

# ICE on Campus: What to Do

**The Immigration** and Customs Enforcement (ICE) division of the US Department of Homeland Security (DHS) is a federal law enforcement agency whose stated mission is to “protect America through criminal investigations and enforcing immigration laws to preserve national security and public safety.” Historically, federal immigration operations on college campuses have been rare, with ICE generally treating campuses as “sensitive locations” and avoiding enforcement actions there.

That practice changed when President Donald Trump began his second term. In January 2025, the Trump administration rescinded guidance limiting federal immigration operations, effectively ending the sensitive location policy. ICE began revoking student visas and initiating deportation proceedings in unprecedented ways. The federal government may lawfully remove noncitizens who lack legal status, as well as those with legal status who are convicted of certain deportable offenses—including “aggravated felonies,” such as murder and rape—under the Immigration and Nationality Act. However, ICE’s current operations go beyond the statutory deportation categories, with agents using broadened enforcement authority to detain students based on alleged visa violations, their social media activity, or participation in campus demonstrations. Critics say the goal is to intimidate students and silence dissent.

In the current climate, institutions and faculty need to know their legal obligations and understand how to protect student rights and minimize risks. Here are practical tips to follow if ICE agents appear on your campus.



**Verify credentials and warrants.**

- Request official identification and ask why the agents are present.
- Ask to see a warrant. These are the two types of warrants ICE agents would use:
  - Judicial warrant (search or arrest): signed by a judge, these grant authority to enter nonpublic campus spaces such as classrooms, offices, and dormitories.
  - Administrative warrants (form I-200 or I-205): signed by an immigration official, these do *not* grant authority to enter nonpublic spaces without consent.
- Under the Fourth Amendment, ICE cannot enter nonpublic spaces without a judicial warrant or voluntary consent from a university president, chancellor, general counsel, or chief of campus police.
- Take a photo or make a copy of the warrant.
- Public areas (such as campus quads and libraries) are normally accessible to ICE without a warrant.

**Protect student information.**

- The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act prohibits institutions from disclosing student records, class schedules, or immigration status without a subpoena or court order.
- Even if presented with a subpoena, consult with legal counsel before releasing records.



**Stay calm and follow protocol.**

- Avoid confrontational behaviors; these can escalate the situation.
- Know your institution’s policies, including ICE response guidelines if they exist.

**Do not interfere, but document.**

- Document:
  - names, badge numbers, time, and location of an ICE encounter
  - details of what ICE officers said or requested
- Recording interactions with a cell phone is generally permitted in public spaces, but check state law.



**Support students legally and safely.**

- If ICE approaches a student, advise the student that they have the right to remain silent and to request an attorney.
- Provide a “know your rights” card if available.
- Do not advise a student to flee or hide. This could increase legal risk for both the student and the institution.



**Provide post-incident support.**

- Offer legal referrals.
- Ensure affected students understand next steps and deadlines for immigration proceedings. <sup>1E</sup>

**Notify key offices immediately.**

- Contact: •the office of general counsel •student affairs/international student services •campus security