dependent maintained valid H status, i.e., a letter from the H-1 employer confirming current employment, and two or three of the most recent pay stubs.
 - For H-4: Copies of primary visa holder's H-1 immigration documents, i.e, passport photo page, biographical page, expiration date page, entry visa page, and page bearing stamp of last entry to the U.S., Form I-94, Forms I-797, and two or three of the most recent pay stubs.

Processing Times

Change of status applications may take several months to be approved. Check the USCIS website at www.uscis.gov for current processing times. Please e-mail Form I-797 Notice of Receipt from USCIS to iss@miami.edu. It is possible to check the status of the application on-line at www.uscis.gov using the receipt number found on the receipt notice.

Travel while Change of Status is pending

Travel abroad while a change of status application is pending is considered an abandonment of the application. If F-2 dependent has to leave the United States while the application is pending, s/he should consult appropriate ISSS advisor, who will provide instructions on how to cancel the pending change of status application.

Visa

Even with an approved change of status, F-2 dependent will need to obtain a visa for the new status during his/her next trip abroad.

If F-2 dependent's change of status application is denied, dependent may be required to leave the United States on short notice and obtain an F-2 visa (usually in home country), and re-enter the U.S.

Please note that ISSS is not responsible for the outcome of change of status adjudication or any delays in processing times.