

Trump administration enhances social media vetting for student visa applicants

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Published June 18, 2025, 11:20 p.m. ET

Student visa applicants will need to set their social media accounts to public as part of the Trump administration's [enhanced vetting of foreign nationals](#) seeking to study in the US.

The [accounts will be scrutinized](#) for “any indications of hostility towards the citizens, culture, government, institutions or founding principles of the United States,” according to a diplomatic cable sent by the State Department to embassies and consulates Wednesday.

The cable, obtained by [multiple outlets](#), further instructs diplomatic officials to look for any “advocacy for, aid or support for foreign terrorists and other threats to US national security” and “support for unlawful antisemitic harassment or violence” in student visa applicants’ online presence.

“For example, during an online presence search, you might discover on social media that an applicant endorsed Hamas or its activities,” the cable states.

The memo defines “online presence” as more than an applicant’s postings on platforms such as Facebook and X, and urges screeners to search online databases like LexisNexis to vet potential visa holders.

Consular officers are asked to flag applicants who “demonstrate a history of political activism” and take “detailed case notes” during the [vetting process](#), including by taking “screenshots to preserve the record against possible later alteration or loss of the information.”

The enhanced vetting will apply to both new and returning student visa applicants.

The cable notes that specific findings during the vetting process would not necessarily deem an applicant ineligible for visa, but that they might trigger additional review.

The State Department did not immediately respond to The Post's request for comment.

The cable was sent as the Trump administration prepares to restart consular appointments for student and exchange visitor visa applicants, which were halted last month.

The cable asks diplomats to prioritize interviewing physicians applying for J-1 exchange visitor visas and students seeking to study at universities “where international students constitute 15 percent or less of the total student population.”