

Business News / Immigration / Indian Students On CPT Now At Risk Of Losing Status Over School's Mistake - Attorney Explains SEVP Crackdown

ADVERTISEMENT

Indian students on CPT now at risk of losing status over school's mistake – Attorney explains SEVP crackdown

Indian students in the US face stricter scrutiny on Curricular Practical Training (CPT) due to SEVP's compliance warnings, risking university sanctions and personal immigration issues amid tightening visa regulations.

Written by [Aditi](#)

Updated: August 20, 2026 07:48 IST



US tightens scrutiny on CPT work permits- What it means for Indian students



Indian students in the US, the largest group of international students, are encountering new challenges regarding Curricular Practical Training (CPT), a work-study option used for gaining practical experience and a pathway to [H-1B visas](#), amidst tightening visa and work authorization regulations.

The latest concern comes from the Student and Exchange Visitor Program (SEVP), which sent a Broadcast Message (BCM 2608-01) to Designated School Officials (DSOs) across the US on August 12.

The message reminded colleges and universities that CPT must be a genuine part of a student's academic programme. It cannot simply be used as a way to get a job.

SEVP said it has seen an increase in [CPT](#) approvals that do not meet the required rules. It warned that schools found misusing the programme could face investigations and even lose their SEVP certification. Officials who approve such CPTs could also face legal consequences.

ADVERTISEMENT

RELATED NEWS

US F-1 Visa New Rule: Complaint filed against DHS over four-year stay limit for international students



Tougher Green Card scrutiny ahead: USCIS 'public charge' rule puts applicants' finances, health under scanner



US to lose \$3.4 bn, 40,000 jobs as foreign student numbers fall; Indian enrolment hits 29-month low



Indian students on CPT now at risk of losing status over school's mistake – Attorney explains SEVP crackdown



US reverses 14-year-old immigration rule: Travel abroad could now trigger 3- or 10-year bar



ADVERTISEMENT

US announces new immigration terms without any grace period for old editions

No new rule, but the warning is serious

On paper, the SEVP message does not change the existing CPT rules, said immigration attorney Rajiv S. Khanna of Immigration.com, speaking to Financial Express.

STORIES YOU MAY LIKE

SBI changes FD rates, savings account charges: What customers need to know

Piyush Goyal, Yogi Adityanath meet Japanese delegation as Uttar Pradesh aims for trillion-dollar economy

One Indian bank in global Top 5? The climb is steep

"The document itself settles this," Khanna said, pointing to the standard SEVP disclaimer, which says the broadcast "is not itself a rule or a final action" and cannot be used to create an enforceable right or benefit.

According to Khanna, the existing regulation that defines CPT and allows Day 1 CPT for certain graduate programmes has not changed.

The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) cannot simply change those rules through a broadcast message, he said. Any major change would require formal rulemaking, similar to the process used for the new duration-of-status rule that takes effect on September 15.

ADVERTISEMENT

But Khanna said students should not assume that the message is harmless just because it is not a new rule. "What makes this more than paperwork is the tone," he said.

SEVP's warning about increasing violations, its reminder that DSOs certify CPT approvals under penalty of perjury, and its public fraud tip line all point to a much tougher approach.

Khanna described it as "a compliance reminder with real teeth".

In other words, the rules may not have changed on paper, but colleges could become much more careful about approving CPT applications.

ALSO READ

UK universities offer up to £8,000 tuition discounts as Indian, foreign enrolments fall

According to the official Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) website, students on F-type visas have two options of engaging in practical training during their program or after it ends in the US.

ADVERTISEMENT

**Govt unveils drive to clear port congestion**

Business 1 hr ago

CBIC launched a drive to clear long-pending containers at Indian ports till October 31. This will free up storage space, reduce logistics costs, and make more containers available for exporters. The West Asia conflict and operational constraints have worsened port...

[VIEW ALL SHORTS >](#)

STOCK ACTION

NSE

BSE

Nifty 50

Top Performing Indices

Top Gainers

Top

Index	Points	Change
Nifty Smallcap 50	10013.45 AD Ratio: 1.40	111.60 1.13%
Nifty Smallcap250 Momentum Quality 100	48993.95 AD Ratio: 1.15	444.20 0.91%
Nifty Smallcap 100	20014.50 AD Ratio: 1.26	173.05 0.87%
Nifty CPSE	6478.60 AD Ratio: 2.67	49.55 0.77%
Nifty Capital Markets	5437.90 AD Ratio: 4.00	38.00 0.70%

VIEW ALL

ADVERTISEMENT

Today's Commodity Rate

21 AUG,
2026

[VIEW GOLD RATE TRENDS >](#)

Applicants' designated school official may authorise them to enroll in CPT at the graduate level during their first semester if the program requires the experience. And so, the primary difference between it and OPT is that while Optional Practical Training can be completed before or after graduation, Curricular Practical Training must be done before graduation, as per Cleveland State University.

Those on CPT can work full-time or part-time. However, if you have completed 12 months or more of full-time CPT, you become ineligible for OPT.

OPT, on the other hand, can be applied for 12-month duration at each education level. Those enrolling for this programme must wait to start work until they receive their Employment Authorization Document (EAD) from USCIS and may ultimately only work 20 hours per week while school is in session.

ADVERTISEMENT

Why Indian students could face more pressure

The concern for Indian students is not accidental, Khanna said.

Indian nationals make up one of the biggest groups of F-1 students in the US. Many depend on the work-authorisation route of CPT, Optional Practical Training (OPT) and the STEM OPT extension to gain work experience and eventually try to move into the H-1B system.

That makes Indian students particularly exposed to any tougher scrutiny of practical training. However, Khanna said not every form of CPT is being treated the same way. There is a difference between CPT that is clearly part of a university's academic programme and the "elective course-credit model."

In the first model, practical training is already built into the curriculum. For example, a graduate programme may have an established internship or practical-training requirement that allows a student to take up a job from the beginning of the course.

ADVERTISEMENT

In the second model, a student first gets a job and then seeks college approval and enrolls in a course that gives academic credit for that work.

It is this second approach that SEVP's message appears to be targeting.

Khanna said this model has become common at some US institutions that cater heavily to international students, including Indian graduate students.

Hence, students could end up paying the price for decisions made by their universities. Many rely on colleges to approve CPT and may have already paid thousands in tuition before facing scrutiny over those approvals.

Students, meanwhile, should not rely only on verbal assurances from their colleges. They should keep copies of course requirements, internship details and their employer's job description. Any changes or pauses in CPT policy should also be confirmed in writing by the DSO. The concern is that a university's compliance problem could quickly turn into a personal immigration issue for students.

LATEST NEWS

Sensex, Nifty Today: GIFT Nifty signals positive start as US Treasury yields retreat from 19-year highs; Asia cheerful



Govt unveils drive to clear port congestion



Indian students on CPT now at risk of losing status over school's mistake – Attorney explains SEVP crackdown



UP, Japan seek to scale up green hydrogen tie-up



Siemens Energy, L&T to Hitachi: Jefferies' 7 'Buy'-rated power and T&D picks with 18% to 33% upside



ADVERTISEMENT

TRENDING TOPICS

DEFENCE STOCKS

GOLD RATE TODAY

SILVER RATE TODAY

AI STOCKS

MUTUAL FUNDS

SEMICONDUCTOR STOCKS

What happens if a university loses its SEVP certification?

One of the biggest concerns is what could happen if SEVP actually takes away a university's certification because of CPT violations.

According to the immigration attorney, this is not just a theoretical possibility. He pointed to the near-miss involving Harvard in 2025, when the university's certification was threatened but the situation was eventually stopped through court intervention.

If a school does lose its certification, international students enrolled there are given formal notice of their options. The usual route is to transfer their SEVIS record to another SEVP-certified school.

But that process can become complicated for students who are working under CPT or OPT. Their work authorisation is connected to the school that approved it. Once the SEVIS transfer takes effect, that authorisation ends.

ADVERTISEMENT

"Students maintaining status can generally start that transfer during the process, but any student on OPT or CPT loses that work authorization the moment the SEVIS transfer takes effect, since work authorization is tied to the school that granted it."

Students who fail to complete the transfer within the required period can fall out of status. The alternative is to seek reinstatement, but that is a discretionary process and there is no guarantee that it will be approved.

"Certification loss is a bureaucratic action for the institution," Khanna said, "and an immediate, personal immigration emergency for every international student on its rolls."

CPT is only one part of a much bigger crackdown

The US has already increased scrutiny of the international student-to-worker pipeline, with concerns also surrounding OPT.

ADVERTISEMENT

According to Khanna, his office has seen more Requests for Evidence (RFEs) and Notices of Intent to Deny (NOIDs) in OPT-related cases which they believe is part of USCIS using AI-based review tools more extensively.

ALSO READ

US launches crackdown on CPT for international students; Colleges face increased scrutiny

moving from the traditional random F-1B lottery to a wage-weighted selection system.

Another major change is also coming on September 15, when the DHS rule ending "duration of status" for F, J and I visa holders takes effect.

The change means F-1 students will, for the first time, have a fixed expiry date on their I-94 rather than automatically remaining in status for the duration of their approved academic programme.

Disclaimer: This article is intended for informational purposes only and is based on publicly available immigration guidance. Rules and deadlines are subject to change; readers should verify current requirements directly with USCIS or consult a qualified immigration attorney before making decisions based on this information. Financial Express is not responsible for any decisions made based on this information.

READ NEXT



India's GDP growth may be close to 7% in FY27: RBI's Poonam Gupta



TOPICS

[IMMIGRATION](#)[STUDY IN US](#)[US IMMIGRATION](#)

This article was first uploaded on August twenty, twenty twenty-six, at twenty-eight minutes past six in the morning.

© IE Online Media Services (P) Ltd