

# Letter of Objection for the DHS Proposal on Admission Period Structure for Nonimmigrants

Dear Attorney General Keith Ellison,

The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) recently announced a proposed change to the admission period structure for F, J, and I nonimmigrant visas ([found here](#)). Under the proposed rule, “F or J nonimmigrants would be admitted into the United States for a period ... not to exceed four years.” A typical mathematics PhD takes 5-6 years to complete, longer than the maximum proposed 2-4 year period proposed by DHS. This would (1) deter excellent candidates who are non-citizens from pursuing PhD programs in the United States, (2) prevent late-stage graduate students from returning home to see their families toward the end of their PhD programs, (3) disproportionately affect certain racial and ethnic groups, and (4) deprive the US economy from doctorate-level experts in its workforce in all fields.

International students at the University of Minnesota are invaluable to maintaining the level of academic excellence and diversity present in our institution. This proposed rule, which will deter international students from studying in Minnesota and elsewhere in the United States, will undermine the quality of research produced and education provided.

Many of our graduate teaching assistants in the Mathematics Department are international PhD students. With this new rule, international students and their dependents may only be allowed a stay of at most 4 years on F visas, so it might no longer be possible to have international students in our 6-year-long PhD program. With the inability to recruit highly talented candidates from other countries for our research programs, the competitiveness of our institutions will be compromised, damaging our standing as a world leader in scientific progress.

In addition, the proposed rule introduces the discriminatory practice of denying an admission period of four years to those from countries deemed to have high visa overstay rates. These countries are predominantly African and Asian. As it is currently written, students from these countries will not be able to obtain a 4-year Bachelor’s degree from any institution in the United States. This stipulation is needlessly exclusionary, and we value the contributions of our international students coming from these countries. We believe the policy is motivated in part by racism and xenophobia for multiple reasons. First, this administration has a history of immigration policies that [appear to have these motivations](#). Second, the policy affects a very broad set of

individuals, most of whom do not overstay their visas, and in severe ways that go beyond limiting visa overstay.

Finally, these proposed changes have caused panic and uncertainty among our current international students. Between this most recent proposal, along with other [proposed changes](#) which were overturned earlier this summer, our international students are justifiably filled with worry and concern for their academic futures. These repeated attempts to undermine the success of our international students, and consequently of our graduate and undergraduate programs, are unacceptable to the department.

We, the undersigned, respectfully request your action to halt the proposed rule change and guarantee opportunity for graduate studies in the US for foreign students.

Sincerely,

***Please add your name and university affiliation; if you are an undergraduate, graduate student, faculty, staff member, community member, alumni, and/or a group, please sign in the appropriate section below.***

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9. Carolyn Stephen, School of Mathematics, CSE
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**Alumni:**

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