



Ministry of External Affairs
Government of India

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QUESTION NO.2261 RELAXING VISA RULES BY UK AND USA FOR INDIAN STUDENTS

March 15, 2018

RAJYA SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO.2261
TO BE ANSWERED ON 15.03.2018

RELAXING VISA RULES BY UK AND USA FOR INDIAN STUDENTS

2261. DR. T. SUBBARAMI REDDY:

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the number of Indian students studying in United Kingdom and United States of America has decreased in recent years and if so, the details thereof;

(b) whether Government has taken up the issue to relax stringent visa rules by UK and USA for Indian students and to refine post-study work visa scheme; and

(c) if so, the details thereof?

ANSWER
THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
[GEN. (DR) V.K. SINGH (RETD)]

(a) With regard to UK: As per the official UK figures (from Higher Education Statistics Agency), the number of Indian students decreased by more than 60% from 2010-11 (40,890) to 2015-16 (14,830). This trend is gradually reversing. In 2016-17, the number of Indian students undergoing higher education in the UK increased to 16,550 (11.5 % increase).

With regard to USA: As per the official USA figures (from Department of Homeland Security), as per the chart below, the number of Indian students studying in USA has been on the rise.

Year	Number of Indian Students in	Percentage	Annual
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	USA	Increase
As on October 31, 2014	1,34,292	-
As on Dec 31, 2015	1,81,051	34.8%
As on Nov 30, 2016	2,06,584	14.1%
As on December 2017 (latest available data)	2,12,228	2.7%

(b) & (c) Yes. With regard to UK: The Government of India continues to convey concerns to the British Government on the changes in the visa rules in the UK that have had an impact on Indian students and skilled professionals. It has also proposed to the UK side that options could be explored to refine the post-study work visa. This is under consideration and has been raised during all the bilateral interactions held with the UK Government on visas.

With regard to USA: From time to time, in different bi-lateral discussions and exchanges the Government has emphasised on the need for easier visa procedures to facilitate the study of Indian students in USA. As of now, there is no change in the existing Optional Practical Training (OPT) program for foreign students and the extension to the OPT for foreign nationals holding US degrees in STEM fields continues to be 24 months. However, the Department of Homeland Security of the US, in its semi-annual regulatory agenda issued on 14 December, 2017 had indicated that the US administration proposes to pursue plans which, inter-alia, included updation of F-1 OPT program for foreign students.



Working hours at Headquarters 9:00 A.M. To 5:30 P.M.