



Multicultural Affairs Student Affairs and Campus Inclusion

The information that is shared here is based on federal regulations and university policies as of July 2026. This information is subject to change in the future.

Change of Status from H-4 to F-1

If you are currently in **H-4 dependent status** and plan to study at MSOE, you may be eligible to change your immigration status to **F-1 student status**. Changing your status to F-1 allows you to study as an F-1 student and may provide access to F-1 benefits, such as Curricular Practical Training (CPT) and Optional Practical Training (OPT), if you meet all eligibility requirements.

Eligibility to Change Status

You may request a change of status from H-4 to F-1 if you:

- Have been admitted to an MSOE program or are a current student at MSOE
- Currently maintain valid H-4 status
- Have the financial documentation required to receive an F-1 Form I-20
- Plan to maintain F-1 requirements after your change of status is approved

Steps to Request a Change of Status

1. Submit a **Create I-20 (new students only) Request** in Terra Dotta
2. Receive your F-1 Form I-20 in Terra Dotta
3. Complete and Submit your [Change of Status application](#) to USCIS

USCIS makes the final decision on all change of status applications. It may be helpful to work with an immigration attorney during this process.

While Your Application is Pending

- You must continue maintaining your H-4 status
- It is recommended that you [maintain a full-time course load](#)
- You should meet with a DSO before making changes to your enrollment, travel plans, or employment plans
- Submit a **Deferral Request** in Terra Dotta for each semester your application is still pending

Processing times vary from 6-14 months; check the [USCIS website](#) for case processing times.

After Your F-1 Status is Approved

Once USCIS approves your change of status, you will be sent an I-797A Notice of Action. Then, you should immediately:

1. Complete **Change of Status Request** in Terra Dotta
2. Submit necessary documentation to the registrar's office
3. Attend F-1 Student Orientation or meet with a DSO to review F-1 requirements
4. A DSO registers you in SEVIS and F-1 benefits begin