



ISSUE BRIEF

Immigration Policy Principles

The U.S. is engaged in global competition for talent to meet the knowledge and skill demands required in the 21st century workplace. Many countries see graduate education as a key component to their economic growth and have established immigration policies that encourage rather than discourage, highly qualified international students to enroll in their graduate education programs. With this growing international competition for talented graduate students, immigration policies should not make it more difficult for international students to participate in U.S. graduate education programs. Further, these policies should increase the likelihood that they can remain in the U.S. upon graduation. We cannot afford to lose our place in the global marketplace as a producer of, and magnet for, the world's top talent.

To maintain our competitive ability to attract talented international graduate students and retain them once they have completed their course of study, CGS recommends the following immigration policy principles:

Extend dual intent to include nonimmigrant foreign students studying at the bachelor's level or higher, with no restrictions on the field of study.

Allow international students who obtain advanced degrees to qualify for immigrant visas so they may remain in the U.S. and work in jobs related to their fields of study. This would apply to:

- Individuals who have earned a doctoral degree from a U.S. institution of higher education;
- Individuals who have earned a master's degree in a Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) field from a U.S. institution of higher education.

Continue the use of Optional Practical Training (OPT) as a bridge between student visa status and H-1B visa status, for temporary employment directly related to the student's major area of study, which gives the student work experience and training, and the employer an opportunity to assess the student's abilities in the workforce.

Increase the number of H-1B visas available to graduate degree-holders and highly skilled workers to enhance U.S. leadership in an increasingly competitive global economy.

- Expand the number of H-1B visas from the current level of 65,000 per year.
- Increase the number of H-1B visas available per year to those who have earned a master's degree or higher in a STEM field from a U.S. institution of higher education.

Explore ways to renew academic visas efficiently, particularly with respect to the interview requirements, to minimize the interruption to student's academic progress.

Enact a permanent legislative solution that allows recipients of the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program to legally remain in the U.S. with a path to citizenship.