How to change from H-1/L-1 to F-1

Application Checklist:

A Gather documents and prepare your application

- Review your new I-20 and sign it.
- Pay the SEVIS fee at fmjfee.com and print a receipt of your payment.
- Get a check or money order for $370 and make it out to US Department of Homeland Security.
- Complete both the USCIS Form I-539 and G-1145.
- Photocopy your documents: Passport identification page / Current I-94 record / Current visa / Admission letter from NYU / Financial documents

- Gather evidence that you have maintained lawful status while in the US prior to submitting your application for change of status (This would include a letter verifying your current H-1 or L-1 employer and your most recent three pay stubs.), including how you will maintain your current status while your change of status application is pending.

- Write a letter explaining why you would like to change your status to F-1. This letter should clearly explain (see attached sample letter):
  - Your current status
  - Your plan for study at NYU
  - Your long-term plan
  - Your ties to your home country—whether in the form of a residence, an expected job offer, or continuing family ties
  - Your dates of employment under H-1/L-1
  - The date you want the F-1 status to be effective
  - The reason you want to change to F-1 status

(1) Your financial documents showing that you have sufficient financial resources to meet the tuition, living expenses, and fees for your program. For more information, bit.ly/NYU-estimated-expenses

(2) Be aware that the F-1 effective date MUST be within 30 days of the program start date as listed on your I-20 / of the end of your H-1 / L-1 status.
**B  Review application with an OGS advisor**

- Make an appointment with an OGS advisor or an immigration attorney to review your documents, the process, and risks of your application being denied.

- Your complete application includes:
  - Your letter explaining why you would like to change to F-1 status
  - Your new I-20 from the OGS
  - A copy of your SEVIS fee receipt
  - A check or money order for $370 made payable to the US Department of Homeland Security
  - A copy of your passport identification page
  - A copy of your most current / recent visa
  - A copy of your current I-94 record
  - A copy of your admission letter from NYU
  - A copy of your financial documents
  - Evidence that you have maintained lawful status while in the US prior to submitting your application for change of status

**C  Find legal help if you are unable to maintain current status**

Meet with an experienced immigration lawyer if you are unable to maintain your current nonimmigrant status while your change of status application is pending. A helpful place to start is by contacting the NYU Immigrant Defense Initiative for an initial screening: www.law.nyu.edu/immigrantrightsclinic/ idi.

**D  Send application to US government**

- A copy of your entire application for your records.

- Send your application no later than the day you finish your H-1 or L-1 employment to the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) using UPS or FedEx to:

  **USCIS**  
  **ATTN: I-539**  
  **2501 S. State Highway 121 Business Ste 400**  
  **Lewisville, TX 75067**
After you submit your application

You will receive a receipt notice with a case number. Check the status of your case at [www.uscis.gov](http://www.uscis.gov). While your application is pending, you cannot travel outside of the US. If you have an emergent situation, notify the OGS before making any travel plans.

Within one year:

- If your application is approved
  - Come to the OGS during walk-in advising hours within 2 weeks with your approval notice, I-20, and passport to speak with an advisor.
  - When you travel outside of the US, in order to reenter the US in F-1 status, you will need to first apply for a valid F-1 visa outside the US.
  - To get an F-1 visa, you will need a new I-20.

- If your application is denied, you get a request to send more information, or you decide to withdraw your application
  - Notify the OGS immediately.
  - Do not travel outside of the US. If you have an emergent situation, speak to an OGS advisor prior to departing the US.
Sample Letter:

[Your name]
[Your street address]
[Your city, state, and ZIP code]

United States Citizenship and Immigration Services
Attention: I-539 Unit
2501 S. State Hwy 121
Business Suite 400
Lewisville, TX 75067

[Today’s date] (DD/MM/YYYY)
Subject: I-539 application change of status from H-1B to F-1
[Your full name as listed in your passport]

Dear [Madam or Sir]:

I am currently in H-1B status, working at [state your employer name]. I entered the US on DD/MM/YYYY and have been maintaining valid H-1B status. I now request my non-immigrant status be changed to F-1 because [state the reason].

After completion of my studies, I plan to [state your plan. Note: This portion is extremely important. You need to explain your current status, your plans for study at NYU, and your longer-term educational and career goals. As an F-1 non-immigrant applicant, you must indicate you continue to maintain strong ties to your home country.]

Attached to this cover letter, please find:

- A photocopy of my NYU I-20
- A photocopy of my SEVIS fee receipt
- A check or money order for $370 made out to US Department of Homeland Security
- A completed USCIS Form I-539
- A completed USCIS Form G-1145
- A photocopy of my passport identification page
- A photocopy of my current I-94 record
- A photocopy of my current visa
- A photocopy of my admission letter from NYU
- A photocopy of my financial documents
- Evidence that I have maintained and can continue to maintain lawful status while in the US

If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact me at [list your contact information].

Sincerely,

[Your signature]
[Your name]