Capstone International Center

International Student & Scholar Services

Duration of Status Rule Webinar

Understanding new rules for F and J Visa Holders - Updates

September 4, 2026

Capstone International Center

International Student & Scholar Services

Hours of Operation: Mon-Fri: 8 am - 5 pm

Walk-in/Virtual Advising: Mon-Thurs: 11 am - 3 pm

Location: 105 BB Comer Hall

Website: http://international.ua.edu/isss/

Email: international@ua.edu

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Disclaimer

The information in this session is intended for the students, faculty, staff and scholars of The University of Alabama.

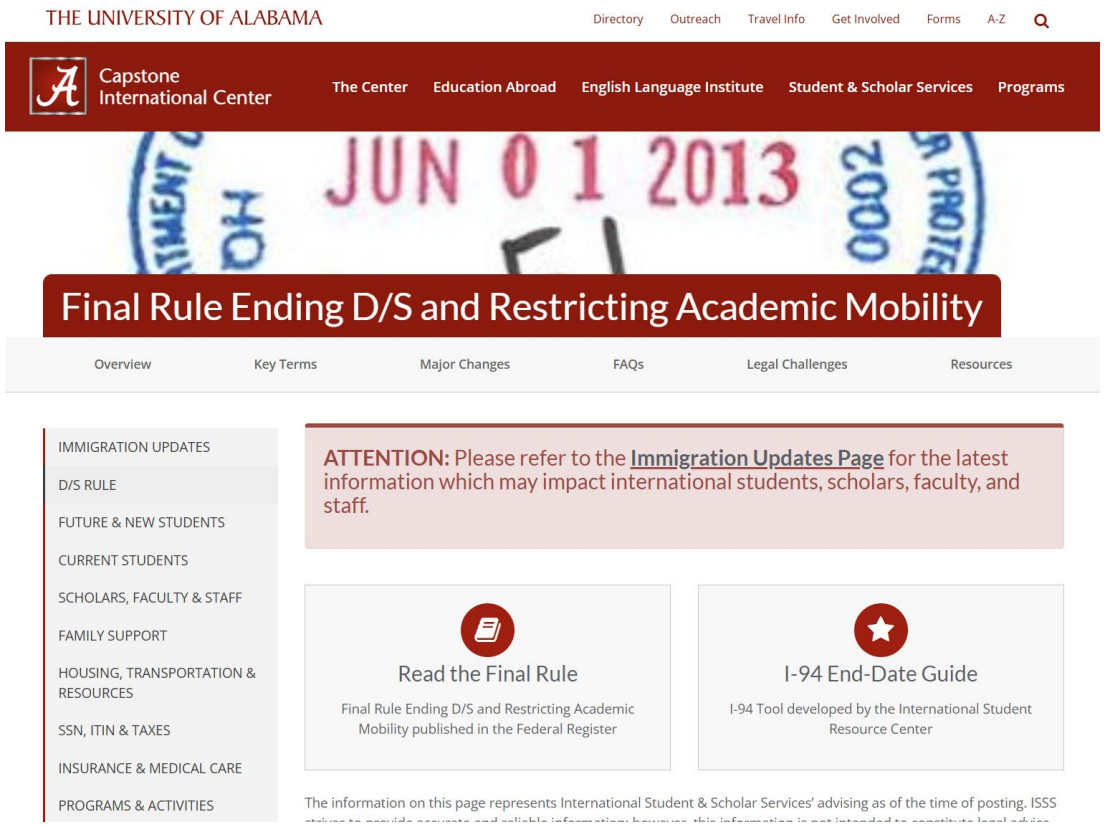
We strive to provide accurate and reliable information; however, this information is not intended to constitute legal advice and should not be relied upon as such (see: ISSS Disclaimer).

If you are seeking legal advice regarding your current immigration status or other factors that might affect your immigration status, consult an experienced immigration lawyer or recognized/accredited organization or representative for legal advice or for legal assistance.

ISSS Immigration Updates Page

https://international.ua.edu/isss/immigration-updates/

DS Rule Page



https://international.ua.edu/isss/ds-rule/

Setting Expectations

1. If you have a question, put it in the Chat.
2. When submitting a question, please do not include personal information.
3. We will try to answer all questions, but we may not be able to address every question.
4. There are many unclear aspects of the new rule for which we are still seeking guidance.
5. **This is being recorded**, and the webinar and slides will be available in a few days.
6. Those who registered will be notified about the recording by email, and a copy will be shared to our D/S page - https://international.ua.edu/isss/ds-rule/.

Litigation Updates

On August 18, 2026, several organizations filed a complaint and a motion for preliminary injunction in the U.S. District Court for the District of Massachusetts.

Motion hearing took place on Thursday, September 3.

- See NAFSA's and the Presidents' Alliance joint press release.
- See NAFSA's litigation update page.
- Read the full complaint.
- Read the motion for a preliminary injunction.
- See NAFSA Legal Challenge Page.

Key Terms

- **Duration of Status (D/S)** - The current system under which most F-1 and J-1 students and scholars may enter and remain in the United States as long as they continue to maintain their immigration status. For new admissions on or after September 15, 2026, D/S will be replaced by a fixed period of admission.

- **Admit Until Date (AUD)** - The date on your Form I-94 indicating when your authorized period of admission expires.

- **Extension of Stay (EOS)** - A request submitted to USCIS to obtain an additional period of authorized stay before the expiration of a current period of admission.

- **Form I-94** - The official DHS record of admission that documents your immigration classification and authorized period of admission.

Overview

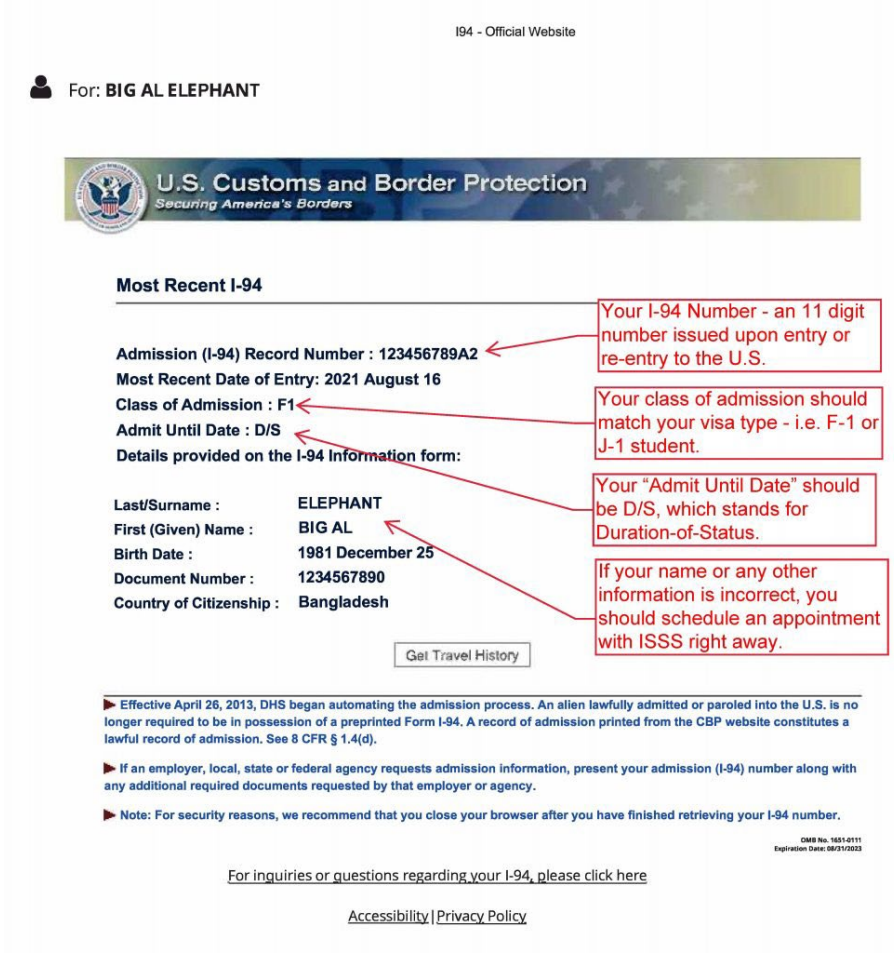
- Department of Homeland Security published its final rule eliminating "duration of status" for individuals in F-1, F-2, J-1, and J-2 visa categories on July 17, 2026.

- Rule goes into effect on **Tuesday, September 15, 2026**.

- Rule impacts more than just Duration of Status
  - Eliminates Duration of Status (D/S)
  - Creates a fixed Admit Until Date (AUD)
  - Creates a 4-year limit per admission period and a new process for an Extension of Stay (EOS)
  - Shortens F-1 Grace Period from 60 to 30 Days (J-1 Grace Period unchanged)
  - Introduces F-1 Academic Restrictions on transfer, change of major, and change of education level

What is/was Duration of Status (D/S)?

- **Duration of Status (D/S)** has been in place since the early 1990s.
- Rather than assigning a fixed expiration date, F-1 and J-1 nonimmigrants' lawful stay in the U.S. has been tied to maintaining the requirements of their immigration status.
- Status end-date tied to the I-20 or DS-2019 and SEVIS Record rather than to a fixed calendar date.



What is Admit Until Date (AUD)

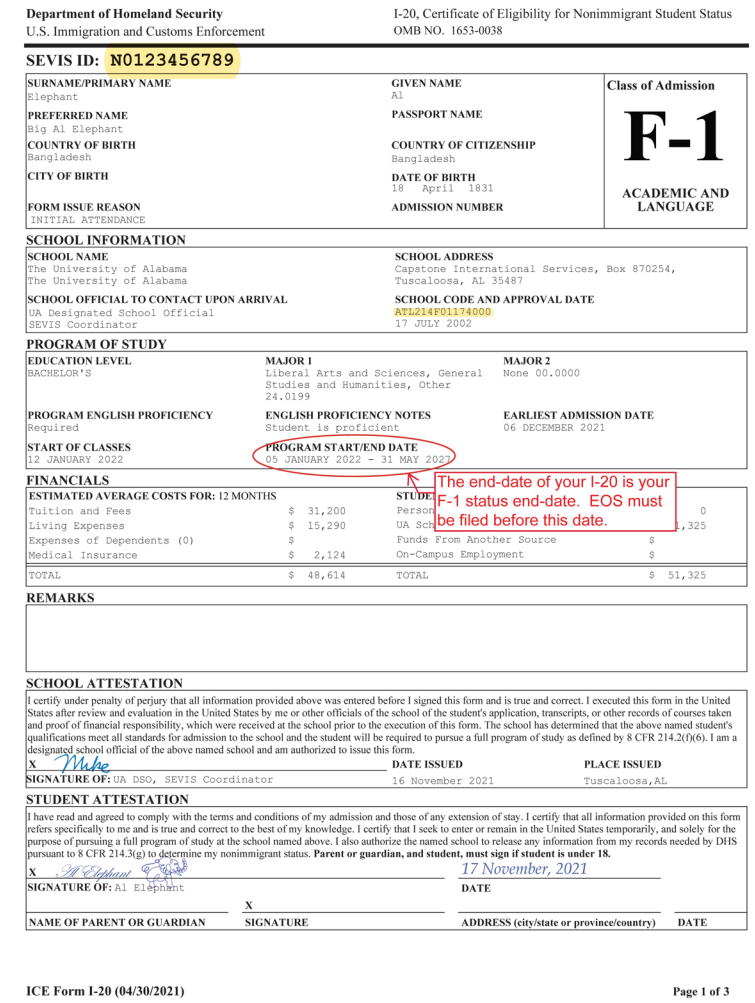
- Duration of Status (D/S) is eliminated on September 15, 2026
- Students entering or re-entering the U.S. after 09/15/2026 will be given an **Admit Until Date (AUD)**, which will be a fixed date on the I-94 Record
- **AUD** will be granted until the end-date of the I-20 or DS-2019, up to a maximum of 4 years, but…
- …extensions of stay are possible.

Understanding 4-Year Limit

- **4-year limit is <u>per period of admission</u>**, not a lifetime limit or degree program limit.
- I-20s and DS-2019s can be issued for program lengths longer than 4 years.
- Those with I-20s and DS-2019s longer than 4 years will need to plan to file an **Extension of Stay (EOS) with USCIS prior to their AUD in order to get an additional period of authorized stay.**
- The 4-Year admission is **<u>not retroactive</u>**. Current students are not going to have their status shortened if they began their program 4 or more years prior to September 15, 2026.

What happens to F and J Visa Holders inside the U.S.?

- F and J Visa holders currently in the U.S. on September 15, 2026 and who were admitted under Duration of Status (D/S):
  - Immigration status will end on the current end-date of your I-20 or DS-2019, or 4 years from September 15, 2026, whichever is earlier
  - Those currently on OPT or STEM OPT, your immigration status will end on the expiration date of your Employment Authorization Document (EAD Card)



Department of Homeland Security
U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement

I-20, Certificate of Eligibility for Nonimmigrant Student Status
OMB NO. 1653-0038

SEVIS ID: N0123456789

SURNAME/PRIMARY NAME	GIVEN NAME	Class of Admission
Elephant	Al	F-1
PREFERRED NAME	**PASSPORT NAME**	
Big Al Elephant		
COUNTRY OF BIRTH	**COUNTRY OF CITIZENSHIP**	
Bangladesh	Bangladesh	
CITY OF BIRTH	**DATE OF BIRTH**	
	18 April 1831	
FORM ISSUE REASON	**ADMISSION NUMBER**	ACADEMIC AND LANGUAGE
INITIAL ATTENDANCE		

SCHOOL INFORMATION

SCHOOL NAME	SCHOOL ADDRESS
The University of Alabama The University of Alabama	Capstone International Services, Box 870254, Tuscaloosa, AL 35487
SCHOOL OFFICIAL TO CONTACT UPON ARRIVAL	**SCHOOL CODE AND APPROVAL DATE**
UA Designated School Official SEVIS Coordinator	ATL214F01174000 17 JULY 2002

PROGRAM OF STUDY

EDUCATION LEVEL	MAJOR 1	MAJOR 2
BACHELOR'S	Liberal Arts and Sciences, General Studies and Humanities, Other 24.0199	None 00.0000
PROGRAM ENGLISH PROFICIENCY	**ENGLISH PROFICIENCY NOTES**	**EARLIEST ADMISSION DATE**
Required	Student is proficient	06 DECEMBER 2021
START OF CLASSES	**PROGRAM START/END DATE**	
12 JANUARY 2022	05 JANUARY 2022 - 31 MAY 2027	

The end-date of your I-20 is your F-1 status end-date. EOS must be filed before this date.

FINANCIALS

ESTIMATED AVERAGE COSTS FOR: 12 MONTHS		STUDE	
Tuition and Fees	$ 31,200	Person	0
Living Expenses	$ 15,290	UA Sch	1,325
Expenses of Dependents (0)	$	Funds From Another Source	$
Medical Insurance	$ 2,124	On-Campus Employment	$
TOTAL	$ 48,614	TOTAL	$ 51,325

REMARKS

SCHOOL ATTESTATION

I certify under penalty of perjury that all information provided above was entered before I signed this form and is true and correct. I executed this form in the United States after review and evaluation in the United States by me or other officials of the school of the student's application, transcripts, or other records of courses taken and proof of financial responsibility, which were received at the school prior to the execution of this form. The school has determined that the above named student's qualifications meet all standards for admission to the school and the student will be required to pursue a full program of study as defined by 8 CFR 214.2(f)(6). I am a designated school official of the above named school and am authorized to issue this form.

X Mike	DATE ISSUED	PLACE ISSUED
SIGNATURE OF: UA DSO, SEVIS Coordinator	16 November 2021	Tuscaloosa,AL

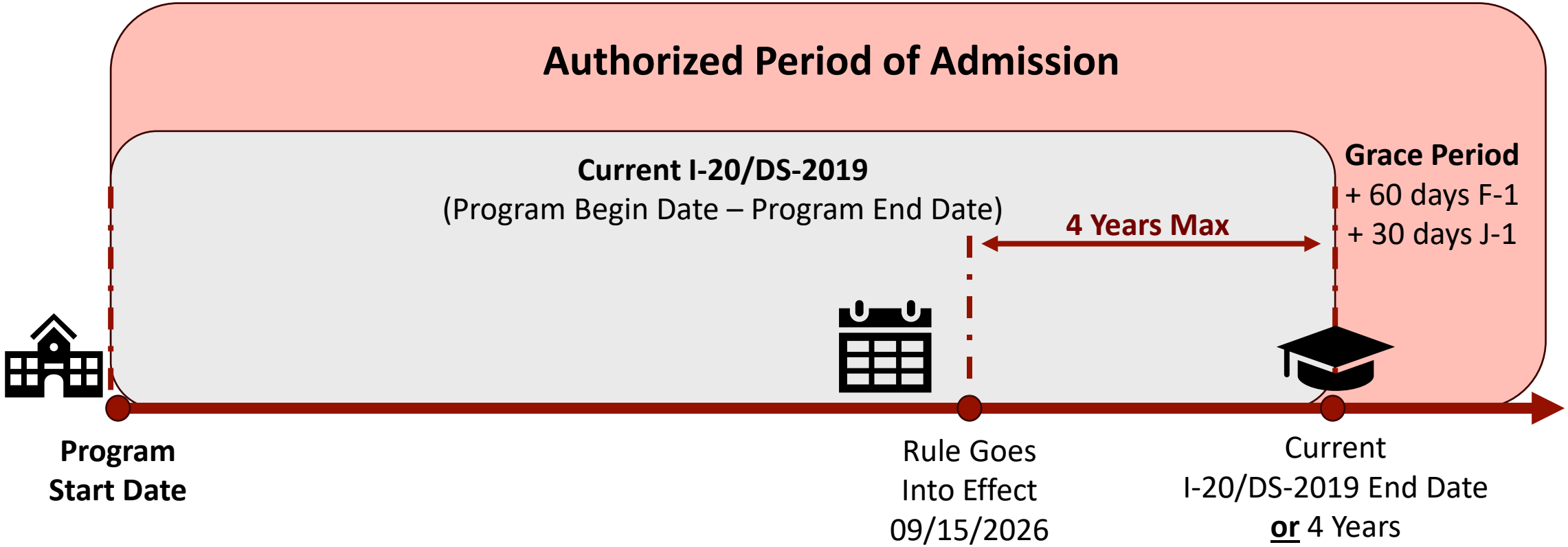
STUDENT ATTESTATION

I have read and agreed to comply with the terms and conditions of my admission and those of any extension of stay. I certify that all information provided on this form refers specifically to me and is true and correct to the best of my knowledge. I certify that I seek to enter or remain in the United States temporarily, and solely for the purpose of pursuing a full program of study at the school named above. I also authorize the named school to release any information from my records needed by DHS pursuant to 8 CFR 214.3(g) to determine my nonimmigrant status. **Parent or guardian, and student, must sign if student is under 18.**

X Al Elephant		17 November, 2021	
SIGNATURE OF: Al Elephant		DATE	
	X		
NAME OF PARENT OR GUARDIAN	SIGNATURE	ADDRESS (city/state or province/country)	DATE

ICE Form I-20 (04/30/2021) Page 1 of 3

F and J Visa Holders inside the U.S.

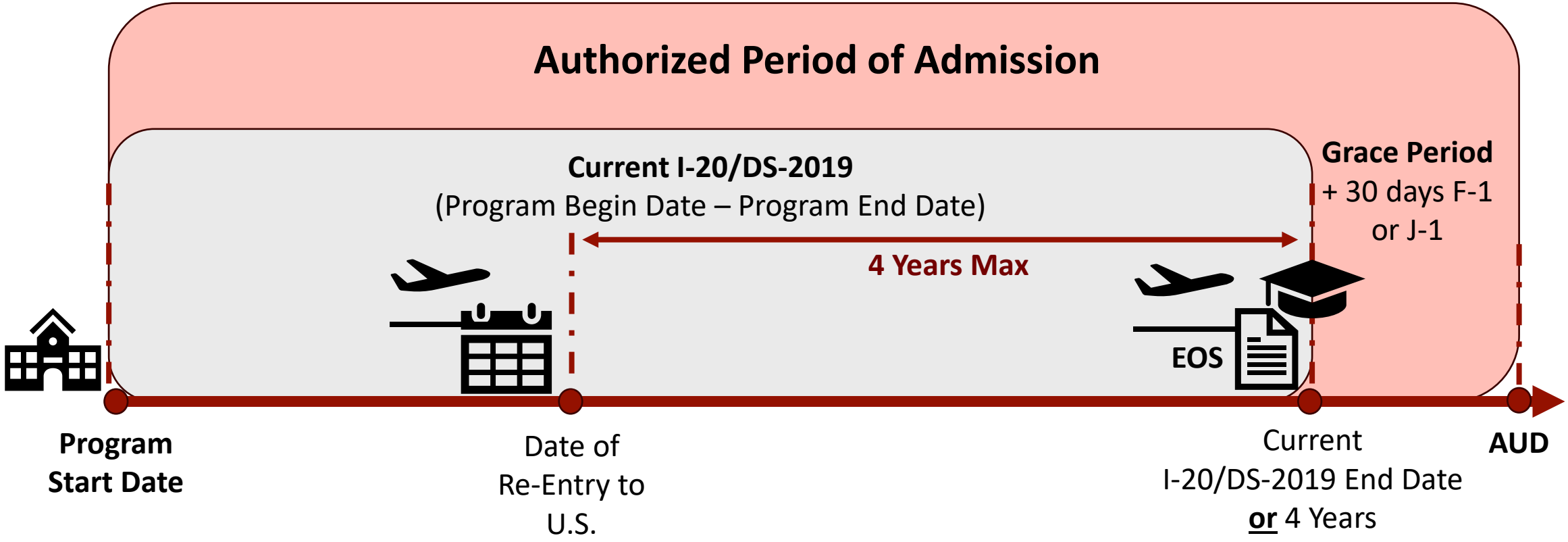


International Travel after 09/15/2026

- F and J Visa holders who depart and return from international travel on or after September 15, 2026 will receive a new fixed admission period and Admit Until Date (AUD) on their I-94.

- **IMPORTANT:** F and J Visa holders should review their I-94 record and submit a copy of the I-94 to ISSS **after every entry to the U.S.**

International Travel – New AUD



What if I need an extension? Remaining in the U.S. via EOS

- After 9/15/2026, F and J Visa holders who need more time beyond their AUD or their current I-20 or DS-2019 end-date will need to file an Extension of Stay (EOS) via a Form I-539 with USCIS.
- Generally, filing the I-539 for EOS will be required if you:
  - need more time to complete your current program;
  - apply for post-completion OPT or a STEM OPT extension;
  - need additional time to complete a J-1 Program or Academic Training;
  - want to begin a new academic program (for example, after completing a bachelor's); or
  - want to begin a new J-1 exchange visitor program.

F-1 Extension of Stay

- **IMPORTANT** – F visa holders must file I-539 for EOS on-time, **before** the I-20 end-date or Admit Until Date (AUD).
  - Early is best – I-539 processing times will take many months and cannot be expedited for EOS
- **F-1 EOS will be a 2-Step Process**
  - Extend I-20 or Update I-20 for New Program
  - File an I-539 with fees and supporting documents to USCIS
- While I-539 EOS Application is Pending:
  - Can continue to study or can begin study for new programs
  - Granted up to a 240-day on-campus work authorization extension while EOS is pending
  - Those applying for EOS and OPT/STEM OPT will have to follow normal OPT work authorization rules (EAD Card in-hand or STEM OPT receipt/EAD to work)

OPT and STEM OPT

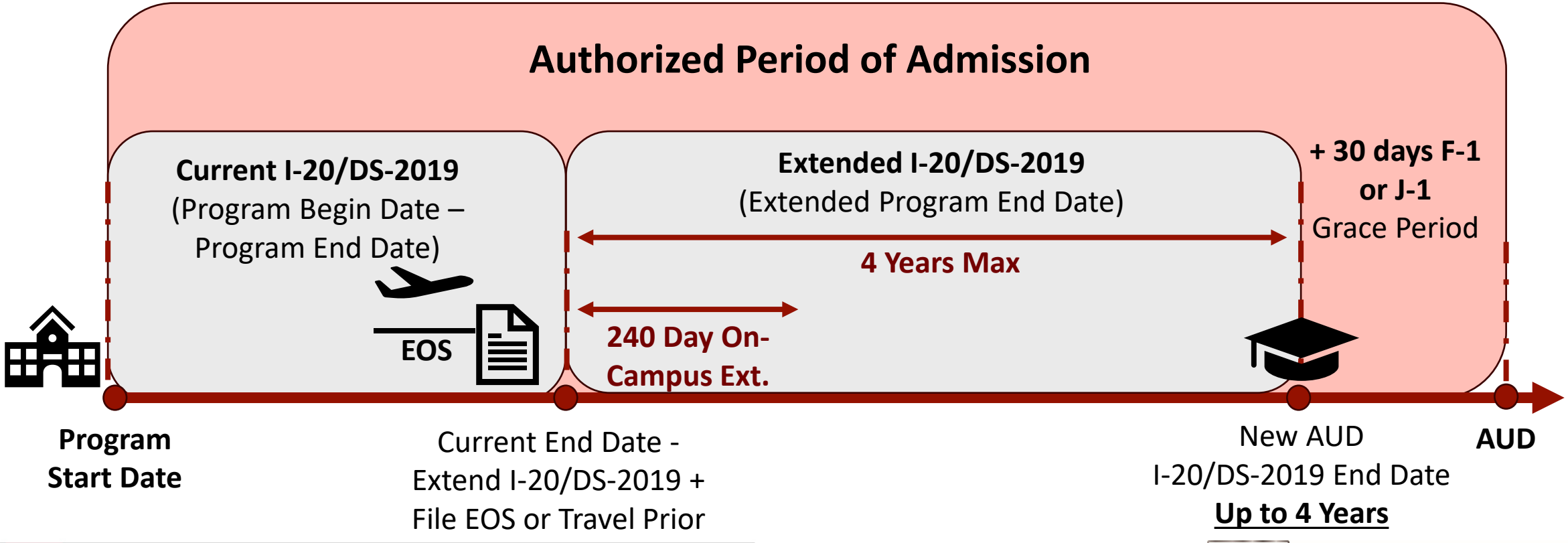
- Generally, F-1s applying for OPT or STEM OPT extensions will have to apply **both for OPT and EOS simultaneously**.
- Applying for **OPT will be a 3-Step Process**:
  - Obtain an I-20 with OPT or STEM OPT Recommendation from ISSS
  - File an I-765 with fees and supporting documents to USCIS for OPT/STEM OPT Authorization
  - Concurrently file an I-539 for Extension of Stay with fees and supporting documents to USCIS to cover extension through the end-date of the OPT or STEM OPT period
- Those applying for EOS and OPT/STEM OPT will have to follow normal OPT work authorization rules (EAD Card in-hand or STEM OPT receipt/EAD to work)
- **SPECIAL EXCEPTION:** During transition period (09/15/2026 – 03/18/2027), F-1 students who are already in the U.S. on September 15, 2026 and who do not travel may apply for OPT or STEM OPT without also having to file an EOS

J-1 Extension of Stay and Academic Training

- **IMPORTANT** – J visa holders who need an extension must file I-539 for EOS on-time, **before** the DS-2019 end-date or Admit Until Date (AUD).
- **J-1 EOS will be a 2-Step Process**
  - Extend DS-2019 or Update DS-2019 for New Program
  - File an I-539 with fees and supporting documents to USCIS
- While I-539 EOS Application is Pending:
  - J-1 can continue to study or can begin study for new programs
  - Granted up to a 240-day on-campus work authorization extension while EOS is pending

- Applying for Academic Training will also generally be a 2-Step Process:
  - Obtain a DS-2019 with Academic Training Authorization
  - File an I-539 for Extension of Stay with fees and supporting documents to USCIS to cover extension through the end-date of the AT period

Extension of Stay



Grace Period

- F-1 Grace Period **shortened from 60 Days to 30 Days**
- F-1s currently in the U.S. will retain their 60-day Grace Period for their current program **unless** they:
  - travel outside of the U.S. and re-enter on/after September 15, 2026, or
  - file for an Extension of Stay (EOS) with USCIS.
  - Travel or EOS filing will create a fixed end-date AUD with 30-Day Grace Period.
- J-1 Grace Period is **unchanged – 30 Days**

New Restrictions on F-1 Academics

- F-1 students will be under new restrictions on changing "educational objectives" during their program of study
  - Change of major
  - Change of educational level (i.e. bachelor's to master's)
- F-1 students will also be under restrictions on school transfers
- F-1 students will be prohibited from pursuing a second degree at the same or lower level
- Restrictions are different for undergraduate and graduate students
- **Note: J-1 students have no change to academic regulations**

F-1 Restrictions on Changing Education Levels

- If you complete a degree on or after September 15, 2026, you may generally only begin a new program at a higher educational level, which will require a new I-20 and an Extension of Stay (EOS) application.
- Cannot change to a lower educational level (for example, PhD to Master's – i.e. mastering out), but can earn the Master's on the way to the PhD
- Cannot pursue a second degree at the same level (i.e. graduate with a Master's and pursue a second Master's)
- Undergraduate students cannot change educational levels during their first year of study unless granted an exception by SEVP.
- Graduate students cannot change educational levels during the current program of study (i.e. a Master's student must complete the Master's before changing to the Doctoral program).

F-1 Restrictions on Changing Education Levels

Permitted

- ✓ Bachelor's → Master's
- ✓ Bachelor's → Ph.D.
- ✓ Master's → Ph.D.

Not permitted

- ✗ Master's → Second Master's
- ✗ Bachelor's → Second Bachelor's
- ✗ Master's → Bachelor's
- ✗ Ph.D → Master's

F-1 Restrictions on Changing Majors

- **Undergraduate students** cannot change majors or add second majors during first year of study, unless granted an exception by SEVP.

- **Graduate students** cannot change majors at any point during their program or add secondary programs after beginning the program of study. If pursuing more than one graduate program concurrently (i.e. MBA and M.S. joint degree), should include this on the I-20 at the start of the program.

F-1 Restrictions on SEVIS Transfers

- **Undergraduate students** cannot transfer schools during first year of study, unless granted an exception by SEVP.

- **Graduate students** may not transfer institutions during any point of their program of study.

- SEVP may authorize an exception for Graduate student transfer, but exception is limited to extraordinary extenuating circumstances, such as a **school closure** or **natural disaster**. Loss of funding or the departure of your major professor will not be considered.

- SEVIS Transfer possible after completion of a program of study to begin a new program of study at a higher level.

Impact on F-2 and J-2 Dependents

- F-2 and J-2 Dependents will receive fixed periods of admissions, which may not exceed that of the F-1 or J-1 visa holder.

- If the F-1 or J-1 travels and re-enters with a new AUD but the F-2 or J-2 remains in the U.S., the F-2 or J-2 dependents AUD will be shortened to match the F-1 or J-1.

- If an F-2 or J-2 travels internationally without the F-1 or J-1, they may be given a shorter AUD than the F-1 or J-1.

- If an F-1 or J-1 visa holder extends their I-20 or DS-2019 and files for an Extension of Stay (EOS) via an I-539 with USCIS, they must also include the F-2 or J-2 dependents in the extension application with an I-539A.

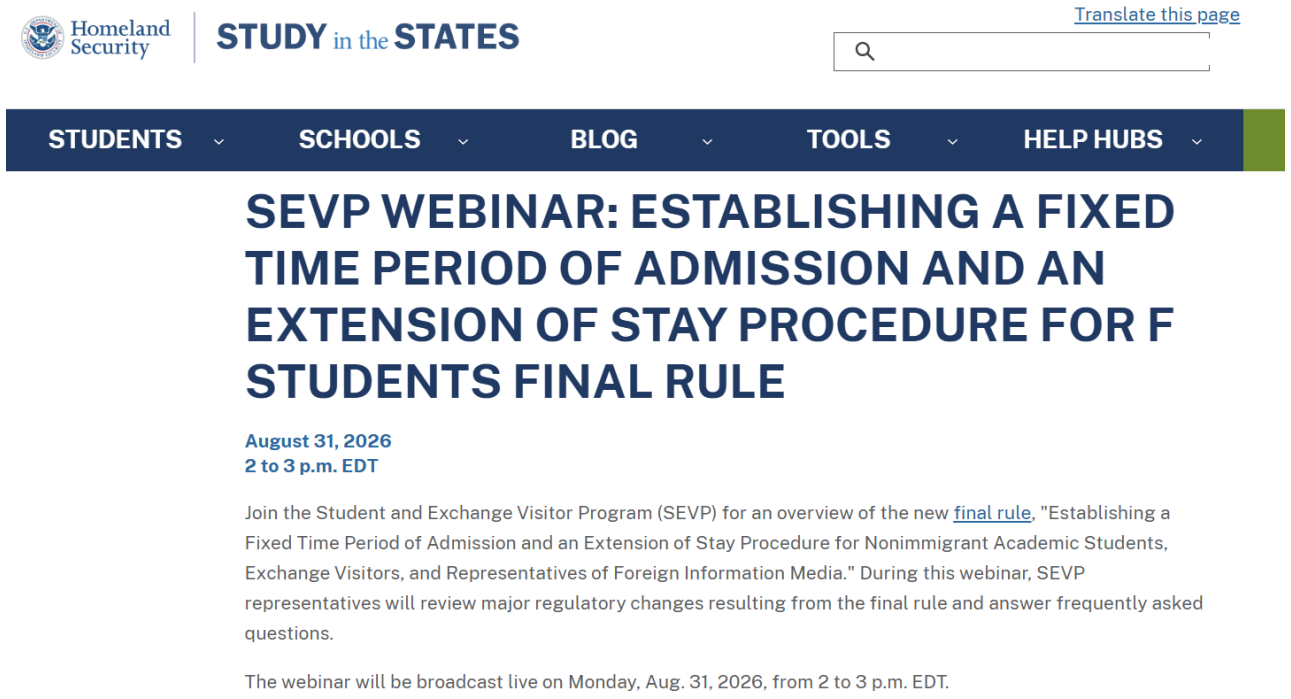
Potential Delays

Possible Delay of Academic Mobility Restrictions: DHS acknowledges that implementing some of the new academic mobility provisions may require updates to SEVIS and other government systems. DHS may postpone implementation of the provisions restricting transfers between schools, changes in educational objectives (major or educational level), and progression to same- or lower-level programs until September 14, 2028 if it determines implementation is not feasible.

Resources

- Official text of the final rule published in the Federal Register: DHS Final Rule: Establishing a Fixed Time Period of Admission and an Extension of Stay Procedure for Nonimmigrant Academic Students, Exchange Visitors, and Representatives of Foreign Information Media
- DHS announcement summarizing the purpose and implementation of the rule: DHS Press Release: Trump Administration Issues Final Rule to End Foreign Student Visa Abuse
- SEVP overview of the new rule and major changes: Study in the States: Elimination of Duration of Status – Quick Facts
- SEVP FAQs addressing common implementation questions: Study in the States: Elimination of Duration of Status – Frequently Asked Questions
- USCIS page for filing an Extension of Stay or Change of Status application: USCIS Form I-539 (Application to Extend/Change Nonimmigrant Status)
- SEVP overview of the I-94 : Study in the States: Understanding the Form I-94

DHS Webinar – 8/31/2026


Homeland Security | STUDY in the STATES

Translate this page

STUDENTS SCHOOLS BLOG TOOLS HELP HUBS

SEVP WEBINAR: ESTABLISHING A FIXED TIME PERIOD OF ADMISSION AND AN EXTENSION OF STAY PROCEDURE FOR F STUDENTS FINAL RULE

August 31, 2026
2 to 3 p.m. EDT

Join the Student and Exchange Visitor Program (SEVP) for an overview of the new final rule, "Establishing a Fixed Time Period of Admission and an Extension of Stay Procedure for Nonimmigrant Academic Students, Exchange Visitors, and Representatives of Foreign Information Media." During this webinar, SEVP representatives will review major regulatory changes resulting from the final rule and answer frequently asked questions.

The webinar will be broadcast live on Monday, Aug. 31, 2026, from 2 to 3 p.m. EDT.

- SEVP held a webinar on **August 31, 2026**
- https://studyinthestates.dhs.gov/webinar/sevp-webinar-establishing-a-fixed-time-period-of-admission-and-an-extension-of-stay

FINAL REMINDERS AND KEY TAKEAWAYS

- **Effective Date: September 15, 2026**
- **F-1 Students - check your I-20**
  - Is your degree program listed correctly?
  - If you have a dual degree program or double major, are they listed on the I-20?
  - Is the end-date accurate?
  - Make any necessary changes prior to 09/15/2026
  - Applying for OPT soon? Remember transition period for filing OPT without an EOS ends 03/18/2027 as long as you have not traveled internationally since 9/15/2026.
- **J-1 Students and Scholars – check your DS-2019**
  - Is your end-date accurate?
- **I-94 is most critical document for status** – check I-94 any time you enter or re-enter the U.S. and provide a copy of the I-94 to ISSS every time!!!

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