


International Students Are Facing Deportation. Here's What to Know.

Since Donald Trump began his second term as president, his administration has pursued policies that are affecting international students on US campuses. As of April 24, 2025, federal officials have revoked the legal status of an estimated 1,800 students at more than 280 colleges and universities, according to *Inside Higher Ed*, placing them at immediate risk of detention or deportation. In many cases, Department of Homeland Security and State Department agents have withdrawn visas based on students' social media posts and participation in campus protests—often with little or no due process. The Trump administration states that these measures are necessary to curb campus antisemitism and safeguard national security. Critics, however, argue that revoking student visas is a politically motivated effort to suppress dissent. Here are key ways institutions can help at-risk students.

Provide accurate and timely legal information.

→ Establish a centralized resource center (physical and/or online) that provides clear, up-to-date guidance on visa regulations, work eligibility, and recent policy changes.

→ Host regular “know your rights” sessions in partnership with immigration attorneys and local legal aid groups.

 → Publish an official institutional statement outlining resources, contacts, and escalation protocols for emergencies related to international students.

Create emergency support funds.

→ Develop a designated emergency relief fund for affected students, which can cover:

- legal expenses
- temporary housing if a student loses campus access
- basic living expenses due to loss of work authorization

→ Publicize eligibility for the relief fund and ensure confidential application processes.



Protect student privacy and limit data sharing.

 → Audit all institutional systems for international students' status data and ensure compliance with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act.

→ Train registrars, IT staff, and faculty on confidentiality protocols.

→ Issue a formal policy that could include these guidelines for faculty and staff:

- Do not voluntarily share international student information with federal agencies without a subpoena or court order.
- Limit the collection of information about student legal status to essential administrative purposes only.

Expand access to legal assistance.

→ Establish agreements with local immigration law clinics or non-profit legal organizations to provide free or low-cost representation for students.

→ Create an institutional legal defense fund to cover emergency legal fees.



→ Advocate for state-level funding of legal services for students by working with associations such as NAFSA: Association of International Educators.

Establish rapid-response protocols.

→ Develop a clear chain of communication for incidents related to student deportations.

→ Train staff on institutional policies regarding federal enforcement on campus.

→ Form a crisis response team that includes representatives from:

- the office of general counsel
- student affairs
- campus security
- mental health services



Ensure academic flexibility.

→ Adopt emergency academic accommodations, such as:

- remote learning options
- flexible attendance policies
- extended withdrawal deadlines without penalty

→ Authorize faculty to exercise discretion in working with affected students.



Advocate publicly and politically.



→ Issue institutional statements affirming support for international students.

→ Join or strengthen participation in coalitions to oppose

federal actions against international students.

→ File amicus briefs and engage in lobbying efforts supporting international student protections.



Train faculty and staff.

→ Include guidance on supporting international students in new faculty orientation.

→ Incorporate relevant policy updates into annual professional development, including training faculty and staff to:

- Recognize distress linked to detention and deportation fears.
- Respond sensitively and refer students to campus resources. ¹⁶

