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This week in international student recruitment

1 message

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22 May 2025



Weekly Highlights

| Welcome to ICEF Monitor Weekly

It has been another fast-paced week in international education, and some of the world's leading study destinations continue to dominate the headlines.

The breaking news today is that the US government has suspended Harvard University's ability to enrol international students. The move will no doubt be subject to legal challenge, but for the moment it effectively revokes Harvard's Student and Exchange Visitor Program certification. It will also trigger a fresh wave of uncertainty for affected students, especially as the Department of Homeland Security is now advising current international students at Harvard to transfer in order to maintain their visa status in the US.

We have the latest on this story – and its wider implications for US higher education – in our feature item below.

Also this week: a look into New Zealand's peak visa processing window, a new trade pact between the UK and EU opens the door to an Erasmus+ reset, the US government increases its scrutiny of OPT students, and a special feature on the factors driving student recommendations and other findings from the latest edition of the International Student Barometer.

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| Breaking: Trump administration bars Harvard from enrolling international students

In an escalation of an ongoing dispute between the US administration and Harvard University, the Department of Homeland Security moved on 22 May 2025 to suspend the university's ability to enrol foreign students.

The university has been given 72 hours to comply with a sweeping records request from DHS in order to regain its certification for next year. Students are advised in the meantime to transfer to another university in order not to lose their legal status in the United States.

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| Plans afoot to stimulate UK-EU student mobility under new terms

Following a significant trade and defence deal struck last week with the EU, UK Prime Minister Keir Starmer has announced that negotiations are underway for a new UK-EU student mobility agreement.

The details aren't yet ironed out, with no word on whether European students will be privy to the lower tuition fees they enjoyed in the UK prior to Brexit. We do know, however, that the door is open for the UK to rejoin Erasmus+ under new terms.

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| **New Zealand enters peak visa processing window**

International students planning to begin studies in New Zealand in July or August this year are advised to apply for a student visa at least three months in advance.

Foreign enrolment in the country continues to grow steadily as New Zealand moves into the latter stages of recovery from the pandemic-era decline in international student numbers.

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| **US: Visa status of foreign graduates on OPT under renewed scrutiny**

Some foreign graduates in the US on post-study work placements have been advised they may be subject to removal unless they quickly update their employment status on file.

The move signals increased scrutiny of students on Optional Practical Training in the US.

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