US to limit visa duration for students, journalists

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The United States Government has announced plans to shorten the validity period of visas issued to international students and foreign journalists.  
  
  
  
According to the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), the proposed rule would cap F visas, which allow foreign students to study in the U.S, at a maximum of four years.  
  
At present, student visas typically cover the full duration of an academic program, which can run beyond five years for doctoral candidates.  
  
  
  
For international media professionals, visa validity would be limited to 240 days with the option of a single extension for another 240 days.  
  
However, journalists’ visas would not be permitted to exceed the length of their assignments.  
  
Any request for an extension would require applications through U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS), subjecting applicants to additional security checks.  
  
Previously, journalists from countries such as Germany have been granted visas lasting up to five years.  
  
“For too long, past administrations have allowed foreign students and other visa holders to remain in the U.S. virtually indefinitely,” DHS stated. “This practice poses security risks and financial burdens, and may disadvantage U.S. citizens.”  
  
The department noted that the changes were designed to curb visa abuse and strengthen oversight.  
  
However, the proposal has already sparked backlash from the U.S. higher education sector.  
  
Miriam Feldblum, president and CEO of the Presidents’ Alliance on Higher Education and Immigration, criticised the plan, warning it would create new challenges for both students and universities.  
  
“The rule would force international students and scholars to regularly submit additional applications, disrupting their studies and straining university operations,” Feldblum said. She further cautioned that the uncertainty could discourage international talent from pursuing education and research opportunities in the U.S.