

DAAD and HRK criticise new visa rules in USA

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German students in the USA are facing an uncertain future due to the new visa rules in the coronavirus crisis. The US immigration agency ICE had announced last week that foreign students who were participating exclusively in online courses at an American university would have to leave the country – or face deportation. The Presidents of the HRK and DAAD have sounded a warning about the consequences.

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The President of the German Rectors' Conference (HRK), Professor Dr Peter-André Alt: "The changes made to the visa regulations are a significant set-back for German-American academic relations. In light of the COVID-19 pandemic, which continues to develop alarmingly in the USA, American universities are understandably relying on the major expansion of their online courses in order to protect students and staff. These measures cannot, however, give the US administration cause to revoke the valid visas of international students and even to expel them from the country. The changes to the visa rules deprive these students of their faith in the dependability of their host country, the certainty of their plans and the overseas experience that is so important. Students and universities must not become pawns of US domestic politics."

Prof Dr Joybrato Mukherjee, the President of the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD): "We are watching the developments in US visa policy with great concern. A restriction of student exchange, in particular the revocation of visas for students who are taking online courses offered by American universities, is completely incomprehensible. The US administration is thereby continuing its agenda of isolation and exclusion, an agenda which is harmful on all counts. The DAAD takes a critical view of this agenda. Moreover, we are placing reliance – precisely in view of the coronavirus pandemic and the exchange, including in digital form, that it necessitates – on



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international cooperation and the exchange of students and academics not being needlessly impeded. In light of this, we welcome the fact that the first American universities have taken legal action against the recent decisions of the US administration.”

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