

Dear Incoming LSU International Students,

Welcome to Louisiana State University! As you pack your bags and prepare to join our campus community next month, we want to share a critical update regarding U.S. immigration policy that directly impacts your upcoming journey.

On Friday, July 17, 2026, the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) published a final rule that officially eliminates the long-standing Duration of Status (D/S) framework for F-1 and J-1 visa holders. This major policy shift transitions student admissions from an open-ended stay based on academic progress to a fixed, restricted timeline. The new regulation is scheduled to take effect on September 15, 2026.

Because you are arriving next month – during the 60-day implementation window before the law takes full effect – DHS explicitly classifies you as part of the "transition students" cohort. This means your immigration journey will experience a unique legal bridge. When you pass through U.S. Customs next month, you will still be admitted under the traditional Duration of Status framework, and your initial Form I-94 arrival record will note D/S. However, once the rule officially goes live on September 15, your stay will automatically become bounded by the new policy restrictions. Under these transition rules, your lawful period of admission will be tied directly to the program end date listed on your Form I-20 or DS-2019, capped at a maximum of four years.

This policy change introduces a few stricter compliance measures that we will navigate together throughout your time as a Tiger. If your academic program takes longer than four years to complete, or if you eventually apply for post-completion employment authorization, you will be required to file a formal extension application and submit biometrics directly with U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS). Additionally, the new rule reduces the post-completion grace period from 60 days to 30 days, and it introduces tighter restrictions if you choose to change your major or transfer schools in the future.

Please rest assured that these regulatory updates do not change your current travel plans, visa appointments, or your admission to LSU. We are sharing this now because we believe in transparency, and we want you to feel fully informed from day one. Our team at LSU International Student Services (ISS) is reviewing the fine details of this policy, and we will host dedicated narrative and Q&A sessions during your International Student Orientation next month to guide you through every step.

Travel safely, and we look forward to welcoming you to Baton Rouge very soon!

Sincerely,

Samba Dieng