Application Process for Change of Status to F-1

Please note the following before applying for a change of status to F-1 (Student):

- The normal processing time for a change of status is 5-12 months and cannot be expedited.
- If you travel outside the U.S. while your change of status application is pending, your application will be canceled.
- Changes of status do not provide the student with an F-1 visa, but only the status of a student. Therefore, should you receive change of status approval and then depart the U.S., you will need to apply for an F-1 visa at a U.S. embassy before you will be able to re-enter the U.S. to resume your studies.
- You must apply for the change of status before your I-94 expires; your desired date to start studying in the Intensive English Program should be no more than one month after your I-94 expires.

In order to apply for a change of status, do the following:

1) Apply to the IEP and receive an I-20.

2) Pay the $200 SEVIS Fee at fmjfee.com.

3) Collect these documents to submit to USCIS:
   a. Form I-539: Application to extend or change nonimmigrant status.
   b. The $370 fee, in the form of a check or money order fee made out to the U.S. Department of Homeland Security.
   c. The original I-20. The student should submit the Form I-20 (the entire form); the student should sign the form where required.
   d. Proof of payment of the SEVIS I-901 fee
   e. Form I-94: Submit a copy of the I-94. You can find the I-94 form at: https://i94.cbp.dhs.gov/I94
   f. Copies of current immigration status documents, such as:
      i. Visa page,
      ii. Most recent visa stamp
      iii. Passport ID pages
      iv. Other documentation related to your current immigration status.
   g. Copies of financial support documents, including:
      i. Official bank statement
      ii. Affidavit of support
   h. Optional: Letter from the student. It is optional for the student to send a letter explaining why he or she wants to change status to F-1. However, a strong letter can help convince USCIS of the student's temporary intent as well as persuade USCIS that the student did not have a pre-conceived intention to study in the U.S.

4) Mail the paper application and documents to the correct USCIS filing address. Make file copies of all documents before sending to USCIS. Give a copy to the IEP. Use a receipt-based mailing option such as certified mail, so that there will be evidence that the documents were received by USCIS. If you would like to receive a text notification that USCIS has received your application, complete the Form G-1145 found at www.uscis.gov and clip it to the front of your application.

   If sending via U.S. Postal Service, send to:  
   USCIS  
   P.O. Box 660166  
   Dallas, TX 75266

   If sending via UPS, FedEx, or DHL, send to:  
   USCIS  
   ATTN: I-539  
   2501 S. State Highway 121 Business  
   Suite 400  
   Lewisville, TX 75067

5) Notify USCIS if you change your address. Use the AR-11 form online to update USCIS and any pending applications.