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Trump Administration Issues Final Rule to End Foreign Student Visa Abuse

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Student visa extensions are only available with rigorous vetting

WASHINGTON – Today, the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) announced the publication of a final rule that officially eliminates the “duration of status” loophole that allowed foreign students, exchange visitors, and media representatives to remain in the United States indefinitely without routine government oversight.

The new regulation establishes a fixed period of admission for nonimmigrant visa holders in F, J, and I classifications. This decisive shift restores integrity to the nation’s immigration system, combats rampant visa abuse, and strengthens national security through regular vetting. A fixed period of admission is currently in place for many other types of nonimmigrant visas.

*“For nearly half a century, the outdated ‘duration of status’ system has compromised national security and created an environment ripe for immigration fraud,” said **DHS Secretary Markwayne Mullin**. “For decades, foreign students have been admitted into the U.S. indefinitely, allowing thousands to abuse our immigration system by perpetually enrolling in courses to avoid having to leave the U.S. By implementing clear, finite limits on these visas, the United States is reclaiming its ability to properly screen, vet, and monitor individuals within our borders. This final rule ensures that foreign students remain focused on their primary purpose: completing their studies and returning home.”*

Since 1978, foreign students have been admitted into the U.S. for an unspecified period, enabling thousands to become “forever students” by perpetually enrolling in courses to avoid departure. The final rule ends this exploitation through several major reforms:

- **Fixed Admission Caps:** Nonimmigrant students (F visas) and exchange visitors (J visas) will be admitted for the length of their specific program, not to exceed a maximum period of four years.
- **Mandatory Federal Extensions:** Visa holders requiring additional time to complete an academic program must formally apply for an Extension of Stay (EOS) directly through U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS). This transitions oversight from university staff back to federal authorities and subjects applicants to biometric vetting, background checks, and fraud screenings.
- **Reduced Departure Grace Period:** The time allowed for F-1 students to prepare for departure, transfer schools, or change status following graduation is reduced from 60 days to 30 days.
- **Program Change Restrictions:** The rule introduces strict limitations on academic changes.

The final rule will publish in the Federal Register in the next few days. The rule will go into effect 60 days after publication in the Federal Register.

Current nonimmigrant visa holders residing in the United States under the previous “duration of status” framework will transition to the new system automatically, with their authorized stay capped at a maximum of four years from the effective date of this rule.

The Student and Exchange Visitor Program (SEVP) acts as the bridge between the federal government and the international student community. SEVP is managed by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement, a component of the Department of Homeland Security. On behalf of DHS, SEVP manages schools, nonimmigrant students in the F and M visa classifications, and their dependents. SEVP uses the Student and Exchange Visitor Information System to track and monitor schools, exchange visitor programs, and international students while they visit the United States and participate in the U.S. education system.

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