

# Canada Scraps Fast-Track Student Visa Policy

## Why In News

- In a fresh policy shift, **Canada did away with the popular Student Direct Stream (SDS)**, ending a fast-track study permit process that has helped thousands of international students quickly secure visas.



## Student Direct Stream

- **Student Direct Stream (SDS)** was launched in 2018 to provide faster processing for eligible post-secondary students. The **SDS was eventually opened to legal residents** of Antigua and Barbuda, Brazil, China, Colombia, Costa Rica, India, Morocco, Pakistan, Peru, Philippines, Senegal, St Vincent and the Grenadines, Trinidad and Tobago, and Vietnam.
- **Prospective university students** from Nigeria had a similar process with the **Nigeria Student Express (NSE)**. “Canada’s goal is to strengthen program integrity, address student vulnerability, and give all students equal and fair access to the application process, as well as a positive academic experience.”



- “Prospective students are invited to apply through the regular study permit stream, which **accepts Guaranteed Investment Certificates** as proof of financial support. Canada will continue to welcome international students from all around the world,” it explained.



- **Further tightening measures include tougher language and academic benchmarks** for students aiming to qualify for the Post-Graduation Work Permit (PGWP), limited work permits for spouses of international students, and higher financial proof requirements.
- The **changes come as Canada seeks to balance** the benefits of its international education sector—hosting a record **807,000 study permit holders in 2023**—with the need to alleviate pressures on housing and services.

## Next Steps For Aspirants

- **Study permit applications** submitted on or after this time will be processed under the regular study permit stream."



- **"This change will not adversely affect eligibility** for those who wish to apply for a study permit from a country where the SDS or NSE initiatives have been offered. All students, regardless of whether they were eligible for the SDS or NSE, are required to meet Canada's study permit application requirements," it added.



## How Will It Affect Indian Students

- **With the programme scrapped**, students from India and 13 other countries will have to undergo a rather lengthy procedure to secure visas.



- This **significant policy change**, the first of its kind in years, is being implemented as a measure to **reduce the influx of immigrants** into the country.
- The decision comes amid a **backdrop of economic challenges**, including a strained healthcare system, escalating living costs, and a housing crisis, among other issues.