

At least 49 international students at Ohio colleges have had visas revoked

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Cleveland.com

COLUMBUS, Ohio - The visas of at least 49 international students studying at Ohio colleges and recent alumni have been revoked, according to the schools and a tally from Inside Higher Ed.

Inside Higher Ed, an online publication, [has tracked visa revocations](#) in Ohio and across the United States, relying primarily on local media reports. It estimates the U.S. State Department has changed the legal status of 1,200 students from 180 institutions nationwide.

In Ohio, the exact number of international students being kicked out of the country could be higher because some schools haven't revealed the exact figure. The total number is at least 49. The students attended 12 colleges and universities.

While Inside Higher Ed had specifics from many universities, some did not provide precise numbers.

The following is the breakdown:

- Youngstown State University: 14
- Ohio State University: 12
- Case Western Reserve University: 4
- Kent State University: 4
- Walsh University in North Canton: 4
- University of Akron: 3
- University of Findlay: 3
- Bowling Green State University: 1

-Cleveland State University: At least 1

-University of Cincinnati: "A small number"

-University of Toledo: "A small number"

-Xavier University: At least 1

Cleveland.com/The Plain Dealer reached out to spokespeople at the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, asking whether there is anyone missing from the tally and why the students lost their visas.

"This revocation of status makes it illegal for any student to remain studying or working in the United States," said Case President Eric Kaler, [in a Monday letter](#) to the university community.

Kaler advised international students, faculty, staff and post-doctorate researchers to avoid travel outside the U.S. and to carry evidence at all times of valid immigration status, such as passports, visa stamps and permanent residence cards.

University of Akron spokeswoman Christine Boyd told Cleveland.com/The Plain Dealer that the university "did not receive any advance notification from the government." Other Ohio colleges said the same.

Many schools are regularly checking the federal Student and Exchange Visitor Information System database for revoked student visas.

"Wednesday of last week, the University discovered at least one student had their SEVIS record terminated (we are not able to specify the number of terminations or provide other specifics due to student privacy regulations, and Xavier has received no cause for termination from the federal government)," said David Hamilton, Xavier's spokesman, in an email. "Leading up to then, Xavier's Center for International Education had been monitoring the SEVIS database for any changes that could impact Xavier students' visa status."

Xavier's International Student and Scholar Services office conducted outreach and will continue to help international students, he added.

Youngstown State discovered 14 international students and alumni had visas revoked when their records in the database were canceled, spokeswoman Rebecca Rose said.

“The (International Programs Office) has been working with the affected students and providing guidance to others. We continue to encourage our international students to follow all immigration laws. We have reached out to our elected officials and federal agencies to request guidance to assist them going forward,” she said.

In other states, the students who have had immigration trouble were members of Islam or [from the Middle East, Asia or North Africa](#). The administration of President Donald Trump said it’s targeting anti-Semitic actions; critics say non-white people are the target.

CAIR-Ohio, the state affiliate of the Council on American-Islamic Relations, on April 3 [condemned the arrest](#) of a University of Cincinnati student for allegedly waving the Palestinian flag. It’s unclear whether the student was a non-citizen with a visa.

The Cincinnati Enquirer reported at the time that police said the student was arrested for impeding a demonstration by preachers carrying signs with phrases such as “Muslims are terrorists.” Police said they tried to stop the man from interfering with the protest and arrested him when he resisted, [according to the Enquirer](#).

“We unequivocally condemn the arrest of student activists and the alleged attack on free speech and academic freedom,” said Khalid Turaani, executive director of CAIR-Ohio, based in suburban Columbus.

The University of Cincinnati didn’t return a message from [cleveland.com/The Plain Dealer](#) about a total number of students whose visas have been revoked.

University of Cincinnati President Neville Pinto wrote in [an April 3 letter to the campus community](#) that a small number of international students’ visas were revoked. He said that the authorities never notified the school or provided reasons why.

“I recognize this is deeply alarming news, and especially for members of our international community who are here to enrich their learning, grow their career and support their family. Please know that our university values you and your contributions to UC,” Pinto wrote.

Kent State President Todd Diacon also sent its community a letter on April 4, saying of the four visas revoked, one was an international student and three were recent graduates with post-graduate work permits under the Optional Practical Training program, in which the feds [permit up to 12 months of employment](#) in a student’s area of study before or after finishing their degree.

“Our colleagues at several other Ohio universities are reporting similar occurrences,” Diacon wrote. “We are working to connect with each of these individuals to ensure they are aware of this change in their status. Kent State was not given advanced notice nor specific reasons for these decisions.”

Four students with revoked visas at Walsh University, a Catholic school outside Canton, are no longer on campus, spokeswoman Teresa Fox said.

“The timing is particularly unfortunate with only three weeks remaining in the school year, however we are assisting these students with being able to complete their coursework remotely in order to finish out the year,” she said.

At OSU, where 12 students’ visas have been revoked as of last Friday, the school, the students and their attorneys are considering next steps, OSU spokesman Chris Booker said.

“At any given time, we have students all over the world,” Booker said.