WHAT IS A CHANGE OF LEVEL?

It is necessary for an F-1 student to be issued a Change of Level I-20 whenever he or she completes one academic program and will begin study in a new academic program. Although it is called a “Change of Level,” this type of I-20 can be issued for a second degree at the same level, provided a student is making normal academic progress. However, if 12 months of OPT have already been used at one level, no additional OPT will be granted.

A change of level:

- Allows an F-1 student to continue studying in the U.S. on the same SEVIS record without restarting the immigration “clock” needed for F-1 benefits like CPT and OPT
- Is necessary even if a student is on OPT. Engaging in full-time and/or matriculated study while you are on OPT is considered a violation of your F-1 status; OPT authorization is “automatically terminated when the student... begins study at another educational level” [8 C.F.R. § 214.2(f)(10)(ii)(B)] You must be issued a Change of Level I-20 before you can begin study in a new program.
- Requires that the new degree program begin within five months of the end date of the previous program (either the I-20 end date or the post-completion OPT end date) OR by the start date of the school’s next required term, whichever comes first. Stevens’ required terms are the fall and spring semesters.

HOW DOES A STUDENT BECOME ELIGIBLE FOR A CHANGE OF LEVEL?

- Complete the degree program for which your current I-20 is issued. (If you are not completing a program but have changed programs and need to amend your I-20, please contact ISSS for assistance.)
- Be accepted to a new degree program either at the same academic level (for instance, a second master’s degree) or at another academic level (i.e., bachelor’s to master’s or master’s to Ph.D.)
- Be in valid F-1 status at the time of the application

HOW DOES A STUDENT APPLY FOR A CHANGE OF LEVEL?

1) COMPLETE THE FOLLOWING FORMS AND GATHER DOCUMENTATION:

- ✓ I-20 Application Form
- ✓ Proof of Financial Support
  - Proof of funds to cover one year (for a full extension) or one half year (for a single-semester extension) of study and living expenses. Please refer to the “Guidelines for Submitting Financial Documents” under “Rules and Responsibilities for Maintaining F-1 Status” here: http://www.stevens.edu/sit/isss/f1-students:
    - Graduate Students $53079 per year
- Graduate Certificate Students $38279 per year
- Undergraduate Students $64416 per year
- Ph.D. Students in Dissertation Status $20879 per year (includes $930 for D-999 and $220 for health fees)

- If your funding is from a sponsor/sponsors, each of your sponsors should fill out the Financial Information and Affidavit of Support form.

✓ Copy of Acceptance Letter from Undergraduate/Graduate Admissions for New Degree Program

✓ Copy of Passport ID Page (with your picture)

2) SUBMIT THE FORMS AND DOCUMENTS IN #1 TO ISSS NO LATER THAN 45 DAYS AFTER THE PROGRAM END DATE OR OPT END DATE ON YOUR CURRENT I-20 AND NO LATER THAN THE LAST DAY OF THE DROP/ADD PERIOD FOR THE SEMESTER YOU WILL BEGIN YOUR NEW ACADEMIC PROGRAM.

3) YOU WILL RECEIVE A NEW I-20 FROM ISSS IN APPROXIMATELY 4-5 BUSINESS DAYS AFTER SUBMITTING YOUR APPLICATION.