

## Comparison Chart

	Change by Travel-Consular Processing	Change of Status (COS) w/USCIS
<b>Cost</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Plane ticket to return to home country.</li> <li>• I-901 SEVIS fee.</li> <li>• Visa application fee.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Form I-539 application fee.</li> <li>• I-901 SEVIS fee.</li> </ul>
<b>Processing Time</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Length of time to obtain a visa varies depending on the U.S. embassy/consulate post. If flagged for security or background check, the review process may be delayed further.</li> <li>• You are allowed to enter the U.S. up to 30 days prior to the program start date listed on the I-20, in F-1 status.</li> <li>• Overall faster process to obtain F-1 status compared to the change of status application process with USCIS.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• USCIS processing time for a change of status cases can vary, from 6 to 8 months or more. Check <a href="#">USCIS Processing Times</a>.</li> <li>• This process does not lead to a new visa stamp in your passport. A visa can only be granted by a U.S. consulate or embassy abroad.</li> <li>• While the COS application is pending you cannot leave the U.S. If you leave the U.S., then USCIS considers you to have abandoned the application, consequently deny your COS.</li> <li>• If your application is not approved within 30 days of the program start date listed on your original COS I-20, ISSS will defer the program start date to the following semester. A new financial document may be required.</li> </ul>
<b>Other Concerns</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It is recommended that you apply for the F-1 visa in your home country. It may be difficult to obtain a visa in Canada or Mexico, if you are not a citizen or legal resident of these countries.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Due to the long processing times, a COS application is not recommended for students needing F-1 status to study full-time.</li> <li>• F-1 employment (CPT or OPT) cannot be granted until the COS to F-1 is approved and you have been enrolled full-time for one academic year. (Time spent in another visa status may count towards this academic year requirement as long as it was full-time and continuous).</li> <li>• <b>Study or Employment in F-2 status.</b> F-2 dependents <i>cannot enroll full-time</i> until COS to F-1 is approved. <i>Enrolling full-time in F-2 status is a violation of your status.</i> F-2 dependents may not engage in on-campus employment until COS to F-1 is approved.</li> <li>• <b>Study or Employment in B-1/B-2 status.</b> Visitors in B-1/B-2 <i>cannot begin studying</i> until a change of F-1 is approved. <i>Enrolling in a degree program in B-1/B-2 status is a violation of your status.</i> F-2 dependents may not engage in on-campus employment until COS to F-1 is approved.</li> </ul>