

# Trump's green card promise for foreign graduates: Policy shift or poll gimmick?

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Donald Trump's recent promise to grant Green Cards to foreign graduates in the US has generated significant buzz. This announcement, aimed at attracting the best and brightest from around the world, has implications that could reverberate across the globe, particularly in India. The US Embassy and its consulates in India have set a record by issuing over 140,000 student visas between October 2022 and September 2023. During this period, the Department of State issued a near-record level of nonimmigrant visas globally, surpassing 10 million.

The US already hosts the maximum number of universities for international students, and if this policy of granting Green Cards is implemented, the number will skyrocket. But is this promise a genuine policy shift, or just another political strategy?

Trump's promise to grant Green Cards to foreign graduates is likely to lead to a surge in applications from Indian students and other international students. The prospect of securing permanent residency in the US is an attractive incentive. For many students, the dream of studying in America is closely tied to the hope of building a life there. A Green Card would offer them stability, allowing them to plan their futures without the constant worry of visa renewals.

India, with its large number of students aspiring to study abroad, would see a significant impact. Educational consultancies and universities

could expect a spike in inquiries and applications. Students who might have considered other countries like Canada, Australia, or the UK could now prioritize the US, drawn by the potential for a more secure future.

## A Policy Shift or Political Strategy?

Ever since the promise has been made, it has raised questions about its sincerity. Is this a

real policy change, or is it a political gimmick designed to garner support in the upcoming elections? Trump's history and the complexity of US immigration policies suggest the latter.

The process for obtaining a Green Card in the US is notoriously stringent, with long waiting times and numerous hurdles. The promise of an easy path to a Green Card for foreign graduates seems overly optimistic, given the current bureaucratic landscape.

Moreover, Trump's previous stances on immigration have been far from welcoming. His administration's efforts to tighten immigration rules and reduce visa approvals have left many skeptical about this sudden change of heart.

## Impact on Global Education Landscape

If Trump's promise materializes shortly, the global education landscape could witness a significant shift. Countries like Canada, Australia, and the UK, which have been attracting international students with promises of post-study work opportunities and pathways to residency, might find themselves facing tougher competition from the US.

For students, the decision of where to study involves weighing various factors, including the quality of education, cultural environment, and potential for long-term residency. The US offering a more straightforward path to a Green Card would undoubtedly make it a more attractive destination. This could lead to a redistribution of international student flows, with more students opting for American universities over other popular destinations.

In countries competing with the US for international students, universities might have to rethink their strategies.

They could increase scholarships, enhance support services for international students, or even lobby for more favourable immigration policies to maintain their appeal. The promise of a Green Card in the US could set off a chain reaction, prompting other countries to adjust their policies to remain competitive.

## The Real Impact

While the promise of Green Cards for foreign graduates has the potential to be a game-changer, its real impact will depend on the implementation. If the US can streamline its Green Card process and make it accessible to international graduates, it could attract top talent from around the world. This, in turn, would benefit American industries and contribute to the country's economic growth.

However, if this promise remains unfulfilled or entangled in bureaucratic red tape, it could be dismissed as yet another empty political promise. Students and their families invest significant time, money, and hope into their education abroad. A clear and reliable path to residency would offer them much-needed assurance and help them make informed decisions about their futures.

For now, the promise remains a tantalizing prospect, one that could either pave the way for new opportunities or fade away as just another political pledge.

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