

US may limit student visas to fixed stay periods, proposal under review

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DHS proposes fixed visa periods for students, sparking concern among experts over legal consequences

Representational image

Washington: The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) has proposed a new order limiting the duration international student

visa holders can stay in the country. This new measure, now submitted to the Office of Management and Budget (OMB), marks a crucial step before the rule is officially published in the Federal Register, according to a report by the Times of India. This move will replace the current flexible policy for international students and exchange visitors with a fixed period of stay, forcing them to apply for extensions as needed.

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The exact time period is expected to be revealed once the order is officially published. International students remain uncertain as to the future of their education.

Adding to uncertainty in higher education

The new rule has raised the concern of educationists and legal experts, with immigration experts warning that the rule may be quickly implemented, overriding the conventional comment period.

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

Mitch Wexler, Senior Counsel at Fragomen, stated that the change would affect the interpretation of "unlawful presence." According to the media outlet, students who remain in the U.S. past their visa expiry could face harsh immigration consequences, even if there

is no official determination from U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) or an immigration court.

If implemented, the rule could significantly impact Indian students, who reportedly numbered 4.2 lakh in 2024.

The Trump administration had recently threatened to cut federal funds to Harvard for alleged antisemitic harassment, cutting back as much as \$3 billion grants and contracts.