

# Agents believe US 'no longer safe for international students'

Decline in perceptions of both the UK and US as welcoming destinations, but UK remains most attractive

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Most education agents think the US is no longer welcoming to international students as a result of the Trump administration's policies, a new survey has found.

In August and September, edtech company ApplyBoard polled (<https://www.applyboard.com/applyinsights-article/recruitment-partner-pulse-survey-fall-2025#f4>) approximately 400 recruitment professionals on student trends, identifying a shift in the perception of three of the "Big Four" anglophone markets this year.

Just 49.9 per cent of respondents agreed that the US was an open, safe and welcoming destination for overseas students (<https://www.timeshighereducation.com/news/us-travel-bans-would-hurt-reputation-among-students-survey-finds>). This was down from 73.9 per cent three months previously and 77.6 per cent last year.

Overall, 31 per cent of recruitment professionals had a neutral outlook on the US, while the remaining 19 per cent thought it was still safe.

ApplyBoard said several factors had probably contributed to this shift in perception (<https://www.timeshighereducation.com/news/us-universities-international-recruitment-back-se>), including the downsizing of the Department of Education, the revocation of hundreds of



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international student visas earlier this year, and pauses on new student visa application interviews (<https://www.timeshighereducation.com/news/overseas-students-vulnerable-years-if-social-media-vetted>).

The research, which polled agents in more than 40 countries, showed that the US was the top study destination last year – when 84 per cent of those surveyed said it was attractive for students they work with.

However, this proportion fell to 67 per cent in the most recent edition, meaning the UK and Canada are now viewed as more attractive.

The proportion who thought the UK was open, safe and welcoming to international students fell slightly from 88.1 per cent in the first quarter of the year to 86.9 per cent – although it remained the number one choice.

Canada improved significantly (<https://www.timeshighereducation.com/news/student-visa-refusals-hit-record-levels-canada>) from 79.3 per cent to 84.3 per cent over this period, while Australia rose slightly to 81.8 per cent.

The US also saw perceptions of value for money drop. A total of 54.1 per cent of respondents said it was affordable for international students, which was down from 66.5 per cent one year previously.

In contrast, this factor improved over the same period across all other major countries in the survey – Australia, Canada, Germany, Ireland and the UK.

Outside this group, ApplyBoard found that New Zealand was the most popular alternative destination among survey respondents, jumping up from third place.

A fifth of respondents said their students were interested in the “diverse study opportunities, laid-back culture, and beautiful cities and wild spaces that New Zealand has to offer”.

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