Siam Legal International Warns Foreign Nationals on Thailand Student Visa Crackdown

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Bangkok, Thailand - August 20, 2026 -
Siam Legal International, a full-service law firm in Thailand, is warning foreign nationals holding or applying for Thai student visas to review their compliance after the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Higher Education, Science, Research and Innovation ordered an urgent investigation into a university's international student admissions programme. The investigation follows concerns raised over curriculum standards, teaching quality, and visa procedures, and the ministry has directed its Permanent Secretary's Office to conduct a fact-finding review covering both degree and non-degree programmes.

The review will examine whether the university's academic management aligns with higher education standards and course criteria, while also checking non-degree courses against ministry guidelines. Investigators are also scrutinizing student enrollment and registration data, immigration records, and visa application procedures tied to the programme. Officials have said the government intends to act without exception against any institution found to have breached the law, regulations, or academic standards, though the investigation remains ongoing and no findings have yet been announced.

The scrutiny follows tighter rules introduced last year targeting short courses, after cases emerged of foreign

nationals using them as a way to work illegally in Thailand rather than to study. Under those regulations, every higher education institution offering short courses must submit its programmes for government evaluation before enrolling foreign students, and institutions must meet stricter benchmarks for course quality, student management, and reporting. Courses must deliver at least 60 percent of instruction on site, no course can run longer than 180 days, and institutions that fall short risk having their programme shut down.

Rex Baay, Senior Immigration Consultant and Operations Manager at Siam Legal International, said the latest investigation signals that oversight of the student visa system is tightening rather than easing. "Foreign nationals who hold or are considering a student visa in Thailand should make sure their enrollment, attendance, and course documentation genuinely reflect what immigration and the ministry expect," Baay said. "Arrangements that were loosely monitored in the past are becoming much harder to sustain, and the risk of a visa being flagged or revoked now falls on the individual student as much as the institution."

Thailand has framed the broader effort as part of protecting the integrity of its higher education system and preventing the student visa process from being used for purposes unrelated to genuine study. Foreign nationals already in Thailand on a student visa are advised to keep clear records of enrollment, attendance, and coursework, since immigration authorities have shown they are prepared to cross-check that data against university reporting. Prospective students are also advised to confirm that a given programme has completed the required government evaluation before enrolling, particularly for short courses and non-degree programmes.

Siam Legal's Thailand student visa crackdown report, which walks through what the investigation covers, how the short course rules already in effect work, and what tightening oversight means for students and institutions. The firm said individuals with questions about their own visa status or documentation are encouraged to seek guidance before an issue arises rather than after a visa has already been flagged.

Siam Legal International is a full-service law firm with more than 22 years of experience assisting foreign nationals in Thailand, with offices in Bangkok, Chiang Mai, Phuket, and Pattaya. The firm provides comprehensive legal and immigration support spanning visa planning, property law, corporate and business advisory, and litigation.

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Siam Legal International

American-managed Thailand law firm with 22+ years? experience. Experts in corporate setup, BOI, FBL, family & divorce, property, litigation, immigration, notary, wills, contracts & due diligence across Bangkok, Phuket, Pattaya & more.

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