

ORAL ROBERTS UNIVERSITY

Fixed Admission F-1 Student Quick Reference & FAQ

Fixed Admission Period Changes | Effective September 15, 2026

The Most Important Change

Beginning September 15, the federal government is changing how the period of authorized stay for F-1 students is managed. Instead of relying on Duration of Status (D/S), F-1 students will have a **fixed admission period** connected to their academic and immigration timeline.

How do I determine my Fixed Admission Period?

Under the new F-1 regulations, your authorized stay in the United States will be connected to a **fixed admission period** rather than simply continuing for as long as you remain enrolled.

You should regularly be aware of **three important pieces of information**:

- **Your I-94 Authorized Until Date** — This is the date associated with your authorized period of admission in the United States.
- **Your I-20 Program End Date** — This reflects the expected completion date of your academic program for immigration purposes.
- **Your ORU Expected Academic Completion Date** — This is when your academic degree plan indicates you should complete your ORU program.

Your academic timeline and immigration timeline need to stay aligned.

Do not assume that remaining enrolled at ORU automatically allows you to remain in the United States beyond your authorized stay.

YOUR RESPONSIBILITY: Know your immigration timeline and contact ISR before making academic, travel, employment, or other decisions that could affect your F-1 status.

What If I Need More Time? — USCIS Program Extension of Stay

If you are unable to complete your academic program within your authorized stay, **you may need to apply to USCIS for an Extension of Stay (EOS)**. An extension is not automatic, and USCIS—not ORU—makes the final decision. Students should begin working with ISR early; an extension application may generally be filed **up to six months before the authorized stay expires**. Most importantly, **do not wait until your expiration date is approaching to ask for help**.

An extension may be considered for qualifying circumstances such as:

- **Compelling academic reasons** or unexpected academic/research circumstances
- **Documented medical reasons**
- **Circumstances beyond the student's control**
- Other circumstances permitted under current USCIS guidance

Needing more time does not automatically mean you qualify for an extension. Contact ISR early so a DSO can review your situation and help determine the appropriate next steps

Four Things to Remember

1. **Know your dates.** Understand your I-20, I-94, and expected academic completion timeline.
2. **Stay academically on track.** Academic delays may have greater immigration consequences.
3. **Ask before you act.** Contact ISR before significant academic, transfer, employment, or travel decisions.
4. **Ask for help early.** Do not wait until your program end date or an immigration deadline is approaching.

When Should I Contact ISR?

- You think you may need additional time to graduate.
- You are struggling academically or have failed courses.
- You are considering changing your major or academic program.
- You are considering transferring.
- You want to drop, withdraw from, or significantly change your enrollment.
- Required courses or program sequencing may delay graduation.
- You are a graduate or doctoral student whose completion timeline has changed.
- You have questions about CPT, OPT, or STEM OPT.
- You are graduating soon and planning international travel.
- You are considering international travel and are unsure how it may affect your status.
- Your I-20, I-94, academic program, or other records appear incorrect.
- You are simply unsure whether a decision could affect your F-1 status.

WHEN IN DOUBT: ASK BEFORE YOU ACT.

Getting Help From ISR

START HERE: ISC@ORU.EDU

When emailing, please include:

- Full name
- Z-number
- Academic program
- Brief explanation of your question or concern
- Relevant deadline or upcoming travel date, if applicable

You do not need to know which DSO to contact. Our team will review your request and route it to the appropriate person.

F-1 Information & Discussion Session

Mondays at 11:00 a.m. | Location: Office of International Student Relations – LRC 2nd Floor

Use this session for general questions, additional explanation, and discussion of common F-1 topics. More complex or individualized immigration matters will be scheduled with the appropriate DSO by appointment.

EMAIL ISC@ORU.EDU -> MONDAY INFORMATION SESSION (when appropriate) -> INDIVIDUAL DSO APPOINTMENT (complex/personal cases)

Immigration procedures may continue to evolve as federal implementation guidance develops. Always use current ISR/DSO guidance for your individual situation.

Frequently Asked Questions

1. What is changing?

F-1 students will move from the previous Duration of Status framework to a fixed admission period. This makes it especially important to understand your immigration timeline and to involve ISR early when academic or other decisions could affect that timeline.

2. Does this mean every F-1 student has exactly four years to graduate?

No. The new framework generally limits an admission period to no more than four years, but individual circumstances and transition rules may differ. Do not assume another student's timeline is the same as yours. Contact ISR for review of your individual situation.

3. I am already studying at ORU. How does this affect me?

The new rule includes transition provisions for students already in the United States under D/S. Your situation may differ from a new student entering after September 15. ISR is reviewing current student records and will contact students who may need additional attention.

4. What is my I-94 and why is it important?

Your I-94 is an important record of your admission to the United States. Under the new framework, students need to pay close attention to their authorized period of stay. ISR can help you understand how your I-94 relates to your other immigration documents.

5. Is my visa expiration date the same as my authorized stay?

No. Your visa and your authorized period of stay are different. If you are unsure about the dates on your documents, contact ISR rather than making assumptions.

6. What if I need more time to finish my degree?

Contact ISR as soon as you believe additional time may be needed. Remaining enrolled does not automatically extend your authorized stay. An Extension of Stay filing with USCIS may be required depending on your situation.

7. Can I change my major or academic program?

A major or program change can have immigration implications. Contact ISR before finalizing the change so a DSO can review your situation.

8. What if I fail a class or fall behind academically?

Get academic help immediately and contact ISR if the issue could delay your expected graduation. Early communication gives you and ORU more time to evaluate available options.

9. Can I transfer to another university?

Transfer decisions can have immigration consequences under the new framework. Contact ISR before making or finalizing transfer plans.

10. Can I travel internationally?

Travel can affect how immigration rules apply to your individual situation. Speak with ISR before international travel, especially if you are approaching graduation, planning OPT, have a pending filing, or have questions about your authorized stay.

11. I am graduating and planning OPT. What should I know?

Seniors and other students preparing for OPT should plan early with ISR. Travel, filing timelines, program completion, and your immigration record may interact differently under the new framework. Contact ISR before making travel or filing decisions.

12. What about CPT, OPT, or STEM OPT?

These benefits remain immigration-sensitive and require careful timing and eligibility review. Use ISR for current guidance and do not rely on another student's experience as a substitute for advice about your case.

13. What happens after I complete my degree?

Your options and departure/grace-period rules depend on your individual situation, including whether you remain in the United States, pursue authorized practical training, or travel. Contact ISR before making plans based on assumptions about the prior D/S system.

14. What if something on my I-20, I-94, or academic record looks wrong?

Contact ISR promptly. Include a description of what appears incorrect and, when appropriate, copies or screenshots of the relevant record so the team can review it.

15. Who should I contact when I have questions?

Start with ISC@ORU.EDU. You do not need to decide which DSO should receive your question. Our team will review your request and route it to the appropriate person.