

US visa: DHS' proposal to limit student visas to fixed periods of stay under review

By [HT US Desk](#), International Students

Published on: Jul 02, 2025 12:29 am IST

A proposed DHS rule could replace the current flexible 'duration of status' with fixed visa tenures for international students

Advertisement

A controversial [visa rule](#) that could upend the stay of international students in the US is under review. The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) has proposed replacing the current flexible student visa system with a fixed period of stay for [students](#).



Donald Trump's administration seeks to change student visa tenure to fixed period

Advertisement

The decision has sparked concern among legal experts and educational institutions. The proposal has reportedly been sent to the Office of Management and Budget (OMB), a key step before publication in the Federal Register, per a TOI report.

Once published, a comment period usually follows. However, immigration experts warn that the [rule](#) may be rushed through as an interim final rule, making it immediately enforceable

What the new rule could mean?

Currently, international students are admitted for the “duration of status” - as long as they [maintain](#) full-time enrolment. Under the proposed change, students would receive visas with a fixed expiry date, forcing them to apply for extensions periodically.

“This will create unnecessary delays, financial burden and legal uncertainty. It will add months of processing for even routine extensions,” Rajiv S. Khanna, managing attorney at Immigration.com, told the outlet.

Mitch Wexler, Senior Counsel at Fragomen, explained that this change would also impact how “unlawful presence” is calculated. If a student stays beyond their visa’s expiry date, they could face serious immigration penalties - even without a formal ruling from USCIS or an immigration judge, per the outlet.

ALSO READ: [‘Those in US illegally or commit visa fraud will be held responsible’: Embassy in India](#)

Past proposals and current fears

The Trump administration introduced a similar rule in 2020, which never got final approval.

With Indian students making up the largest group of international students in the US, over 4.2 lakh in 2024, this policy could have major repercussions, per the outlet. Overstaying is often cited as a reason for stricter rules, yet data shows the overstay rate for students and exchange visitors was just 3.6% in 2023.

Advertisement

What lies ahead?

The exact visa tenure will only become clear when the rule is published. Until then, international students, already dealing with sudden SEVIS terminations and revoked F-1 visas, are once again left in limbo.

Many in the academic world argue that change will do more harm than good, both to students and to the US education system.

FAQs

Q1. What is the proposed visa rule change for international students?

A1. DHS proposes replacing “duration of status” with a fixed period of stay, requiring regular extensions.

Q2. Has this rule been proposed before?

A2. Yes, a similar rule was introduced by the Trump administration in 2020, but wasn't finalised.

Q3. What happens if a student overstays under the new rule?

A3. Unlawful presence could begin after the visa's end date, potentially leading to long-term reentry bans.

Q4. How would this affect Indian students?

A4. With Indians being the largest group of international students in the US, the impact could be significant.