

September 8, 2022

Rachel E. Canty
Director, Student and Exchange Visitor Program
U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement
Department of Homeland Security
Washington, D.C. 20536

VIA EMAIL: Rachel.e.canty@ice.dhs.gov

Re: Request for Special Student Relief for students from Pakistan

Dear Director Canty:

I am writing to request that the Department of Homeland Security - SEVP consider granting Special Student Relief* to F-1 students from Pakistan, which has experienced catastrophic flooding in recent days. The [United Nations Refugee Agency \(UNHCR\) reports](#) that the flooding has affected “over 30 million people in Pakistan”, left “6.4 million people in need of immediate support” and displaced “hundreds of thousands” of people.

The most recent [data posted in the SEVP Data Library](#) (2020) shows that there were 8,638 active SEVIS records for students with Pakistan listed as their country of citizenship. As the impacts of the flooding continue, F-1 students from Pakistan would greatly benefit from the availability of Special Student Relief, which allows DHS to suspend the 20 hour per week limits on incident-to-status on-campus and USCIS-authorized off-campus employment, and for students to be considered engaged in a “full course of study” for the duration of their employment authorization if they satisfy specific minimum course load requirements.

Given the rapidly emerging consequences of the flooding, we ask that you consider and support this request, and to please forward it quickly through the necessary channels within the Department.

I urge you to share the letter with the Department of State for their consideration as relief is contemplated for Pakistan citizens in the United States who are here as exchange visitors.

Thank you for your consideration of this urgent request for Special Student Relief to aid the challenges students from Pakistan are currently facing.

Sincerely,

Esther D. Brimmer, DPhil
Executive Director & CEO
NAFSA: Association of International Educators

* Regulations allow DHS to suspend or alter rules regarding duration of status, full course of study, and employment eligibility, for specific groups of students from parts of the world that are experiencing emergent circumstances. This collection of benefits is known as "special student relief." [[63 Fed. Reg. 31872](#) (June 10, 1998), amending the Code of Federal Regulations governing F-1 duration of status at 8 C.F.R. § 214.2 (f)(5), full course of study at 8 C.F.R. § 214.2 (f)(6)(A) and (B), and employment eligibility at 8 C.F.R. § 214.2 (f) (9) (i) and (ii)]