

Elimination of Duration of Status for J Scholars

Overview

On Friday, July 17, 2026, DHS published in the Federal Register the 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.”](#) The rule is to take effect on September 15, 2026. This rule will change how F-1/F-2 and J-1/J-2 international students and scholars, and their families, are admitted to the U.S., as well as the process for extending their stay. It will eliminate the long-standing "duration of status" (D/S) policy for F and J nonimmigrants. It will replace the “duration of status” admission with a fixed I-94 end date and establish procedures for international students and J scholars to file extension applications with U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) to extend their status.

Key Provisions

- **Effective Date:** September 15, 2026.
- **Admission period:** J exchange visitors who travel to the United States on or after September 15, 2026, will be admitted for a fixed period not to exceed four years. Extending or transferring programs on or after September 15, 2026, will require additional procedures. The additional procedures will involve filing an extension of status application with the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS), which will incur a filing fee, as well as international travel and re-entry.
- **Transition period:** Those currently in the U.S. on the effective date will also need to follow the same procedures to extend their status if their program is extended and/or transferred.

FAQ for J Scholars

When does this rule go into effect?

The 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”](#) was published on July 15, 2026, with an implementation date of 60 days from the date of publication. The rule will go into effect on September 15, 2026.

What is changing for J Scholars and J-2 family members?

This rule will change how F-1/F-2 and J-1/J-2 nonimmigrants are admitted to the U.S. and the process for extending their stay. It will eliminate the long-standing "duration of status" (D/S) policy for F- and J-nonimmigrants. Those entering the United States as F-1/F-2 international students and J-1/J-2 exchange visitors will be admitted for a fixed period of time as reflected by the “admit until date” on their Form I-94. The fixed end date will be limited to the end date of their Form I-20 or Form DS-2019, not to exceed 4 years, plus 30 days following their program end date. The rule establishes procedures for F international students and J exchange visitors to file extension applications with the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) to extend their status.

What is a nonimmigrant?

If not a U.S. citizen, every person entering the U.S. has either immigrant or nonimmigrant status. Immigrants are those who come to the United States permanently and are often referred to as permanent residents or green card holders. A nonimmigrant enters the U.S. on a temporary basis – whether for tourism, business, temporary work, or study. Once a person has entered the U.S. in nonimmigrant status, they are restricted to the activity or reason for which they were allowed entry and to how long they can remain in the U.S. Some nonimmigrants may have more than one visa in their passport, but they can only be admitted into the U.S. in one type of nonimmigrant status at a time, as reflected on their Form I-94.

What is an I-94?

When entering the United States as a nonimmigrant, the Customs and Border Protection (CBP) officer examines their passport and visa and, in most cases, issues an electronic Arrival/Departure document called the Form I-94. The I-94 determines how long a nonimmigrant is allowed to stay in the United States, proves that they arrived in the country legally, and confirms their current immigration status.

To access this record, nonimmigrants can visit [CBP's website](#). The electronic I-94 record should be printed and stored immediately after arrival, and every time a nonimmigrant enters the U.S. It is also recommended to save a digital copy. Should an international student or scholar notice a discrepancy on their I-94, they should contact Immigration Services.

What is an Admit Until Date (AUD)?

The “Admit Until Date” on Form I-94 determines how long a nonimmigrant is allowed to stay in the United States.

Previously, those entering the United States in F or J status have been admitted for “duration of status,” which is the period during which they maintain their status and engage in their program activities as listed on their Form I-20 or Form DS-2019.

Upon implementation of this rule, students and scholars who enter the United States will have a fixed “admit until date” on their Form I-94. Students and scholars will need to depart the United States by their “admit until date” unless they have filed an application to extend or change their status.

Does the U.S. entry visa stamp determine how long I can remain in the U.S.?

No, the U.S. entry visa does not determine how long an international visitor can remain in the United States. A visa allows a non-immigrant to travel to a U.S. port-of-entry (airport, for example) and present themselves to a U.S. Immigration Inspector. The Inspector will ask questions about their intent to come to the United States and verify that the non-immigrant has an appropriate visa. If admitted to the U.S., an I-94 Arrival/Departure Record will be created. This indicates which non-immigrant status they have been admitted under and how long they are allowed to stay.

Does this rule affect those already in the U.S. as a J-1 Scholar or J-2 dependent?

Yes. For those in the U.S. on the effective date of implementation, September 15th, 2026, the end date of their status will be converted to a fixed end date. This end date will correspond with the duration of their exchange visitor program as stated on the Form DS-2019, for a maximum period of 4 years, plus an additional 30-day grace period. Their I-94 will not be updated with this information, but it is the scholar’s responsibility to understand the new rule and when their period of stay expires. If the scholar travels internationally, they will then receive an updated I-94 upon re-entry with a fixed end date.

Does the rule affect J scholars with a program that will end prior to the effective date of September 15, 2026?

Scholars with programs that end on or before September 15, 2026, who will not be transferring or extending their program do not need to take any action. As before, they can depart within the 30-day grace period after their program end date.

Does the rule affect me if I'm a J scholar currently traveling internationally but will return prior to September 15, 2026?

If you return prior to September 15, 2026, you may be admitted for Duration of Status (D/S). Check your I-94 when you return to the U.S. to see whether you are admitted for D/S or have a fixed "Admit until date". If you return prior to September 15, 2026, and your "Admit until date" shows a date rather than "D/S," please contact Immigration Services and provide a copy of your Form I-94 and J visa stamp.

If you return prior to September 15, 2026, the end date of your status will be converted to a fixed end date on September 15, 2026. If you extend or transfer your program, you will need to follow additional procedures.

Does the rule affect me if I'm a J scholar currently traveling internationally but will return on or after September 15, 2026?

If you return to the U.S. on or after September 15, 2026, your I-94 will have a fixed "admit until date" when you return. It is expected that this end date will correspond with the duration of their exchange visitor program as stated on the Form DS-2019, for a maximum period of 4 years, plus an additional 30-day grace period. Check your I-94 when you return to the U.S. and notify Immigration Services if there are discrepancies or concerns about the "admit until date" on your Form I-94.

How do I extend my status one or after September 15, 2026?

Immigration Services will be providing additional guidance on filing an Extension of Stay application in the near future. The basic steps are listed below:

Step 1: The first step in the extension process still involves extending the J-1 appointment, so scholars should first discuss any plans to extend their program with their host faculty, hosting department, and/or human resources.

Step 2: After the appointment is extended, your host department submits a J-1 extension request to Immigration Services, which processes your extended Form DS-2019.

Step 3: Extending your J program on or after September 15, 2026, will require filing an extension of stay (EOS) application with USCIS (which includes filing fees) or traveling internationally and re-entering with a new fixed end date.

Do dependents need to extend their status as well?

Yes, J-2 dependents will also need to extend their stay. Immigration Services will provide additional guidance on filing Extension of Stay applications in the near future.

What happens to my 30-day grace period after my program?

J-1 exchange visitors will continue to receive a 30-day grace period following their program end date, intended to prepare for departure or otherwise seek to maintain status. These 30 days will be

reflected in the Admit Until Date as indicated on the I-94. If you enter the U.S. and your I-94 does not include this time, please contact Immigration Services.

Does the rule affect the process of transferring my J-1 scholar program to another school?

The rule does affect the process for transferring your J-1 program if the end date at your new school is after your current program end date, as reflected on the Form DS-2019. Because there are additional steps and timing considerations, consult Immigration Services early if you are considering transferring your J-1 program to another school.

Can I still engage in my program objectives and be paid while my Form I-539 is pending?

If you have filed a timely extension of stay application with USCIS, you are permitted to continue working up to 240 days after the original end date of your program. A timely filed application is one that has been received by USCIS during their authorized period of stay. J-1 scholars not receiving payment may continue their program activities until their extension of status application is adjudicated.

An exchange visitor who has a timely filed extension **on or before March 18, 2027**, is authorized to continue engaging in authorized employment activities and activities consistent with pursuing the terms and conditions of their program objectives, while the extension of stay application is pending until the end date on the Form DS-2019 with the pending application. This is a temporary provision related to the transition period for the rule.

I am planning to travel internationally in the future. How does this rule impact my international travel?

Every time a non-immigrant travels internationally, it is critical that they print and review their I-94 record upon return, and contact Immigration Services if there are errors or inconsistencies. Immigration Services also recommends keeping a digital copy of your I-94. Those traveling internationally and returning on or after September 15, 2026, will be admitted for a fixed duration, and the “Admit until date” on the I-94 will determine the date by which they must depart the U.S., unless an application to extend or change status has been filed.

Other Resources

NAFSA: Association of International Educators

- [Duration of Status Rule Web Page & Resources](#)
- [NAFSA Analysis](#)

Study in the States

- [Elimination of Duration of Status Quick Facts](#)
- [Elimination of Duration of Status Frequently Asked Questions](#)