CHANGE OF STATUS GUIDELINES:
B-2 VISITOR STATUS TO J-2 SCHOLAR DEPENDENT STATUS

This guideline will assist current B-2 visitors with applying for J-2 dependent status with the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) while remaining in the United States. We understand that this is a rare occasion, but want to supply this form as a resource for our scholars and their potential future spouses. Please know that although it is an option to apply for a Change of Status (COS) within the U.S., ISSS advisors strongly recommend applying for J-2 status within the dependent's home country, as change of status requests submitted to the USCIS within the United States take 4-6 months for approval, and travel abroad is prohibited while the COS is pending.

ISSS advisors attempt to keep the most current information available; however, please know that government procedures and fees are subject to change without notice. COS applicants are responsible for these updates and changes, even if not informed by International Scholar & Student Services (ISSS).

I. ELIGIBILITY

- Who May be a J-2: Only the spouse and unmarried minor children (under 21 years of age) of the J-1 are eligible for J-2 dependent status. Parents, brothers, sisters, domestic partners, and same sex spouses are not eligible for J-2 classification.
- Who May Not Be A J-2: Foreign nationals participating in the Visa Waiver Program are not eligible to apply for a Change of Status within the U.S. Unfortunately, the federal government does not recognize domestic partners or married same sex partners as spouses. Domestic partners and spouses in same sex relationships must apply for B-2 status. For additional guidance, please review the U.S. Department of State website.
- Valid Passport (must be valid at least 6 months into the future)
- Valid I-94
- Valid Legal Status: Dependents must currently be in valid legal status
- Bars & Bans: Dependents who previously participated in the exchange visitor program must fulfill their 12-month or 24-month bar obligations before they are eligible for J-2 status.
- Financial Certification Requirements: J-1’s must be able to certify that they meet minimum financial requirements ($1800/month for the J-1, plus $1000/month for spouse, plus $500/month per eligible child). For example, a J-1 coming with her/his spouse and two children must be able to demonstrate financial certification in the amount of at least $3800/month for the entire program duration.
- Review of ISSS Website for J-2 Dependents: Both J-1 scholars and their J-2 dependents are required to review our website, which provides information on maintaining J-2 legal status, J-2 employment authorization; J-2 study, travel abroad, and J-2 departure periods.

IMPORTANT: Applicants cannot travel abroad while their change of status application is pending with the USCIS. Traveling abroad will automatically terminate the COS application.

II. APPLICANT RESPONSIBILITIES

Applicants are solely responsible for:
- Maintaining their current legal status while their COS application is pending
- Reviewing the IEO website for J-2 dependents, and maintaining J-2 legal status once approved
- Checking with the USCIS directly regarding the progress of their COS application
- Notifying ISSS advisor within 5 calendar days when their COS is approved
- Understanding the terms and conditions associated with the USCIS COS application, including all government procedures (and potential fees) that may not be listed within these COS Guidelines

III. REQUESTING A DS-2019

A J-2 DS-2019 must be issued in order to apply for a Change of Status. Your UCSC J-1 Advisor can issue the J-2 DS-2019 if all eligibility requirements are met. Submit the following documents to the J-1 Advisor during advising hours to initiate the process:
• J-2 visa request form (available on our website)
• Original Financial Certification Letter
• Certification of Translation (if financial certification is not in English)
• Currency Conversion, if funding is not in U.S. dollars (http://www.xe.com)
• Valid Passport for each J-2 dependent

The J-1 Advisor will issue the J-2 DS-2019 10 business days after submission of all required documents. The Advisor will email the scholar to pick up the form in the International Education Office.

IV. USCIS CHANGE OF STATUS PROCESS

The COS Applicant:
1. Certifies the DS-2019 with their signature if they are 14 years of age or older. If the J-2 is under 14 years of age, the J-1 signs on behalf of the dependent
2. Reviews the I-539 Change of Status Instructions AND Application on the USCIS website (www.uscis.gov). It will take some time to load the webpage.
3. Completes Form I-539 in black ink
4. Carefully reviews and prepares the application and required supplemental legal documents
   • Original Legal Documents to Submit: I-539, financial certification, dependent's B-2 I-94 card, J-2 DS-2019, filing fee. Other legal documents at request of USCIS.
   • Copies of Legal Documents to Submit: J-1 DS-2019, J-1 visa, J-1 I-94 (copy of front and back of card), J-1 passport, J-1 SEVIS fee receipt, dependent B-2 visa, valid dependent passport, marriage certificate. Other legal documents at request of USCIS
5. Makes photocopies of all documents for personal records
6. Submits the COS application to the appropriate USCIS address (with supplementary legal documents AND filing fee).
   *Request Proof of Receipt When Mailing

The USCIS will mail a receipt notice to the COS Applicant (usually within 3-4 weeks). The applicant may track their case status online with the number on their receipt notice, also known as a "WAC" number, at https://egov.uscis.gov/.

V. CHANGE OF STATUS APPROVAL NOTICE

When the change of status is approved, applicants will receive an I-797 Notice of Action from the USCIS, along with their approved legal documents.

VI. J-2 REPORTING REQUIREMENT

Upon USCIS approval, J-2 dependents are required to notify ISSS within 5 calendar days to submit their approved legal documents as well as proof of insurance. J-2 legal status does not begin until dependents have submitted all required legal documents, including insurance for the entire program duration.

-AGREEMENT TO UCSC TERMS FOR CHANGE OF STATUS-

Please cut along dotted line above, and return bottom portion to:

UC Santa Cruz, International Education Office, c/o J-1 Advisor, 1156 High Street, Santa Cruz, CA 95064

I have reviewed the COS guidelines provided, as well as the IEO website for J-2 dependents. I assure IEO that my dependents are eligible for J-2 status. I also assure IEO that my dependents will contact your office within 5 calendar days once their J-2 COS request is approved so that they can submit the approved legal documents, including J-2 insurance that meets Department of State requirements. I understand that my dependents must maintain legal status while the COS is pending.

_____________________________  _____________________________ ________
Full Name  Signature  Date