

September 2026 Newsletter

International Student & Scholar Services



Topics covered in this month's newsletter

- DHS Rule Ending Duration of Status (D/S)
- Important CPT Changes
- International Travel updates
- Applying for OPT
- Immigration advising

DHS Rule Ending Duration of Status (D/S)

On July 17, 2026, the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) published a 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" that will fundamentally change how F and J visa holders (students and exchange visitors) are admitted to and maintain status in the U.S. **The rule is scheduled to take effect on September 15, 2026.**

You should have received an email from Homebase to enroll in a module entitled "Change to Duration of Status." If you have not received this email and have already checked your spam and junk folders, please email iss@siue.edu immediately.

To do before September 15:

- Complete the "Change to Duration of Status" module in Homebase
- Check your I-20 program end date against your degree completion plan. If you think you'll need more time to complete your program, [apply with ISSS for an extension ASAP](#) and **before September 11.**
- Check your program of study and CIP code on your I-20. Is it accurate? If not, email iss@siue.edu to update your SEVIS record **before September 11.**
- Attend ISSS Open Advising hours on Tuesday from 9am – 11am, or email iss@siue.edu to schedule an appointment with your immigration advisor if you have any questions **after reviewing the module in Homebase.**

Please also review this helpful resource:

[Study in the States FAQs](#)

Important CPT Changes

The Department of Homeland Security has communicated a new interpretation of Curricular Practical Training (CPT) regulations which states that international students may not receive CPT authorization for internships not required for their degree programs.

Therefore, ISSS is not able to authorize CPT unless a student's internship is absolutely required for graduation.

Curricular practical training is defined as alternative work/study, internship, cooperative education or any other type of required internship or practicum that is offered by sponsoring employers through cooperative agreements with the school.

FAQs

- **What if my program has an elective internship course that's not required for graduation but offers credit towards program completion?**

If the internship course is an option but not a requirement, you may not pursue an internship.

- **How do I know if an internship is required for my program?**

Please inquire with your Academic Advisor or Graduate Program Director.

- **Does this apply for summer internships as well?**

Yes. Summer is not an exception to this rule.

The [ISSS website](#) reflects this updated policy. Please email iss@siue.edu with any additional questions.

International Travel Updates

Starting September 15, 2026, if you travel outside the U.S, you will lose the benefit of the new rule's transition period. Current transition benefits include:

- 60-day grace period (for F-1 students)
- If you are applying for OPT or a STEM OPT extension before March 18, 2027, you are not required to apply for an Extension of Stay through USCIS

After September 15, 2026, your I-94 will have an Admit Until Date (AUD) that will likely match the program end date on your I-20 or work authorization date if you are on OPT or STEM OPT, plus a 30-day grace period. After returning to the U.S., please check your I-94 record to make sure all information is correct.

Before departing the U.S., make sure you have a valid travel signature (within 6 months) from an international advisor on your I-20 (F-1 students) or DS-2019 (J-1 students). Please submit a **Travel Signature Request** a couple of weeks before you travel. Check the ISSS website for a full list of documents to carry with you when you travel.

Applying for OPT

If you are graduating this semester and plan to apply for OPT, please [see our website](#) for more information. The earliest day to apply is September 21, 2026, and before applying, students must complete the [Online OPT Application Training](#).

Please note that students who remain in the U.S. under D/S and file for OPT or STEM OPT on or before March 18, 2027 may not need to file a separate Extension of Stay application. **This exception does not apply to students who travel and reenter the U.S. after September 15, 2026.**

Immigration Advising

We know there have been a lot of potentially confusing immigration changes lately, and we are here to help you navigate them! Open Advising Hours are Tuesdays from 9am – 11am. To make an appointment for another day and time, email iss@siue.edu.



Timanye Watson
International Student Advisor
Advises F-1 students, last names A-M



Amy Nusser
Director
Advises F-1 students, last names N-Z
J-1 students

International Student and Scholar Services

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