UNM Faculty Senate

International Students in a Changing Policy Landscape

What has changed since January 2025



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Numbers & Economic Impact

NATIONALLY

Contributed to the U.S. economy by international students, 2024–25

U.S. jobs supported, 2024–25

17% Decline in new international student enrollment, Fall 2025



National figures: NAFSA / JB International economic analysis (Nov. 2025); IIE Fall 2025 Snapshot. New Mexico: fill in from the NAFSA Economic Value Tool.

State Facts and Figures 2025

New Mexico

opendoors®

INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS, 2024/25

2,943
International Students

42
Rank in the United States*

5.7
% Change from Previous Year

$84,520,839
Estimated International Student Expenditure**

LEADING PLACES OF ORIGIN

Place of Origin	% Total
India	12.4
Mexico	11.4
Nepal	7.8
China	6
Bangladesh	5.3

LEADING INSTITUTIONS

Institution	Total
University of New Mexico - Albuquerque	1,393
New Mexico State University - Las Cruces	833
Eastern New Mexico University - Portales	131
Western New Mexico University	84
New Mexico Military Institute	64

5% decline in international enrollment at UNM between Fall 2024 to Fall 2026

International Student & Scholars Add Value to UNM:



Foster global perspectives in our classrooms and co-curricular learning spaces



Work in our labs and help drive research innovation



Help strengthening academic and diplomatic ties with partner nations



Enhance our global network and brand

Population Stress and Concern

International students are living with constant uncertainty.



Fear for their status

Worry that a record can be canceled with little or no warning



Afraid to travel

Uncertainty about leaving the U.S. and being able to re-enter



Uncertain future

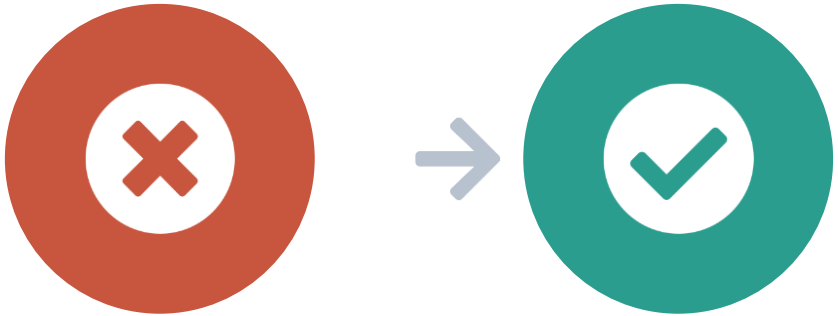
Work options after graduation are in question

SINCE JANUARY 2025

Changes and actions since the Administration took office

1. Immigration status cancellations & reinstatements
2. Changes in visa processing
3. Expanded travel bans
4. Termination of temporary protected status
5. New Rule with Four-year admission limit and Program Restrictions
6. CPT reinterpretation
7. OPT fee proposed rule
8. Processing gridlock

Status Cancellations and Reinstatements



Status canceled **Then reinstated**

No documented reason, or for minor infractions, like a speeding ticket.

Students experience the full disruption and fear of a cancellation, even when it is later reversed.

Changes in Visa Processing

No third-country applications

Students can no longer apply in a third country

Interviews for renewals

Personal interviews now required even for visa renewals

Social media checks

All applicants must report every account and make them public

Consulate closures

Primarily in Africa, making access more difficult

Fewer State Dept. staff

Reduced personnel makes visa wait times even longer

Expanded Travel Bans

39 countries, mostly in the Global South, now under travel bans



Now more than visa bans:

- Processing holds on applications for students from these countries
- Includes work permission, change of status, and adjustment of status

Termination of Temporary Protected Status

A temporary U.S. immigration benefit administered by U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services.

It grants protection from deportation and work authorization to foreign nationals already living in the U.S. who cannot safely return to their home countries due to armed conflict, natural disasters, or other extraordinary crise.

- TPS for 13 (of 17) countries was recently terminated (or allowed to expire) affecting over 1 million people (including .

New Rule: Four-Year Admission Limit

Paused by Preliminary Injunction

For international students, research scholars, and foreign media representatives

A shortened time limit

- Initial admission capped at a maximum of 4 years
- Must leave and re-enter, or apply to USCIS for an extension they may not get

Program change restrictions

Undergraduates: no change of major in the first year

Graduates: no changes until the current program is complete

Everyone: no repeating a program at the same or a lower level

CPT: A Sudden Reinterpretation

Lawsuit filed

Curricular Practical Training

A broadcast message re-interprets decades-old policy on when schools can authorize internship work experience for international students.

- Issued without warning
- Paired with threats aimed at schools and their designated school officials
- No acknowledgment that it changes an interpretation in place for 30+ years

Proposed Rule on Optional Practical Training

$70,000

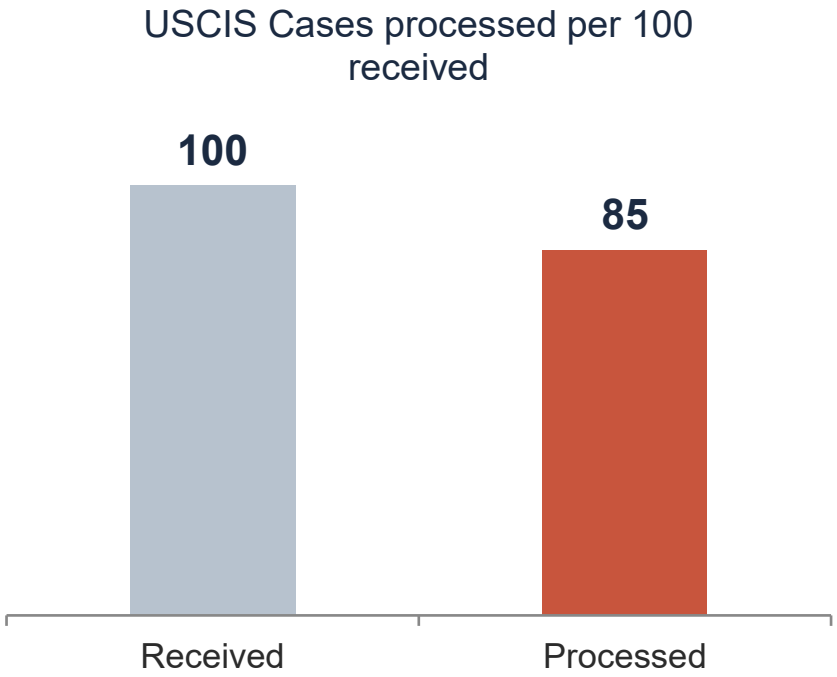
fee for an initial OPT application for each student paid by institution

OPT is post-completion work permission

It mirrors the H-1B executive order, which was struck down, then re-issued with a similar fee

Comment period for proposed rule is OPEN

Gridlock: Paying More, Waiting Longer



$2,000 Most premium processing fees

Missed promised time frames, even for premium cases

Rising filing fees, despite the slowdown

The Consequences Are Real

"Driving away the talents, perspectives, and aspirations of international students will only hurt American innovation, economic growth, workforce development, and global leadership."
-Fanta Aw, NAFSA CEO



Confusion and uncertainty



Applications are down, current students in limbo



Repercussions will continue even if decision are reversed


QUESTIONS