

Between Borders and Bureaucracy: Immigration Updates Every Campus Partner Should Know

Navigating federal policy shifts in F-1, J-1, and H-1B regulations to protect compliance, operational continuity, and international community success.

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Briefing Roadmap: Legal Landscape & Campus Impact

Key regulatory focal points and administrative actions required for UNC Charlotte faculty and staff.



1. F-1 / J-1 VISA STATUS

Federal Litigation

Court stays, injunctions, fixed-period rules, status maintenance and travel protocols.



2. ACADEMIC INTEGRATION

SEVP CPT Strict Standards

Mandatory catalog alignment. Elimination of elective CPT approvals.



3. FINANCIAL EXPOSURE

Proposed DHS OPT Fees

Evaluating institutional liability and advocacy timeline for \$70k fees.

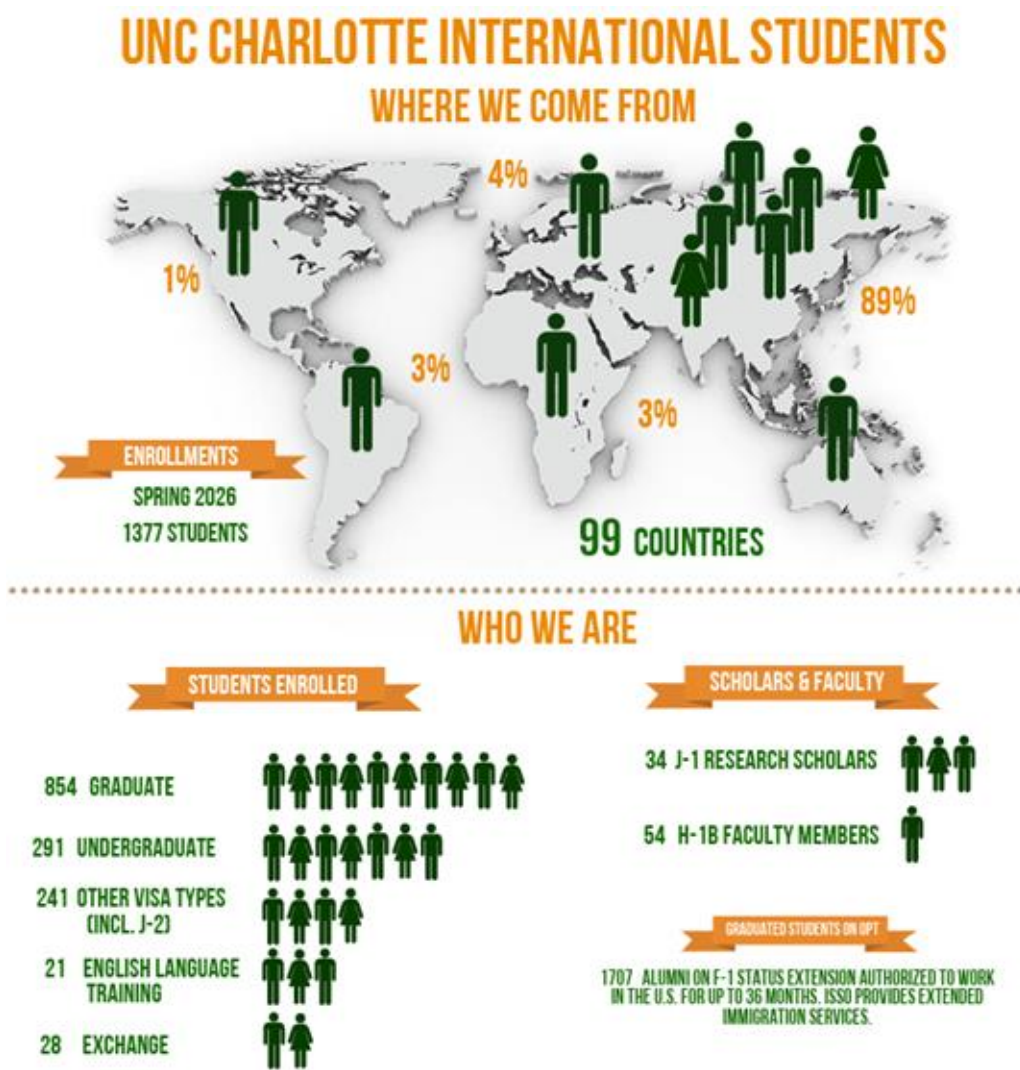


4. FACULTY HIRING

H-1B & Pathway to Permanent Residence

Specialty occupation criteria, lead times, and institutional sponsorship policy.

Scope of Impact: UNC Charlotte's International Population



ISSO's Core Administrative and Compliance Scope

Federal Reporting & Monitoring: Serves as the official institutional liaison to the Department of Homeland Security (SEVP/SEVIS) and the Department of State; DSOs authorized to issue I-20s and DS-2019s.

Academic & Professional Authorizations: Evaluates and processes all requests for Optional Practical Training (OPT), Curricular Practical Training (CPT), program extensions, reduced course load authorization, status changes and more.

Campus Partner Support: Collaborates with academic departments, HR, Legal, Enrollment Management and others to streamline hiring workflows, regulatory compliance, and international mobility.

Duration of Status (D/S): Injunction Status & Impact

DHS proposed eliminating D/S in favor of fixed admission periods, restrictions on major changes and school transfers. Federal courts have stepped in.

STATUS: ACTIVE INJUNCTION

Sept 14, 2026

U.S. District Court Preliminary Injunction

Nationwide preliminary injunction blocks DHS fixed period of admission rule (91 FR 44976) from taking effect.

Operational Baseline:

Standard D/S rules remain active. F-1 and J-1 students maintain status as long as full-time enrollment and SEVIS records remain valid.

POTENTIAL RISK FACTOR

Re-Entry Secondary Inspection

International travel during rule transition poses heightened risk of CBP secondary processing and shortened I-94 dates.

DEPARTMENT GUIDANCE

Defer to ISSO

Advise international students and scholars to consult ISSO before booking international travel during active litigation.

Changes to CPT: Injunction Status & Impact

STATUS: HEARING SCHEDULED

October 5, 2026

Lawsuit Filed in the U.S. District Court for the District of Massachusetts

The Court has set a hearing date of November 6, 2026, for the plaintiffs' motions for preliminary injunction and stay of agency action.

Operational Baseline:

CPT is limited to experiences that are explicitly mandatory in the published University Catalog for degree completion.

POTENTIAL RISK FACTOR

Enhanced Scrutiny Over Later Petitions

Students could be asked to provide documentation or justification demonstrating CPT was integral to their course of study when petitioning for a future visa or change of status.

DEPARTMENT GUIDANCE

Formalizing CPT opportunities

Departments facilitating a CPT should contact ISSO or OLA to ensure there is a written agreement between the employer and the University.

SEVP CPT Guidance: Catalog Requirement Enforcement

Curricular Practical Training (CPT) is defined as “alternative work/study, internship, cooperative education or any other type of required internship or practicum that is offered by sponsoring employers through cooperative agreements with the school.”

CPT is permitted only where the training is an “integral part of an established curriculum”.

✖ Former Practice (Restricted)

Elective course for credit or general internship courses for off-campus practical experiences

NO ELECTIVE CPT



✔ Current Practice

CPT is limited to experiences that are explicitly mandatory in the published University Catalog for degree completion.

CATALOG MANDATED ONLY



Faculty & Department Chair Action: Review degree catalog descriptions. Off-campus internships without explicit catalog requirement wording will be denied under SEVP guidelines.

SEVP CPT Guidance: Cooperative Agreements

- Curricular Practical Training (CPT) requires explicit, mandatory connection to catalog degree requirements.
- Sponsoring employers must have established cooperative agreements with the school and must be able to provide a quality practical training experience to students.
- CPT students should have access to practical training managed by an employer who has entered into a cooperative agreement with a school where it is agreed the employer will sponsor the school's students for specific training.
- Students are not expected to obtain EADs for this training which is an integral and required part of the curriculum.

Financial Impact Alert

Proposed DHS OPT Fee Rule: Risk Analysis

DHS proposal (Oct 7, 2026) shifts substantial financial obligations to SEVP-certified institutions.

INITIAL F-1 OPT RECOMMENDATION

\$70,000

per student to be paid by
the institution to Dept of
the Treasury

SUBSEQUENT STEM OPT EXTENSION RECOMMENDATION

\$30,000

per student to be paid by
the institution to Dept of
the Treasury

Regulatory Rule Status

Status: Proposal only — currently under public comment until November 9, 2026. Not active law.

Implementation Lag: Requires publication of Final Rule + mandatory 60-day delayed effective date.

Higher Ed Response: National higher education associations preparing formal opposition filings.

H-1B Faculty & Scholar Sponsorship Criteria

UNC Charlotte Employment-Based Immigration Sponsorship for Teaching and Research Positions



Position Eligibility

Full-time, permanent teaching or research positions with minimum 1-year secured funding.



Lead Time Requirement

Allow 4 to 6 months for processing (export control checks, LCA, and USCIS filing).



Mandatory Department Fees

Hiring department pays all required USCIS filing fees. Beneficiary payment is legally prohibited.

Legal Compliance Notice: H-1B approval must be received from USCIS before the employee can begin work.

Sponsorship & Communication Protocols

Managing expectations and legal representation for green card pathways.

Green Card Sponsorship Protocol

- ❖ Sponsorship always at discretion of department chair/Dean.
- ❖ Highly individualized based on recruitment process/eligibility criteria.
- ❖ Multi-year processing timeline (typically 2 to 4 years).
- ❖ Hiring department documentation critical to success of petition.
- ❖ Department covers USCIS filing fees.

Critical Compliance Rules

- ❖ Do NOT Make "Green Card Promises"
- ❖ Verbal or written promises in offer letters can create binding institutional liability and conflict with Federal DOL regulations.
- ❖ Outside legal counsel is NOT authorized to represent UNC Charlotte without Legal Affairs approval.

Campus Action Plan

How Campus Partners Foster Compliance & Success

Proactive administrative strategies for chairs, business managers, and faculty supervisors.

- ❖ **Audit Academic Degree Catalogs**

Ensure CPT-eligible courses explicitly state mandatory degree completion requirements.

- ❖ **Initiate H-1B Filings 6 Months Early**

Prevent employment gaps for new faculty hires or those requiring a change of status.

- ❖ **Refer Complex Queries to ISSO**

Direct students and scholars to official ISSO advising for immigration, travel and employment issues.

- ❖ **Remain Calm and Positive**

Help students to remain calm, stay positive and listen only to authoritative sources of information.





Questions & Discussion

Thank you for supporting UNC Charlotte's international students, scholars, and faculty.

**INTERNATIONAL STUDENT &
SCHOLAR OFFICE**

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OFFICE OF LEGAL AFFAIRS

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