

F-1 GRADUATE GUIDE

What can I do Next?



Completing your Course of Study

If fewer classes are needed to complete your course of study, you may be able to reduce the number of credits taken in your final quarter.

- Meet an Academic Advisor for a degree audit and authorize Reduced Course Load
- Submit an application for a degree or certificate to the College Credential Evaluator in the 5000 building

Online Course in your Final Quarter

If you only need one class to complete your program of study, the class cannot be online.

- You must take the class on campus

If the class is **ONLY** offered online, what should I do?

- Transfer to a university if you are already accepted
- Withdraw from the college and complete the class in your home country
- Add at least one face-to-face class (Must be approved by an Academic Advisor)



I-20 Program End Date & Grace Period

Your I-20 program will be shortened to the grades available date.

- See your program end date: Academic Calendar
<https://www.shoreline.edu/calendars/academic.aspx>

Your 60-day grace period starts after your program end date.

What can I do during my Grace Period?

During your 60-day grace period, you can:

- **Transfer to another U.S. school**
- **Apply for OPT**
- **Apply for a new program at the same school**
- **Prepare to go home**
- **Apply for change of status (not common)**

Transfer to another U.S. School

Request Shoreline to transfer your SEVIS record to your new school. (This will allow the new school to issue an I-20 with the same SEVIS number.)

Eligibility:

- Your SEVIS record must be ACTIVE (if your SEVIS record is COMPLETED or TERMINATED, please contact your new school for your options)**
- You must start at a next available session AND the program starting date at the new school must be within five months from your program completion date**

How to Transfer my SEVIS Record?

Submit the Transfer-out Request form to Shoreline with a copy of your acceptance letter from the new school

- Your SEVIS record will be released to the new school
- May not be able to cancel your request once it is processed

Ask Shoreline to complete any transfer verification forms given to you by your new school

- This form provides your F-1 status information and is NOT a request to transfer your SEVIS record

Contact your new school to obtain an I-20 issued by your new school

Deadline - Transfer Out Request Form

DO NOT WAIT until the last minutes to submit your Transfer-out Request form.

Processing your transfer-out request form takes time.

- You must submit your Transfer Out Request before the end of your 60-day grace period
- If you missed the deadline for Transfer Out Request...
 - Your SEVIS record is COMPLETED (contact your new school for your options)

Travel after SEVIS Transfer to another U.S. School

Travel

- Within the U.S. – YES
- Outside of the U.S. – YES
 - You will return to the U.S. with a Transfer Pending I-20 issued by the new school

Optional Practical Training (OPT)

What is Optional Practical Training (OPT)?

- Work authorization related to your major area of study
- Approved by USCIS
- Post-completion OPT – maximum of 12 months
 - If you did pre-completion OPT, the length will be deducted.

Eligibility

- Enrolled at least one full academic year in a valid F-1 status
- Will complete program of study (degree, certificate)

Apply for OPT

When can I Apply?

- USCIS can accept your application between 90 days before your program completion date and 60 days after your program end date

Application deadline?

- Your application must be received by USCIS before the end of your 60-day grace period or within 30 days from the OPT recommendation date, whichever is earlier

Steps to Apply for OPT

Step 1: Pick up the OPT Handout and read it carefully

Step 2: Think about your OPT starting date and consider the following:

- **When do I want to start working?**
- **Can I find a job easily?**
- **Do I want to travel before OPT?**
- **When will I complete my application?**

Your request date may not be the same as your actual starting date and you cannot start working until you receive your EAD card. However, you can only choose your request starting date within your 60-day grace period.

Steps to Apply for OPT

Step 3

- Make an appointment with an F-1 Immigration Specialist
 - 1st appointment for OPT recommendation I-20
 - 2nd appointment for completing your application
- Mail your OPT application to USCIS
- Report to IE when you receive your Employment Authorization Document (EAD)
 - Will take approximately 3-5 months

Requirements:

- Employment must be related to major of study
- Must update your contact and employment information (by OPT Portal or submit the OPT Employment Information Form to F-1 Specialist)
- Cannot be unemployed more than 90 days total



Travel for OPT Students

Travel outside of the U.S.

- Before graduation
 - YES – make sure you have an updated travel signature
- After graduation but your application is still in pending status
 - Not recommended – may be risky
 - Must have receipt notice from USCIS
- After graduation and your application is approved
 - Must have EAD card
 - Have a job offer or employment verification
 - If you have no employment, travel is NOT recommended as you may be denied reentry



Start a new program at Shoreline

See your academic advisor and submit the I-20 Request form

- **Determine eligibility to study a new program**
- **Prepare your financial document**

New program starting date must be within five months from your program completion date.

If you travel outside of the U.S., you need to return with a new program I-20.

Preparing to Go Home

You must leave the U.S. on or before the end of your 60-day grace period

You can travel within the U.S. during your grace period. However, if you leave the U.S. (including a short trip to Canada and Mexico), you cannot reenter with your current Shoreline I-20 (program ended).

Unlawful Presence

Unlawful presence starts:

- **After 60-day grace period is over**
- **After you accumulate 90-day unemployment limit during OPT**

Plan to leave the U.S. before you accumulate any unlawful presence time as it may impact you for traveling to the U.S. and obtaining a visa in the future.

Questions?

Please see an F-1 Specialist if you have any questions.

Walk-in:

- **Monday – Thursday 10:30 – 11:30 am & 2:00-3:00 pm**

Appointment:

- **Contact the International Education front desk Room 9302**
- **Email at iefrontdesk@shoreline.edu**
- **Phone at 206-546-4697**