

Federal Rule Change Impacting F-1 and J-1 International Students

International Student and Scholar Services

University of Oregon

September 10, 2026



**International Student
and Scholar Services**



Key changes

Effective September 15

- ✓ Replaces “**duration of status**” with **fixed end date**, not to exceed 4 years
- ✓ Formal USCIS application required to extend fixed end date
- ✓ **Restrictions on academic mobility**
- ✓ Grace period reduced to 30 days

Pending Litigation Ruling – expected before September 15

What is duration of status (D/S)?

1. ISSS issues Form I-20 (F-1) or DS-2019 (J-1) for visa with estimated program end date (5 years for PhD, 2 years for Master's, 4 years for Bachelor's)
2. Student enters U.S. with I-20 or DS-2019, passport & visa
3. CBP admits student in F or J status and issues I-94 arrival record with **Admit Until Date: D/S**
4. **No cap on authorized period of stay**
 - D/S = **continuous** legal status tied to maintaining conditions of visa status and **managed by ISSS** through SEVIS system.
 - Full-time enrollment + reduced course loads
 - I-20 & DS-2019 extensions, as needed
 - Transfers
 - Change of level
 - OPT & STEM OPT



Most Recent I-94

Admission (I-94) Record Number :

Most Recent Date of Entry: 2018 November 23

Class of Admission : F1

Admit Until Date : D/S



Details provided on the I-94 Information form:

Last/Surname :

First (Given) Name :

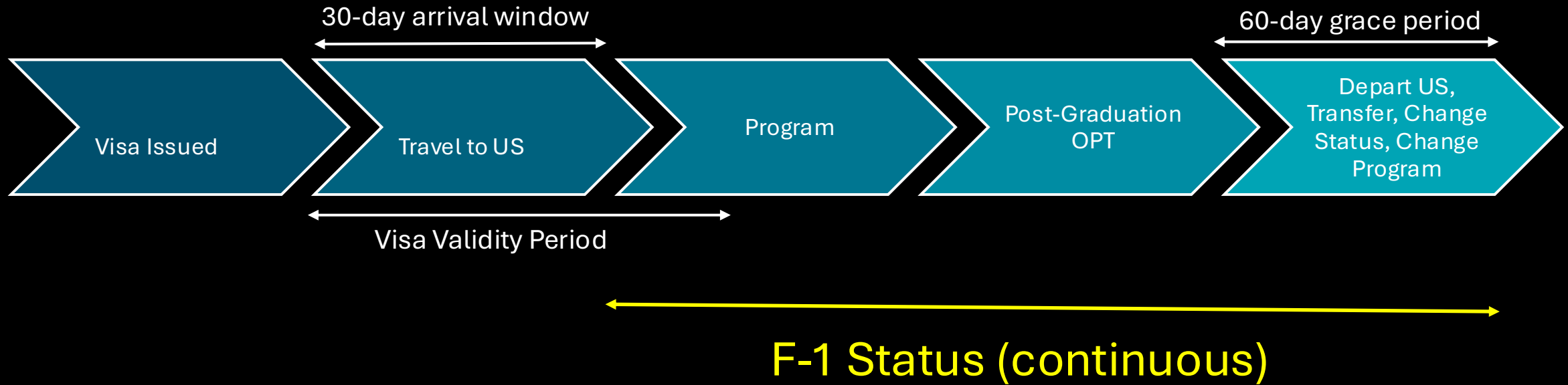
Birth Date :

Passport Number :

Country of Issuance :

Duration of Status

No cap; based on I-20 or DS-2019 program end date



What is changing?

- Effective September 15, 2026
- Rule change **replaces D/S with a fixed authorized period of stay** referred to as the 'Admit Until Date' (AUD)
- AUD issued by CBP upon arrival (or USCIS via formal extension application)
- AUD capped at maximum of 4 years regardless of length of program.
- To extend AUD, student must file a formal application w/USCIS before AUD expires
 - Fee = \$420
 - Processing time = at least 180 days before AUD expires
- Grace period reduced to 30 days



Most Recent I-94

Admission (I-94) Record Number :

Most Recent Date of Entry: 2018 November 23

Class of Admission : F1

Admit Until Date : ~~D/S~~ 6/15/2028



Details provided on the I-94 Information form:

Last/Surname :

First (Given) Name :

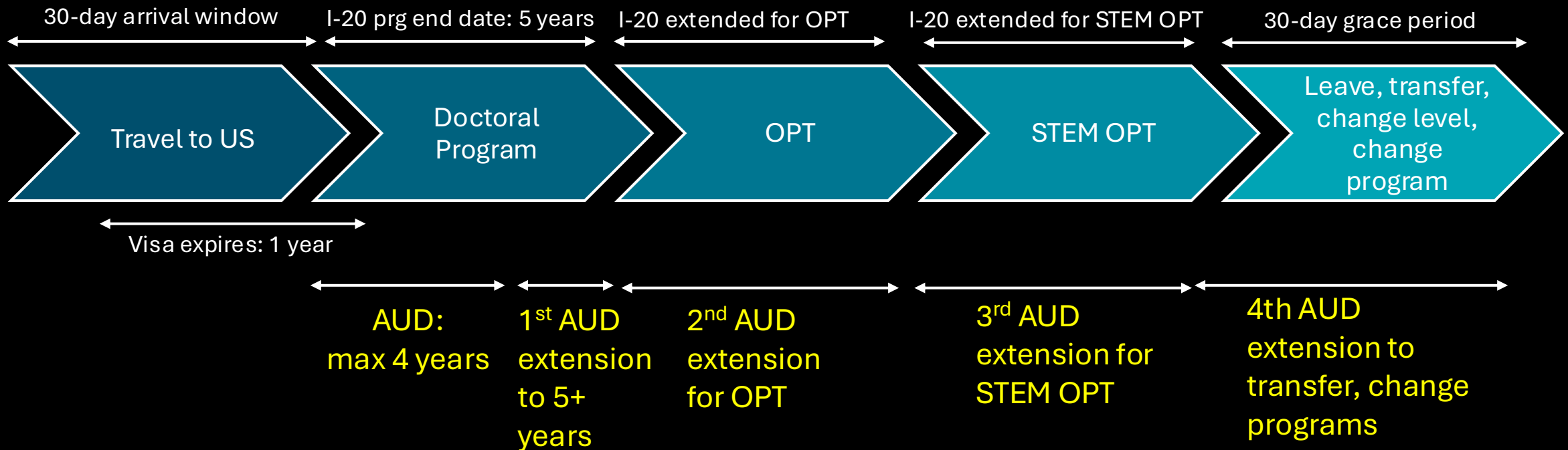
Birth Date :

Passport Number :

Country of Issuance :

Example #1

Fixed 'Admit Until Date' F-1 PhD Student (STEM)



Review: Legal status tied to 2 documents

I-20 or DS-2019 Program End Date

- Managed by ISSS/UO
- **Must remain valid** until end of program including any post-completion plans (i.e. OPT, STEM OPT, transfers, new program)

I-94 Admit Until Date (AUD)

- Managed by CBP/Homeland Security each time student travels and re-enters U.S. or requests an extension of AUD
- **Must remain valid and is primary legal status document!**

To extend F or J status, there are now 2 steps:

Student must request extension of I-20 or DS-2019 w/ISSS

plus

Student must request extension of AUD w/USCIS (option to leave and re-enter)

Who is impacted?

Again, **AUD and I-20 or DS-2019 program end date determine end of legal status**, whichever is earlier.

- PhDs who need more than 4 years to complete degree
- Undergrads who need more than 4 years to complete degree
- Students transferring in and transferring out
- Students changing programs
- Students applying for OPT and STEM OPT

Extension process:

Involves ISSS and USCIS (\$420 fee and potentially months in processing times)

premium processing not yet available but would cost extra \$2,075

If AUD expires without filing extension, students must leave the US and re-enter

6-month transition period: Sept 2026 – March 2027

- **For students in D/S currently in the U.S. as of Sept 15:**
 - Remain in D/S status, but D/S ends on the earliest of these dates:
 1. November 15, 2030 (4 years from effective rule date)
 2. I-20 or DS-2019 program end date
 3. Date of departure from US
 - Still have a 60-day grace period after completion of program or OPT/STEM OPT
- **Students in D/S graduating fall 2026, winter 2027 or spring 2027:**
 - May apply for OPT without filing a separate extension application with USCIS.
 - Transition period ends March 18, 2027 (tight window for spring grads)
 - ISSS has already contacted students graduating this year

What else is changing?

Restrictions on academic mobility

F-1 Undergraduate students:

- may not transfer or change major during their first academic year

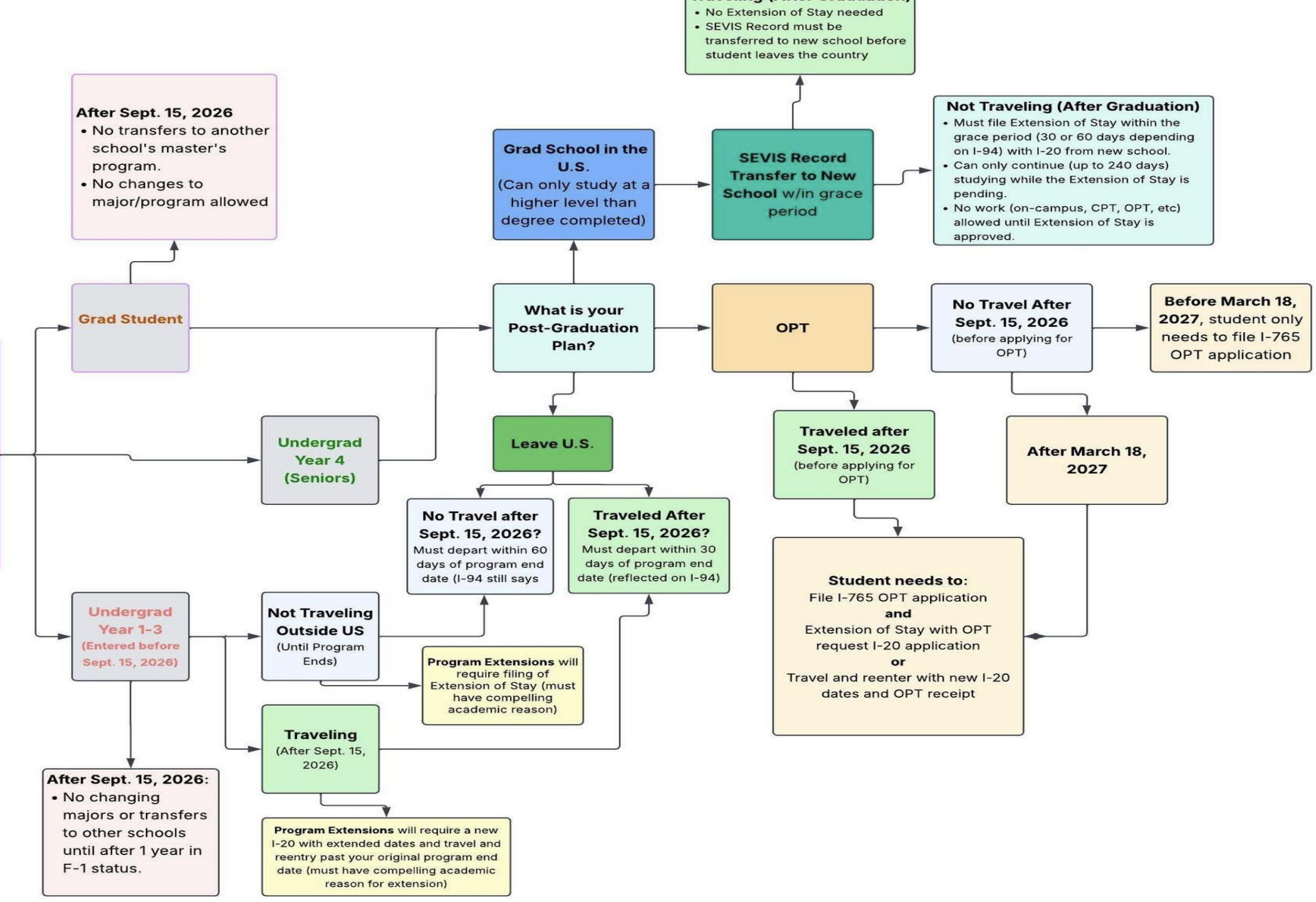
F-1 Graduate students:

- may not change major or educational level unless there is an "extenuating circumstances" exception (i.e. school closure due to a natural disaster)
- may not transfer unless there is an "extenuating circumstances" exception

No lateral or reverse matriculation

- F-1 students **cannot move** to another program at the **same** or **lower** educational level
 - Doctoral students **cannot 'master out' and remain in the US** - will lose OPT eligibility
 - Undergraduates cannot do a post-bac after getting a bachelor's degree
- Concurrent majors/degrees may be allowed (need clarification)

Effects of F1 Student Regulation Changes
(D/S to Authorized Period of Stay)



Key Challenges

- Students are **solely responsible** for knowing when their legal status ends and taking necessary steps to extend legal status
 - ISSS responsible for F & J SEVIS record, but not a student's legal status
- More **date-driven compliance pressure** on students
- **No more flexibility** with last minute changes
- **Extra cost** and **administrative processing** delays
- How will students manage their legal status under the new fixed-admission framework?
- How will the new academic restrictions affect international students' movement through their educational and career pathways?
- How will employment authorization intersect with the new fixed-admission and extension process?

New recommendations for F and J students

- Consult with ISSS for:
 - **any travel** (travel signature, review documents, verify status, advise on re-entry)
 - **for any academic change**
- Know **I-20 program end date** *and* **admit until date (AUD)**
- Start extension process **at least 180 days** before I-20/DS-2019 program end date and AUD expiration date, whichever is sooner
- Onus on students to **verify funding and justify reason** for extension
- Read ISSS emails!
- Review the [ISSS website](#) for more detailed information and guidance

Considerations for Departments

- **Students will need to plan program extensions months in advance** - at least 180 days before I-20 program end date and AUD fixed end date, whichever is sooner
- Proof of **continued funding/financial resources** and **study plans** will be required for extensions
- Extensions are not guaranteed and at the discretion of USCIS to grant more time
- Students **may continue studying and working on campus up to 240 days while an extension is pending**, provided they file before their I-20 expires.
- Students **may not continue working** on-campus if they file an extension during the 30-day grace period after their I-20 expires. Students in this situation must stop all employment while the extension is pending and may only resume work if the extension is approved.

New CPT Policy

- In August, Dept of Homeland Security sent out 2 broadcast messages essentially telling schools to tighten up CPT eligibility or else...
- Effective immediately, ISSS can only authorize CPT when the training is
 - an integral part of an established curriculum and is **required of all students** participating in that program, and
 - directly related to the student's major area of study.
- CPT cannot no longer be authorized solely for the purpose of employment nor for elective internship credits if training is not a core requirement for all students in the program.
- Students should still apply for summer internships but will need ***pre-completion*** OPT for work authorization
- New CPT Policy: <https://iss.s.uoregon.edu/curricular-practical-training-cpt>

Resources

- [D/S Rule Change Website](#)
- [FAQs for International Students](#)
- [Extension of Stay: Filing Guide](#)
- [UO Department: Guidance Toolkit](#)
- [FAQs for Advisors](#)
- [Federal Immigration Updates](#)

ISSS will continue to provide:

- Expertise and guidance on maintaining legal F and J status
- Case advising support to students, scholars and departments
- Information sessions and workshops throughout the year to provide guidance and answer questions

Oregon Hall, 3rd floor • 541-346-3206 • intl@uoregon.edu (students) • ischolar@uoregon.edu (scholars)



**International Student
and Scholar Services**

Admissions considerations

Fair evaluation comes first

- Apply established academic and program criteria consistently
- Do not deny, deprioritize, or discourage applicants based solely on international status – or assumptions about immigration challenges
- Communicate candidly about known program requirements, funding, and constraints
- Refer individual immigration eligibility questions to DGS and ISSS

The rule may change an applicant's pathway – not the standard for academic evaluation

Admissions Considerations

- **Review academic pathways**
 - Change of educational objective
 - *Ex: moving from one graduate program to another*
 - Mid-program transfer
 - *Ex: following an adviser to or from another institution*
 - Same or lower-level study
 - *Ex: pursuing a second U.S. master's or "mastering out" of a PhD*
- **Refer complex cases early**
 - Consult DGS and ISSS before promising a pathway or making an adverse decision
- **Set accurate recruitment expectations**
 - Explain typical doctoral time-to-degree and potential extension process
- **Clarify funding and extension support**
 - Clearly communicate funding duration and conditions; anticipate documentation needs

Retention and support considerations

Programs and Departments

- Access to core set of resources and information
 - Accurate and accessible program handbook
 - Templated communications for consistently setting advising expectations
- Review requirements for potential issues with equal access
 - Optional internships vs. core requirement internships
 - Travel for on-site research in a course
 - Internal awards or funding – eligibility or rubrics
 - Hiring – minimum requirements, duties
- Review processes for potential issues with timing
 - Appointing advisors, distribution of international advisees
- Apply academic policies and process academic requirements consistently

Retention and support considerations

Faculty and Advisors

- No central notification or accurate tracking available for fixed end dates
 - Be **proactive** with academic timelines/milestones → track, reach out or refer
 - Be **prepared** for confusion and delays → have contingencies
- Limited options and flexibility
 - Be **involved** with logistics
 - Sabbaticals, funding options, crisis support
 - Be **clear** in communication
 - Expectations, deadlines, impact/consequences, options
 - Be **aware** of timelines and boundaries
 - Turnaround time for feedback, hybrid options
- Ask questions as care

Retention and support considerations

- CPT
 - Elective internship credit/s no longer allowed
 - Students should still apply for internships for career development
 - If not core req, work with ISSS to apply for pre-completion OPT
 - Unpaid internships/practical training still OK
- GEs
 - Working outside of the US has significant costs for the department and legal limitations based on tax treaties
 - Working outside of Oregon has tax implications and additional costs for the department

Retention and support considerations

- Candidacy and Oral Defense
 - Hybrid or remote defenses can be scheduled
 - Doctoral students must be registered for 3 credits
- Academic Leave
 - Doctoral – 6 terms; master's – 3 terms
 - General petition available if a student needs more time
 - Resource access is limited during leave (e.g., housing, library, crisis funds)
 - Consult w/ISSS early on in planning stage re: visa restrictions and options

Retention and support considerations

- Financial resources and support
 - Proactive, knowledgeable academic advising and curriculum structure *is* financial support
 - Central campus support
 - Grad Student Assistance Fund
 - International Emergency Financial Aid
 - Students in Crisis Fund
 - Basic Needs

Curriculum considerations

- Reduce time-to-degree
 - Fewer courses
 - Tracking milestones closely
 - Time to advancement
 - Time to dissertation proposal
 - Time to dissertation defense
- Think about international travel
 - Research & field work
 - Conferences & other professional development opportunities
 - Internship/experiential learning requirements
- Standardized letter ready to go for 'extension of stay' requests
- Changes to admission cycles & eligibility



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