



SEVIS 6.18 Pre Release Webinar

November 15, 2014: Added questions from original FAQ to FAQ from Pre-Release Webinar

Verification Period..... 1
Annual Verification Process- General Questions 1
Annual Verification and Form I-17 Petition Updates 3
Annual Verification and School Recertification 3
Adding and Removing Officials during the Verification Period 4
Communication to and from SEVP 5
Department of State 6
Consequences of NOT Verifying School/Sponsor Officials 6
Miscellaneous 7
Available Handouts..... 7

Verification Period

Q: What is the verification period?

A: The annual verification period is December 2nd through March 3rd.

Q: Will this period be the same every year?

A: Yes. The verification period will be the same every year.

Annual Verification Process- General Questions

Q: Why do schools and sponsors have to verify their official each year?

A: As a federal database, SEVIS is subject to the Federal Information Security Management Act (FISMA). FISMA requires the annual verification that all users who access federal systems have both the business need and the authorization to access the system. To comply with FISMA, PDSOs and ROs must annually verify that every Primary Designated School Official (PDSO), Designated School Official (DSO), Responsible Officer (RO), and Alternate Responsible Officer (ARO) who has access to SEVIS:

- 1. Is still regularly employed by the organization and continues to be the designated PDSO, DSO, RO, or ARO.
2. Requires continued access to SEVIS.
3.



Q. What's happened on October 31st?

A. The verification functionality was released into SEVIS production on October 31st. However, you shouldn't actually see anything related to the annual verification until December 2, when the verification period begins.

Q: What is SEVP's definition of a DSO "requiring continued access" to SEVIS? Should all DSOs have a regular need to access SEVIS, or is it alright to have DSOs who are in place for periods of time when the PDSO/DSOs are unavailable?

A: The verification confirms that an individual is still employed at the school and has a business need to be able to access SEVIS. It is perfectly acceptable to have DSOs designated for back-up purposes that are not necessarily making frequent updates. However, anyone who is employed at the school but no longer has a business need to access SEVIS (i.e., no longer serves in that capacity, backup or otherwise) should be designated as "No".

Q. Can we update a DSO's email and phone information while we are on the verification page?

A. You cannot update the DSOs email address on the verification page but you can do it on "update officials" page in the I-17 if necessary.

Q: If we opt against verifying a DSO, do they automatically get removed from our I-17? If a DSO is removed through this process, do we still have to file an I-17 update?

A: A decision must be made for every DSO listed for the school. Every DSO must be verified with either a "Yes" or "No" designation. If you select "No", that DSO is automatically removed from the I-17. There is no need to file a supplementary petition update to remove officials.

Q. Our school has multiple campuses, each with a PDSO. If one PDSO fails to complete the verification process, will all the campuses be affected?

A. Yes, if even one campus remains unverified, the entire school and all officials will be locked out of SEVIS. Therefore, any PDSO may verify all of the campuses. If your school has multiple PDSOs, you may want to assign verification to one particular PDSO for all campuses, or you may assign each PDSO responsibility for his/ her own campus.

Q: I work at a community college that has more than one campus. Do we need verification for each campus?

A: Yes, every campus has a PDSO assigned to it – as listed on the Form I-17. Campuses may also have DSOs.

Q. I'm a PDSO at seven different schools. How do I verify these?

A. Different schools must be verified individually. If you are a PDSO at multiple schools, when you log in and access the verification page, you will see on the list all your schools and all your campuses. It will be easy for you to tell when you have verified all of your officials, as the schools/campuses are removed from the list as you verify them.



- Q. Does the PDSO need to confirm DSO U.S. national or permanent residency credentials?**
- A. No, the PDSO does not need to confirm DSO citizenship or residency to complete the annual verification.

- Q. What if a school added a campus during the previous year?**
- A. If the campus is already officially added to the Form I-17, it will appear on the verification screen. If the campus addition hasn't yet been approved, then it and the associated officials will appear for verification the following year.

Annual Verification and Form I-17 Petition Updates

- Q. What if we already submitted an I-17 update, our I-17 is locked and we are waiting for a response and/or a site visit from SEVIS?**

- A. If the I-17 updates involve changes to P/DSOs, School Certification will devote more resources to adjudicate those before or soon after the start of the verification period. Otherwise, if you are already an approved school, the annual verification is a completely independent function of SEVIS from the petition update process, and can be completed while the Form I-17 is locked.

- Q. Should updates to the I-17, for example, a name change, be done before or after verification?**

- A. The verification process and I-17 updates are completely different processes. However, if possible, we recommend you do the verification process first.

- Q: May we complete the verification process if we are currently waiting to hear about approval for new DSO?**

- A: Yes. If the new DSO is approved after the verification has been completed, they will appear on the list during the following verification period.

- Q. What if you know you'll have a change of PDSO around the time of the verification period?**

- A. If possible, the current PDSO should verify their school officials before leaving. If the PDSO change is pending, ensure your request has all the required documentation in order to reduce adjudication time.

- Q. If a PDSO is going on leave during the verification period, should we take her off the I-17 during that time?**

- A. No. However, if she cannot complete the verification before she leaves, she needs to reassign the PDSO role to another existing DSO on the I-17, who can complete the verification in her absence.

Annual Verification and School Recertification

- Q: What if you are going through recertification during the 90 days and your I-17 is locked pending recertification adjudication?**



A: The processes have no relationship to each other. You can complete the verification while your I-17 is locked for recertification.

Q: If we remove a DSO during verification, will it affect our pending recertification?

A: No.

Adding and Removing Officials during the Verification Period

Q: If we get a new DSO after we verify, but still during the verification period, is that new DSO automatically verified? Do we have to re-verify?

A: If a DSO addition is approved after the school has completed their verification, the new DSO will be validated during the next verification period. Schools will not need to re-verify if there is a new DSO added.

Q: What should we do if the PDSO will retire during the verification period?

A: The verification period begins December 2nd. If possible, the current PDSO should complete the verification before leaving. If the PDSO is unable to verify before leaving, your institution should request the approval of a new PDSO from the School Certification Unit.

Q: We currently do not have international students enrolled at school but hope to enroll more in the future. Should we just continue to log in every 3 months?

A: Yes.

Q: How do we remove a PDSO?

A: Every school campus must have a PDSO. The fact sheet we refer to explains how to do this. If you don't have the fact sheet, email us at SEVISTechnicalFeedback@ice.dhs.gov to request a copy.

Q: Is there a simple way to re-add an official who was removed during the verification?

A: No, it will require a Form I-17 petition update to add an official who was removed during the verification.

Q: If we are currently under adjudication to remove a DSO, should we cancel that update and just remove the DSO using verification?

A: If your I-17 is pending for adjudication of a DSO removal and/or any other reason, the School Certification Unit will handle the DSO removal and/or any other request with the I-17 adjudication.

Q: What happens if a PDSO or RO selects "No" next to a DSO's or ARO's name?

A: A "No" selection will display an on-screen message informing the PDSO or RO that the user will no longer be able to access SEVIS as an official of that particular school or program. DSOs and AROs for whom "No" is selected will lose SEVIS access when the PDSO or RO submits the verification.



Q: How soon after submission will the DSO or ARO lose access to SEVIS if the PDSO or RO selected “NO?”

A: Immediately upon submission, the DSO or ARO will lose the ability to log in to SEVIS. If the official has an active SEVIS session at the time of submission, the official can finish the session, but will not be able to log back in to SEVIS after the active session ends.

Q: Are DSOs and AROs notified when the PDSO or RO submits the verification?

A: DSOs and AROs do **not** receive an email message when their school or program’s verification is submitted. Submission of the verification can be confirmed by:

- The absence of the verification notice on the Message Board.
- For schools, the *School Information* page reflects that all campuses of the school have been verified and reflects a Next User Verification Date that is a year into the future.

Q: Will DSOs and AROS with “No” validations be notified that their access has been revoked?

A: No. They will not be notified of the revoked access. The “NO” designation means the individual no longer holds the role of DSO or ARO and no longer requires SEVIS access.

Communication to and from SEVP

Q: What is the best SEVP/SEVIS email to communicate changes to PDSO and/or DSO?

A: You can contact the School Certification Unit at DSOPDSO@ice.dhs.gov.

Q: Will messages to PDSO go to all DSOs as well?

A: Yes. All officials at an institution will be notified during the verification period.

Q. What should we do if we are not receiving emails from SEVIS?

A. First, check to see if your email addresses are correct on the I-17. Then check with your IT department to see if they are being blocked or are going into your spam or junk folders. If you can get into SEVIS, you should be receiving emails from us.

Q. What if we have not received the alert by March 2 to verify?

A. Please do not wait until the end of the verification period to tell us you have not received the verification alert. If you don’t see the verification alert on your school’s SEVIS message board page and have not received any email verification alerts by December 3, you need to let us know immediately.

Q. Who do we contact if a DSO name is missing from the school page?

A. First, confirm that you are looking at the right campus. If something still looks wrong, contact the helpdesk.



Q: Where will downloads be available after the presentation?

A: Downloads will be available on Study in the States. There will also be a post release webinar in December which will be an opportunity to give us feedback once the verification period begins.

Q: If the school roles/titles change for the PDSO and/or DSO, can we change that as part of the verification or do we need to change that on the I-17?

A: That information must be changed by filing a Form I-17 petition update.

Department of State

Q: What does RO and ARO stand for? These are new acronyms for me.

A: RO stands for Responsible Officer and ARO stands for Alternate Responsible Officer. These are officials for J-1 programs and are equivalent to school PDSOs and DSOs.

Q: How do we add an ARO to our J-1 program who is not an employee at our institution?

A: An official RO or ARO for your program would have to print a new DS-3037 and complete the information for the new individual and mail it in to DoS. If you have more questions about this, please contact your current program official.

Q: If an RO fails to verify all AROs, will the EV program lose all access to SEVIS?

A: Yes, the RO and all AROs will be locked out of that particular EV Program.

Consequences of NOT Verifying School/Sponsor Officials

Q: What if the PDSO or RO does not verify the DSOs and ROs at the institution by March 2nd?

A: If a PDSO or an RO does not verify their organization's officials, the following happens on March 3rd:

- DSOs and AROs are locked out of SEVIS. They cannot edit or update any nonimmigrant records.
- PDSOs and ROs can log in to SEVIS, but they can only complete the validation process. They cannot edit or update any nonimmigrant records.
- The organization will not be able to upload any updates via batch.
- The F/M school is deemed out of compliance with recordkeeping and reporting regulations; and may be withdrawn from participation in the Student and Exchange Visitor Program.

Q: What happens if a PDSO at a multi-campus school fails to verify one of the campuses?

A: A school is considered verified only when ALL the campuses at the school are verified. If a school does not complete the verification process for ALL the campuses on their school



list by March 2nd, EVERY SEVIS official for that school on EVERY campus will be locked out on March 3rd.

Even DSOs at campuses that had previously been verified will be locked out of SEVIS. Their access to SEVIS will be restored only after a PDSO verifies all SEVIS officials.

Q: Are school and sponsor officials notified if a PDSO or an RO misses the validation deadline?

A: Yes. On March 3rd DSOs and AROs at unverified schools or programs receive an email informing them of their loss of access to SEVIS. The email also advises them to contact their PDSO or RO.

Miscellaneous

Q: How many PDSOs are allowed?

A: One PDSO per campus is allowed.

Q: If there is only one DSO, are they automatically the PDSO?

A: Check the I-17 to verify whether or not an individual is designated as a DSO or a PDSO. Being the sole DSO at an institution does not automatically mean an individual has been approved as the PDSO. If there is only a DSO approved for an institution, they will **not** have the authority to complete the verification process. The institution should start the process immediately to request the approval of an individual to act in the capacity of a PDSO. A fact sheet was sent via broadcast message detailing this process. If you have not received that documentation contact SEVISTechnicalFeedback@ice.dhs.gov and we will send one to you.

Q: Did you state that a school does not have to have a DSO? During our last recertification, we were told we had to have a DSO at each campus. What about our campuses that have no international students at all?

A: You must have at least one PDSO for every campus on your I-17. However, it would not be necessary to have a PDSO and an additional DSO at a campus where there were no international students. However, if you have plans to enroll international students at these campuses, School Certification recommends you keep the campuses on the I-17 and maintain at least one back up DSO in addition to the PDSO for any of these campuses.

Q: Is there any batch schema change in the 6.18 release?

A: No.

Available Handouts

The webinar was recorded and is currently posted on Study in the States. You can also find all the handouts that supported the webinar in the same location:



- Webinar Slides
- PDSO/DSO Annual Verification User Guide
- RO/ARO Annual Verification User Guide

In addition, we added a fact sheet from the School Certification Unit that addresses the process of adding P/DSOs to your institution.