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Americans tend to view international students positively, though some support limitations

U.S. colleges and universities resumed classes this fall with fewer international students than in recent years, according to some early projections. In the 2023-24 academic year, the United States had more than 1.1 million international students at its higher education institutions – an all-time high.

These forecasts follow the Trump administration's temporary pause and subsequent redesign of the student visa interview process, as well as its efforts to deport some student activists, among other moves.

Most Americans (79%) think it's good for U.S. colleges and universities to accept international students. That includes majorities of both Republicans and Democrats, according to a Pew Research Center survey conducted Sept. 2-8.

Still, sizable shares support certain restrictions on foreign students:

- Half support limiting the number of Chinese students coming to the U.S.
- Around four-in-ten or more support limiting the number of students from India, Nigeria and South Korea.
- 42% say the U.S. should be able to cancel the visas of international students who have criticized U.S. foreign policy.

All of these views differ along partisan lines.

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Students attend a graduation ceremony at Harvard University in Cambridge, Massachusetts, on May 29, 2025, days after the Trump administration moved to bar Harvard from enrolling international students. (Selcuk Acar/Anadolu via Getty Images)