BERGEN COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Applying for a Change of Status to F-1 Visa



International Student Center, Room SC-110
Pitkin Education Center
Bergen Community College
400 Paramus Road, Paramus NJ 07652, USA

International Student Center, 400 Paramus Rd, Paramus, NJ 07652-1595
Phone: +1 (201) 689-7601 / www.bergen.edu/isc

Applying for a Change of Status to F-1

Thank you for your interest in attending Bergen Community College!

The following information packet is for applicants who will apply to Bergen Community College (BCC) for a change of status to F-1. Please submit the following documents to the International Student Center and allow up to 3 weeks for processing. More information is available at www.bergen.edu/isc. If you need assistance, please e-mail us at intadmissions@bergen.edu.

Deadlines: Fall – July 1st Spring – November 1st

Check List for change of status applicants:

- ☐ Bergen Community College application for admissions, available at www.bergen.edu. Click the *apply online* option. All F-1 students MUST apply for a degree or certificate program. ***Do not complete the application if you are already a BCC student with a BCC ID#.***
- ☐ Proof of graduation from high school or college (translated into English, if necessary)
- ☐ Photocopy of passport identification pages, **DS 2019 (J-1 visa) and I-94 form.**
- ☐ Agreement of Support Form
- ☐ Bank Statement or letter showing at least $22,000 USD
- ☐ Biographical Information Form
- ☐ Release of Responsibility for Change of Status to F-1 Form
- ☐ Completed Form I-539 found at www.uscis.gov/forms
- ☐ Check made out to 'Department of Homeland Security' for $370.00
  Fees are subject to change; see the USCIS website for more information.
- ☐ Letter explaining why you are requesting the Change of Status to F-1
- ☐ Evidence of residency in your home country (house deeds, letter from your home country, etc.) – It is your responsibility to prove to the Immigration Officer that you plan to return home after completion of your studies.
- ☐ Paid I-901 SEVIS fee of $350.00 – https://www.fmjfee.com. This is to be paid AFTER your I-20 has been issued by the ISC. A copy of the SEVIS fee receipt must be mailed with your change of status application.

The International Student Center will process the Change of Status I-20 and call you or send e-mail to inform you that the packet is ready for pick-up. *You are responsible for mailing your application to the Service Center for processing.*

We recommend sending your application with certified, return receipt mail service. This will allow you to track the package. The mailing address for the change for status applications changes often. Contact the ISC for the most current address or check the instructions found at www.uscis.gov for the Form I-539. It is critical that you notify the ISC of any information that you receive from immigration pertaining to your change of status request. You must notify the ISC of any address/phone # changes. ***It is your responsibility to maintain your status. The ISC is not responsible for F-1 change of status denials.***

What you need to know:

- When a person changes status to F-1, they intend to pursue a degree or certificate in the United States (US) as a full-time student. In general, non-immigrants maintaining legal status can apply for the change of status to F-1, but there are some exceptions and specific rules to remember.
    - BCC is only authorized to issue a Form I-20 for the Fall (September) and Spring (January) semesters (not summer or winter). Keep in mind when planning your status change to F-1.
    - There should never be a gap longer than 30 days between your current status end date and your anticipated F-1 start date. Immigration will deny your change of status if there is a gap longer than 30 days.
    - Be aware that individuals with M-1, WB, WT, K, C, D, N, and S status **cannot** change to F-1 within the US.
    - J-1 or J-2 visa holders should not attempt a change of status to F-1 in the US if subject to Section 212(e), also known as the "two-year home residency requirement", unless they have received a recommendation for a waiver for the requirement from the Department of State.
    - The ISC is not required to issue a change of status I-20 to applicants who are currently in violation of their current status. Each change of status applicant will be advised on a case-by-case basis.
    - There are specific eligibility rules associated with B visitors who have already begun a course of study in the US. Please ask the ISC Admissions staff for details.
    - B-1/B-2 visitors who apply for a change of status to F-1 must wait until the F-1 is approved to begin classes at BCC.
    - All F-1 students must attend the F-1 orientation. Please ask the ISC for details.
    - Even if your change of status is approved, you will still need to apply for a VISA page when you travel. Before traveling, contact your International Student Counselor for important travel information.
- Applicants may not apply directly to The School of Health Professions Program. International applicants must first apply to a general program, for example, the Associate of Science, Natural Science and Math, General (AS.NSM.GEN) and then apply for a change of major after one semester of study or after fulfilling all prerequisites.
- Standardized tests (the SAT, TOEFL or IELTS) are not required for admission. However, if you have taken the SAT, you may be exempt from taking certain sections of the placement testing depending on your SAT scores and SAT completion date. For the placement test waiver eligibility requirements information, visit https://bergen.edu/testing/placement-test-waiver-information/.
- If a student is not exempt from the language-based placement test, he or she will take the Accuplacer ESL at BCC. This is not an entrance examination; it is used for placement only. If it is necessary for a student to take English as a Second Language courses through the American Language Program (ALP), the test score will determine the appropriate ALP course level. Each level is one semester long.

- Students may be exempt from providing proof of high school graduation if they have completed 30 or more college level credits at a regionally accredited US college/university. Students will have to provide an official transcript from each school attended to the International Student Center.

- International students at BCC are required to show sponsorship of at least $22,000 at the time of application. The $22,000 figure reflects tuition and fees for one year of study and estimated living costs. Tuition and fees for an international student are estimated at $10,000 per year, or approximately $5,000 per semester.

- An applicant that wishes to bring a spouse to the US (on an F-2 visa), an additional $12,000 must be reflected in the financial statements and indicated on the Agreement of Support Form. If the applicant wishes to bring a dependent child, an additional $6,000 must be reflected on the affidavit and bank statements.

- Remember, BCC does **NOT** provide housing and therefore students must obtain housing on their own.

- International students are **NOT** eligible for the in-county tuition rate, and are therefore charged out-of-county tuition rates. Financial aid is not available to international students.

- Admitted international students are strongly advised to purchase adequate health insurance coverage.

- Upon being admitted, students will receive a medical history form, which will require a physical examination by a doctor and proof of immunization records in English. This examination can be performed either in the student's home country or in the US upon arrival. Students will have to show proof of immunization against Measles, Mumps and Rubella in English. It is extremely important that students submit necessary health records. The form can be found at: www.bergen.edu/isc/forms.

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Biographical Information

This form will be used to create your Form I-20. Complete the following information below and write clearly. Incomplete forms will not be processed.

Process I-20 as (check one box): ☐ Initial ☐ Transfer ☐ Change of Status

Initial – Applicant residing outside the U.S. who will apply for an F-1 student visa in their home country.

Transfer – Applicant is already in F-1 status transferring from one U.S. institution to BCC.

Last Name: _____ First Name: _____

BCC Student ID: _____ Date of Birth: _____

Country of Birth: _____ Country of Citizenship: _____

E-mail: _____ Telephone: _____

All students must provide their foreign permanent address and current U.S. address if applicable. By checking one of the two boxes below, I request that my admission packet and Form I-20 be sent to the following address (please write clearly and do NOT provide PO Box addresses):

☐ Foreign Permanent Address: _____

_____

☐ U.S. Current Address (if applicable): _____

_____

Check all of the following that are applicable:

- ☐ I have a degree from the United States. (Enclose a copy of your degree)
- ☐ I have a degree from a country other than the United States. (Enclose a NACES approved evaluation report of your degree. Approved listing of foreign evaluators accepted by BCC can be found at the following website: http://www.naces.org/members.htm.
- ☐ I have taken the TOEFL exam. (Enclose a copy of your TOEFL Score Report)
- ☐ I have taken the SAT exam. (Enclose a copy of your SAT Score Report)
- ☐ I have taken the IELTS exam. (Enclose a copy of your IELTS Score Report)
- ☐ None of the above applies to me.

Only provide the following information below if you require an I-20 for your spouse or child. If you do not wish to bring a dependent with you to the USA, do not provide this information.

- Copy of valid passport
- Copy of the marriage and/or birth certificate translated into English

Make sure that you provide additional financial supporting documentation for each dependent (additional $12,000 for spouse and $6,000 per child).

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Agreement of Support

International applicants must show financial sponsorship of at least **$22,000 USD*.** This form may be duplicated for multiple sponsors. Students who wish to show personal funds to satisfy the $22,000 requirement do not need to complete the Agreement of Support, but must show a bank statement in their own name for the entire amount. All bank statements are required to be within the last six months.

BCC Student ID: _____

Name of Sponsor: _____ Sponsor's relationship to student: _____

Complete Address of Sponsor: _____

_____

I hereby certify that I promise to provide _____
(Name of International Student)

funds in the amount of US $ _____ for each year of study at Bergen Community College.

I hereby affirm that the contents of the statements of this form are true and correct.

_____	_____	_____
(Sponsor's Name Printed)	(Sponsor's Signature)	(Date)

If the international student is bringing dependents with him/her to the USA and those dependents will be supported by the sponsor indicated on this form, an additional $12,000 for a spouse and an additional $6,000 per child must be evident.

**Sponsor MUST attach a bank statement or bank letter showing the amount indicated above. The $22,000 is an estimate for tuition and living expenses for one academic year. ($10,000 for tuition/fees and $12,000 for room/board) These figures are subject to change.*

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Release of Responsibility for Change of Status to F-1

Last Name: _____ **First Name:** _____

BCC Student ID: _____

- Bergen Community College is not responsible for the approval of this change of status to F-1 application with United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS), nor is the Designated School Official (DSO), the preparer, of these documents. The DSO is there to help you through the process, advise you of related F-1 regulations, and provide you with an I-20.
- It is recommended that anyone seeking a change to F-1 consults with an immigration attorney to review the process and for assistance with the USCIS Form I-539. Any students in F-2 and B status or in J status who are subject to 212(e) are especially encouraged to work with a lawyer. The ISC will not assist with the preparation of the I-539 Form.
- The applicant is responsible for his/her own status and the status of his/her dependents (if applicable). The applicant is also responsible for paying all non-refundable fees associated with this application, and mailing the application to the USCIS service center.
- In the event that you should be denied change of status, you will be expected to leave the United States immediately and the school is not responsible for reimbursement of funds if it is beyond the school's reimbursement deadline (see Bergen's registration calendar for the current term).
- Applicants should notify the ISC staff of any correspondence from USCIS concerning this change of status application to ensure proper maintenance of the applicant's SEVIS record.

_____ _____
(Student's Signature) (Date)

_____ _____
(DSO's Signature) (Date)