



UW INTERNATIONAL STUDENT SERVICES

Upcoming Immigration Changes

Introductions



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Important Reminders

- Session will not be recorded but slides will be made available
- We will take live questions and open the chat after the presentation
- ISS staff are still learning and assessing the new rule
- This new rule is complex
- We do not have all the answers yet and need clarification from the government
- ISS staff are not lawyers – we provide guidance, not legal advice
- ISS will continue updating the D/S Hub resources

Current Policy



I-94 Arrival/Departure Record

- Currently, when a student enters the U.S., **Customs and Border Protection (CBP)** issues an electronic I-94.
- The I-94 confirms their legal admission to the U.S. and includes the following:
 - **Class of admission** (visa type)
 - **Admit Until Date** (how long you can stay in the U.S.)



U.S. Customs and Border Protection
Securing America's Borders

Most Recent I-94

Admission (I-94) Record Number : 1234567890
Most Recent Date of Entry: 2023 June 10
Class of Admission : F1
Admit Until Date : D/S

Details provided on the I-94 Information form:

Last/Surname :	the Husky
First (Given) Name :	Harry
Birth Date :	1995 September 27
Document Number :	#####
Country of Citizenship :	Seattle

Duration of Status (D/S)

- Currently, F and J students are given an Admit Until Date (AUD) of “**D/S**” which stands for **Duration of Status**.
- Duration of Status means a student can **remain in the U.S.** as long as they maintain status including:
 - Keeping immigration documents valid
 - Enrolling full-time each quarter
 - Following employment authorization requirements

Upcoming Changes

A close-up photograph of a person's hands writing in a lined notebook. The person is wearing a purple long-sleeved shirt. The background is blurred, showing what appears to be a computer monitor and other office equipment. A dark purple rectangular box is overlaid on the left side of the image, containing the text 'Upcoming Changes' in white.

What is changing?

- The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) is eliminating the Duration of Status rule.
- Under the *new* rule, F and J students will be admitted to the U.S. for a **fixed date** known as the **Admit Until Date (AUD)**.
- This period of stay in the U.S. will be limited to the **Program End Date** on a student's I-20 or DS-2019 but **not to exceed 4 years** plus a 30-day grace period.

What is changing? (continued)

- Currently, if a student needs additional time to complete their program, begin a new program, or transfer to a different school, ISS is able to approve and process these requests.
- Under the new rules if a student needs to stay beyond their AUD, they will **still** need to request permission from ISS. However, they will also need to extend their AUD by either:
 - Timely filing an **Extension of Stay (EOS)** application with **U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS)** before their AUD expires; **OR**
 - **Departing and reentering** the U.S.

Additional new restrictions & limits

- The **grace period** at completion of a program for F-1 students will be reduced from 60 to 30 days. J-1 student grace period remains 30 days.
- Pursuing another degree at the **same or lower education level** will not be allowed once a student completes a degree.

** Programs completed prior to September 15, 2026, will not be considered in this new restriction/limit.*

Additional new restrictions & limits (continued)

- **Undergraduate students:** Cannot change majors or transfer schools in their first year of study.
- **Graduate students:** Cannot change their educational objective (program) or transfer schools at any time.

When does this take effect?

- The new rules take effect on **September 15, 2026**.
- Students physically present in the U.S. **before September 15**, will continue under D/S status. However, any future international travel will change their status to the new fixed-AUD policy.
- Students arriving in the U.S. **on or after September 15**, will receive an I-94 with a fixed-AUD plus a 30-day grace period after their program end date (not to exceed 4 years).
- The restrictions on academic changes will take effect for **all students** on September 15, 2026.

Extension of Stay (EOS)



Extension of Stay

- Students who need additional time beyond their I-94 AUD for any of the following reasons will need to request an extension of stay:
 - Complete current program/degree requirements
 - I-20/DS-2019 program end date is more than 4 years at time of entry
 - Change education level to a higher degree
 - Transfer schools for a new program
 - Apply for post-graduation employment authorization including OPT, STEM OPT, or Academic Training

Extension of Stay

- There are two ways students can request an extension of stay in the U.S.:
 - Timely filing an **Extension of Stay application (I-539)** with **U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS)** before their AUD expires **OR**
 - **Departing** and **reentering** the U.S.

Extension of Stay

- DHS expects bona fide students to be committed to their studies, attending classes as required, carrying a full course of study, and making reasonable efforts toward program completion.
- A compelling **academic reason**, a documented **illness or medical condition**, or **exceptional circumstances** beyond the control of the student will still be considered. However, stricter standards may also be considered in determining whether an extension is justified:
 - Overall poor academic performance
 - Excessive course failures
 - Pattern of repeating & dropping classes
 - Inability or unwillingness to complete a course of study (program)
 - Making normal academic progress (as determined by government)

Example Scenarios

Scenario 1:

- Undergraduate student needs 2 additional quarters to complete degree requirements.
- Student submits a program extension request to ISS with approval from their academic/department adviser for 2 additional quarters.
- Before the original I-20 end date, the student files their extended I-20 with the EOS application to USCIS with reasons additional time is needed or the student travels & reenters U.S. Once adjudicated by USCIS or CBP, a new I-94 Admit Until Date (AUD) is issued.

Example Scenarios

Scenario 2:

- Master's degree student is graduating from UCLA in December 2026 and plans to begin a PhD program at UW in January 2027.
- Student requests their SEVIS record be transferred from UCLA to the UW once their Master's degree program ends on 12/4/2026. GEMS issues a transfer pending PhD I-20 with a program start date of 1/4/2027.
- Student will need to file an EOS application to USCIS with the reasons additional time in the U.S. is needed or the student travels & reenters with the UW's transfer I-20. Once adjudicated by USCIS or CBP, a new I-94 Admit Until Date (AUD) is issued.

Example Scenarios

Scenario 3:

- Student will earn a Bachelor's degree at the end of spring quarter 2027 and receives admission to a UW Master's degree program for autumn quarter 2027.
- Student submits a Change of Level/Program request to ISS.
- Change of Level I-20 issued by ISS with a 9/2027 program start date and new I-20 end date for the Master's degree program.
- Student will need to file an EOS application to USCIS with reason additional time in the U.S. is needed or travel & reenter with the Change of Level Master's degree I-20. Once adjudicated by USCIS or CBP, a new I-94 Admit Until Date (AUD) is issued.

Example Scenarios

Scenario 4:

- Incoming Master's degree student for autumn 2026 with a program start date 9/21/2026 and a program end date of 6/9/2028.
- Student travels to the U.S. on 9/16/2026 and is given an I-94 fixed AUD of 7/9/2028 (2 years plus a 30-day grace period).
- If the student needs additional time to complete degree requirements, they plan to change to a higher degree level, or they plan to apply for OPT, they will need to file an EOS application to USCIS or travel & reenter with an updated I-20. Once adjudicated by USCIS or CBP, a new I-94 Admit Until Date (AUD) is issued.

Example Scenarios

Scenario 5:

- New PhD student receives an I-20 with a program start date of 9/21/2026 and program end date 6/13/2031 (5 years).
- Student enters the U.S. on 9/18/2026, and the I-94 fixed-AUD is 10/21/2030 (4 years plus a 30-day grace period).
- After the first year of the PhD program, the student travels internationally during the summer break and reenters the U.S. in August 2027 with their same I-20 program end date, 6/13/2031.
- Student is issued a new I-94 fixed-AUD of 7/12/2031 (6/13/2031 program end date plus a 30-day grace period).
- No EOS to USCIS is required in this scenario **unless** additional time beyond 6/13/2031 is needed to complete all degree requirements.

Example Scenarios

Scenario 6:

- PhD student with an I-20 program start date in 2023 and a program end date of 8/18/2028.
- The student will return to the U.S. after summer break on 9/20/2026.
- Student will receive a new I-94 fixed-AUD of 9/17/2028 (8/18/2028 I-20 end date plus a 30-day grace period).
- No EOS to USCIS is required **unless** additional time beyond 8/18/2028 will be needed to complete all degree requirements.
- 4-year limit does not include years already spent in the U.S. It's a restriction on how long a student can continuously remain in the U.S. without traveling or requesting an Extension of Stay. The I-94 fixed-AUD is calculated on the I-20 or DS-2019 program end date or a maximum of 4 years.



Transition Provisions & What's Next

Transition Provisions

- Students physically present in the U.S. before September 15, 2026, will retain D/S (not to exceed 4 years) plus the legacy 60-day grace period.
- **Benefits for F-1 students keeping D/S:**
 - **Retain D/S** for the remainder of their academic program end date or a maximum of 4 years.
 - **Retain the legacy 60-day grace period** at the end of their completed program.
 - No EOS application with USCIS will be required if they apply for post-completion OPT by **March 18, 2027**.

Transition Provisions

- The D/S transition provisions **DO NOT:**
 - exclude students from the new educational limits and restrictions on changing majors, programs, levels, schools, etc. This applies to all F-1 and J-1 students regardless of D/S status.
 - eliminate the EOS application for students who require additional time beyond their I-20/DS-2019 Program End Date.
 - prevent a fixed I-94 AUD if traveling any time after September 15, 2026.

What can you do?

Advisers, faculty, staff, and other campus partners should **avoid providing immigration advice**. Federal regulations are complex and affect students differently. Incorrect or inaccurate information puts students and the institution at compliance risk.

- Direct students to these ISS resources:
 - [Duration of Status Hub](#) – updated information & student FAQs
 - [Contact ISS form](#)
 - [ISS advising](#) (virtual & in person drop-in advising available)
- Encourage students to meet with you about degree planning and a realistic timeline to complete their degree requirements.

What can you do? (continued)

- Help remind students to be aware of their I-94 Admit Until Date and their I-20/DS-2019 Program End Date in relation to their academic timeline and remaining requirements.
- Help students plan early and take steps to start the Extension of Stay process if additional time is needed for their degree, a new degree program, or OPT.
- Review department programs and policies to ensure international students can successfully continue without compliance concerns.
 - Hiring manager procedures and accurate documentation for F-1 and J-1 students
 - Exiting PhD students with a Master's degree
 - Bypass, internal promotion, "blue button" processes and deadlines
 - Average time to degree for all students and what is "normal" for your program
 - Program or degree code practices (CIP codes)

Commonly Asked Questions

Q: Do students need to change their travel plans and enter or return to the U.S. before September 15?

A: For most students, entering the U.S. before September 15 is not necessary, as most students will be admitted under the new fixed-program end date at some point during their degree program.

Entering the U.S. before September 15 under D/S could be beneficial if:

- Student will not travel internationally for the remainder of their program.
- They will not need additional time beyond the I-20/DS-2019 Program End Date (i.e. complete degree requirements, change educational levels, etc.).
- Student will be eligible to apply for post-completion OPT before March 18, 2027.

Commonly Asked Questions

Q: How can departments know a student's I-94 Admit Until Date (AUD) or Program End Date?

A: Immigration specific data related to a student's visa status is not available to departments, administrators, staff, or campus partners. Only Designated School Officials (DSO) authorized by the government to issue, monitor, and report data through SEVIS have access to this data.

Students have access to their own I-94 and I-20 records. You can ask a student to provide you with their I-20 program end date or I-94 AUD to assist in advising or planning for time to degree. Students can share this information if they choose.

Commonly Asked Questions

Q: Will ISS notify students of their I-94 Admit Until Date (AUD)?

A: Students are responsible for understanding and monitoring their own F-1 and J-1 immigration records and deadlines.

In general, ISS currently sends reminders to students about their I-20/DS-2019 program end date, starting 90 days before the date. At this time, I-94 AUD information is not available in SEVIS and ISS cannot access the information directly. We will continue to remind students to plan early, keep track of their program end date and I-94 AUD, and contact their academic adviser and ISS if additional time is needed beyond the AUD for any reason.

Commonly Asked Questions

Q: Can ISS process program extensions before Sept.15 if we already know a student needs more time to complete their degree requirements?

A: Yes. Any program extension processed by ISS before Sept.15 will be valid and not impacted by the new rules.

Discuss degree planning with students and if you both determine additional time beyond their current I-20 or DS-2019 end date is needed, the student should submit a Program Extension request in MyISSS now. Academic adviser approval will still be required, and students must still meet the current F or J requirements for a program extension.

Commonly Asked Questions

Q: A PhD generally takes more than 4 years to complete. Should departments consider changes to our PhD programs, or should we not admit international students?

A: No, departments do not need to change their degree program or admission policies because of this new regulation. F-1 and J-1 students should still be considered for your programs, regardless of their immigration status.

The new rule limits the number of years a student can stay continuously in the U.S. without travel and reentry or by requesting an EOS. The government wants a touchpoint at 4 years to ensure students are still following their intended purpose for being in the U.S. The rule does not change the institution's degree programs.

Commonly Asked Questions

Q: The new restrictions state graduate students cannot change their educational objective or program. What does this mean for students who enter our program under one program/CIP code and then change to another?

A: We believe that CIP code changes at the graduate level associated with the I-20/DS-2019 record will not be permitted. It is not clear whether this means the full CIP code or just the first 2 digits for the area of study. The government has not provided additional details on what "educational objective" means.

We have asked for clarification from the government on this policy. Until they provide additional guidance and the new regulation goes into effect, we are not sure how this process will work or how the SEVIS system will be changed.

Commonly Asked Questions

Q: How does the new rule impact professional degree programs? For example, the Juris Doctor (JD) is a professional degree and students often enroll in an LLM program upon completion. Will this be allowed?

A: We do not have an answer for this yet and many schools with professional degree programs have raised this topic as needing additional clarification.

It is unclear if a professional degree program will be viewed separately in the degree hierarchy. Currently, the SEVIS immigration system does not distinguish between different types of doctoral levels (i.e. JD, MD, PhD, PharmD, etc.)

Commonly Asked Questions

Q: Will we still be able to promote students within our department? (also known as 'blue button' promotion, bypass process, internal promotion)

A: Yes, international students can still advance to a higher-level degree program. They will need to submit an I-20 Change Level/Program I-20 request for the new degree.

Timing for this process will be critical for international students. The change of level I-20 cannot be issued until the new degree program is added to MyGrad/SDB showing the pending change. Starting 9/15, all students with a change of level I-20 will need to file an EOS with USCIS or travel and reenter with the new degree I-20 before their current program or AUD expires.

Commonly Asked Questions

Q: Will international students still be allowed to earn a Master's degree on their way to a PhD? Alternatively, could they still exit a PhD program with a Master's degree instead of completing all requirements for the PhD?

A: Yes, we believe this will still be allowed.

Students issued a PhD level I-20/DS-2019 should still be allowed to earn a Master's degree on their way to the PhD. Awarding a Master's degree to a student enrolled in a PhD program is a Graduate School and University policy.

However, we believe ISS will not be able to add the Master's degree program to the I-20/DS-2019 and students will not be eligible for immigration benefits based on the Masters, including post-completion OPT.

Commonly Asked Questions

Q: Will undergraduate students be able to pursue a double major or double degree? Will they be allowed to add a second major or minor during the first year?

A: We believe students will be allowed to double major or double degree. It is unlikely any major code changes will be allowed on the I-20/DS-2019 during the first year (minors are not reflected on an I-20/DS-2019).

DHS has not yet released any additional details about how this new restriction will be handled and what the SEVIS system will look like for academic changes to majors after Sept. 15. We believe the functionality to make changes in SEVIS will be restricted.

Commonly Asked Questions

Q: For undergraduate students who cannot change their major during their "first year," what does this mean for pre-majors or transfer students? Will students still be allowed to double major, double degree, or add a minor?

A: We don't know yet.

It is likely that first-year students will not be able to add/change major codes until they have completed 3 quarters. Further clarification is still needed whether this restriction applies to only the 1st year of study in the U.S. or the 1st year at the UW.

We do believe students will be allowed to double major or double degree. However, it is likely any major code changes will not be allowed on the I-20/DS-2019 until an undergraduate completes their first year. (minors are not reflected on the I-20/DS-2019)

Commonly Asked Questions

Q: How will academic advisers know whether an undergraduate student is eligible to change their major or degree program?

A: We do not know yet, but I believe institutional academic policies or advising around majors, degree planning, course schedules, or time to degree do not need to change. Remind F-1 and J-1 international students to consult ISS before changes are finalized.

We will be working internally on request forms and with campus partners to think through ways we can improve some of these transactional items with international students in mind. Right now, we do not know how the government will change the SEVIS immigration system or what restrictions will be built in to prevent changes.

Commonly Asked Questions

Q: Will students be required to leave the country if their Extension of Stay (EOS) is not adjudicated before their fixed-AUD?

A: No. Students with a pending EOS application with USCIS should be able to remain in the U.S.

This also applies to students who have pending EOS and I-765 employment authorization applications with USCIS.

Commonly Asked Questions

Q: Are the post-completion OPT eligibility requirements or process for applying changing and how early can students apply?

A: The post-completion OPT eligibility and application process, including the timeline for applying, is not changing. Students can apply 90-days before their I-20 or DS-2019 program end date.

F-1 students with a fixed-AUD will be required to file an Extension of Stay (EOS) in addition to their I-765 employment authorization application. Both applications should be adjudicated at the same time by USCIS.

If a student with D/S files the OPT I-765 application before March 18, 2027, only the I-765 application is required. Students filing after March 18 will be required to file both the OPT I-765 and an EOS application. For more details, review Employment under the [student FAQs](#).



Questions?