



By: TA | AP Brief

Greece cuts student population at universities by half



More than 300,000 inactive university students have been removed from the rolls in Greece, cutting the country's official student population by nearly half, authorities said.

The move marks the end of a decadeslong practice — formally abolished in recent legislation — that allowed extended enrollment to facilitate lifelong learning and lengthy breaks for work.

On Friday, the Education Ministry said that 308,605 students admitted to state-run universities' four-year degree programs before 2017 had been removed from the records.

"Student status is not valid for life in any modern European university," Education Minister Sofia Zacharaki said. "We want degrees with value, which reflect effort, skills and passion."

Ministry officials said that about 35,000 people successfully applied for reenrollment in 2025.

Opponents of the conservative government's reform, mostly from the academic community, argue the second-chance program failed to address the scale of disruption caused by Greece's severe financial crisis in the previous decade.

Administrative difficulties

The country's active student population stands at just over 350,000, studying at 25 public higher education institutions, according to 2024 data from the Hellenic Authority for Higher Education.

Undergraduate degree programs at state universities are normally funded by the government. Until recently, only public universities offering state-recognized degrees have operated in Greece.

But recognized **private universities** are gradually being introduced.

With updated student lists, universities gain the ability to plan more precisely - Nikos Papaioannou

Education Ministry officials said that dormant students — those who had interrupted their studies — didn't impose any direct financial burden on universities, but created administrative difficulties.

"With updated student lists, universities gain the ability to plan more precisely," Deputy Education Minister Nikos Papaioannou said.

"That is a prerequisite for improving academic quality, daily operations and the criteria used to evaluate Greek universities in international rankings."