SEVIS Names FAQ

Date	Summary of Release
October 30, 2014	Revision to reflect revised SEVIS names standards

Timeline for Implementation of Name Standards

Q: **When do we have to start complying with these name standards?**

A: The name stanards will be implemented in 2015.

Q: **What is the schedule for implementation of the name changes?**

A: The name standards will be implemented according to the following schedule:

- August 1, 2014: SEVIS Name Standardization Impact Report became available for schools and sponsors to assess how the standards will affect them and provide SEVP with feedback/concerns.
- September 5, 2014: Draft Names Batch Schema released, so batch vendors can begin to update their software to account for the new standards.

- October 10, 2014: Final Schema released, so work on batch software can be finalized.
- November 2014: Name standards implemented in the batch test environment.
- June 2015: Name standards will be implemented in SEVIS production environment. SEVIS converts existing names in SEVIS to the new standards.

Passports

Q: **What is the Machine Readable Zone (MRZ) of a passport?**

A: The MRZ of the passport appears at the bottom of the biographic page of the passport. The top line consists of uppercase letters (nonimmigrant's name) and carets (<<).

Q: **What is the Visual Inspection Zone (VIZ) of a passport?**

A: The VIZ of the passport is in the center of the biographic page, to the right of the holder's photo. It includes the holder's full name, date of birth, nationality, etc.

SEVIS Name Fields

Q: **The name fields discussed in the June 26, 2014 webinar differ from those discussed in previous webinars. The previous webinars had middle names. Can we assume that the information in the June 26th webinar includes the fields that will be implemented?**

A: The name fields have changed. When the new name standards are implemented in 2015, the following will happen:

- Family Name field will be relabeled Surname/Primary Name.
- First Name field will be relabeled Given Name.
- Middle Name field will be eliminated.
- Preferred Name field will be added auto-populated and optional to complete.
- Passport Name field will be added and optional to complete.

Q: **How do we use the MRZ as a guide for spelling the nonimmigrant's name in SEVIS?**

A: If the passport has an MRZ, the issuing country already converted the name into SEVIS acceptable characters.

Q: **How do we use the MRZ as a guide for determining nonimmigrant name order?**

A: If a passport has an MRZ, the issuing country has already identified which name component(s) it considers to be the primary identifier; therefore, with a few exceptions, the MRZ can usually be used as a good guide for determining which components of the name should be entered into which name fields in SEVIS. Generally, there are three fields where the MRZ serves as a guide:

- **Surname/Primary Name:** The Primary Name is the first name that appears in the MRZ. In most cases, that should very closely reflect what you put in the Surname/Primary Name field. Very long surnames (40+ letters) are truncated in

the MRZ. In that case, DSOs should use the Primary Name field in the VIZ as a guide for the complete surname.

- **Given Name:** Captures any other names on the passport.
- **Passport Name:** Should reflect exactly what is in the MRZ. The Passport Name allows various government officials to match the Form I-20/Form DS-2019 exactly to the passport.

Q: **What if there is no MRZ in the passport, but there is a U.S. visa with an MRZ?**

A: If the passport lacks an MRZ, the U.S. visa can also be used as a guide for determining how to enter the name into SEVIS. If the passport VIZ is difficult to interpret, or does not match the U.S. visa, you should compare the name on the U.S. visa to the name the nonimmigrant gave you. If the U.S. visa more closely matches the name the nonimmigrant uses, use the U.S. visa as a guide when entering the name into SEVIS.

Q: **The SEVIS Name Fields Job Aid says to use the MRZ for the Surname/Primary Name and Given Name, and it says to use the MRZ for the Passport Name. I still do not understand why two name types are being used for the same data. Please give examples when there will be a difference between the two name types (Surname/Primary and Given vs. Passport), when both come from the MRZ.**

A: The Surname/Primary Name and the Given Name fields are meant to have nonimmigrants' names spelled out in their entirety, as seen in the VIZ. Remember, this usually follows the name order as seen in the MRZ, but not always. The Passport Name field is a way for government officials to match a Form I-20/Form DS-2019 to a passport; therefore, it makes sense for the MRZ to be represented as precisely as possible in the Passport Name field (separating names with spaces instead of carets). Differences between the Surname/Primary Name fields and the Passport Name may occur when an individual's name is longer than 39 characters. MRZ names with more than 39 characters will be truncated in the Passport field. (See the SEVP Name Standards User Guide.)

Q: **What do you mean when you mention Legacy Names?**

A: Legacy SEVIS Names are the names as they appear in SEVIS before the new name standards take effect. SEVIS will store the Legacy Names so that you can still find records based on those names. Legacy Names will print in conjunction with the standardized name on the Form I-20/Form DS-2019 to show that the government changed the name and it is not an attempt by the nonimmigrant or by the school to inappropriately change the name.

Passport Name

Q: **Why do you need to capture the Passport Name?**

A: Adding the Passport Name came from recommendations within the school community. We anticipate that the Passport Name will help nonimmigrants with other government offices, as the Passport Name will match the MRZ name in the passport.

Q: **Do the surname and given names need to match the passport? If so, what is the purpose of the Passport Name field?**

A: The surname and given name need to match at least part of the passport. The passport MRZ will truncate a name at 39 characters and sometimes that is not enough room to capture all the names. You need to follow the VIZ to complete name spelling. The Passport Name field is where you enter the name as it appears in the MRZ. The MRZ will help improve data matching between government databases.

Given Name

Q: Why do the standards say that Given Name is optional?

A: Not everybody has more than one name. If you have only one name, it must go into the Surname/Primary Name field. However, if a given name does exist, you must enter it in the Given Name field in SEVIS.

Q: What should we enter for the Given Name, if there is only one name listed for a nonimmigrant and we are no longer to use FNU or LNU?

A: If there is only one name listed for the nonimmigrant, enter it in the Surname/Primary Name field. Leave the Given Name field empty.

Q: If a nonimmigrant has three given names and no family name, all three names would be in the Primary Name field with the Given Name blank, correct?

A: Not necessarily, in cases of multiple names listed under the VIZ Given Name field, usually, the name listed first after the country initials in the MRZ portion of the passport is the given name. The other two names may be a combination of a middle and surname, depending on how the nonimmigrant has specified the name on the application. (See the SEVP Name Standardization User Guide.)

Q: Certain secondary identifiers may appear as a first and a middle name, but are actually a two-word first name. Will such compound first names be accommodated?

A: Yes, you can enter a two-part first name in the Given Name field.

Q: If a nonimmigrant has multiple Given Names, "John Mark Edward," do all of the names need to be in the Given Name field or can we simply use the first Given Name, i.e., "John?"

A: While all given names are not required, SEVP highly recommends entering all of them to have as much identifying information in SEVIS as possible.

Q: If the VIZ shows a first name and middle name, but the MRZ does not, is this considered an "honorable" name and should it be included when entering "Given Name?"

A: Generally, only the names listed in MRZ should be considered part of the actual name in SEVIS. However, there are some exceptions. For example, if the individual has a very long surname, the MRZ may not have enough room to capture the complete name that appears in the VIZ. Occasionally, passports may include a title as part of the Given Name field. These titles should not be entered into the Surname/Primary Name or the Given Name fields. They can, however, be entered into the Preferred Name field.

Preferred Name

Q: **What is the purpose of the Preferred Name?**

A: The Preferred Name field allows schools and sponsors to record nonimmigrant names in the way the nonimmigrant or the institution may want them reflected. It accommodates longer names and allows the entry of some special characters. This is where honorific names and nicknames used at the school can be entered.

Q: **Will the Preferred Name show up on the Form I-20? Where will it appear?**

A: We are still determining this, but we hope to have the Preferred Name on the first page of the Form 1-20/Form DS-2019. It will appear in the nonimmigrant record and you will be able to use it as a search option in SEVIS.

Q: **If the VIZ part of the passport includes special characters, will we be required to provide those in a Preferred Name section?**

A: You can enter them in the Preferred Name field, but it will not be required.

Q: **Can the Preferred Name be a nickname that the nonimmigrant goes by? For example, many Chinese nonimmigrants would like an Americanized name.**

A: Yes, occasionally there is an "ALSO KNOWN AS" field on the VIZ. This often lists an Americanized nickname. You can put nicknames in the Preferred Name field, whether they appear in the VIZ or not.

SEVIS Name Order

Name order in the MRZ is not always consistent with what the nonimmigrant calls him/herself or with the U.S. visa (when available). Furthermore, some passports are still missing MRZs altogether. See the recommendations below from specific countries for entering names in SEVIS.

Q: **For some Muslim (and Malaysian) nonimmigrants and exchange visitors, their primary identifiers may be preceded by "bin"(Arabic for "son of") or "binti" (Arabic for "daughter of"). Will these continue to be accommodated?**

A: Yes, SEVIS will accept those types of entries. If they appear in the MRZ of the passport, they should be included. If they are not in the MRZ, they should only be included in the Preferred Name field.

Q: **Countries like Singapore put all names in one line and the family name is often some place in the middle. How should we distinguish which parts of the name belong in which fields in SEVIS?**

A: Often, the U.S. Consulate will interpret the name order correctly on the U.S. visa. If the U.S. visa is not available, follow the student's request. The name can be changed on the Form I-20/ DS-2019 later, if necessary.

Q: **If a nonimmigrant's first and last names are swapped on the passport, when entering the names into SEVIS, should we match the passport, write the names in the correct order into SEVIS, or request a new passport?**

A: Match the name order to the passport MRZ, unless there is a U.S. visa that lists the names in the correct order. In the case of a correct U.S. visa (per the nonimmigrant's request), follow that. Use the Preferred Name field to capture the order of the names that the nonimmigrant says is correct. If the improper name order in the passport creates a significant problem with other government agencies, the nonimmigrant may have to get a new passport.

Q: If the name is all on one line in the VIZ and there are no double carets in the MRZ, do we have to split them up?

A: No, you do not have to split them up. If the U.S. visa is not available, we recommend you follow the nonimmigrant's preference. Check the SEVIS Name Standards User Guide for country recommendations.

Q: The U.S. Embassy has added the middle name to the last name line on the visa stamp. How should the name be entered in SEVIS? Based on passport ID page or the U.S. visa?

A: Use the passport MRZ as a first guide, particularly if it matches what the student prefers.

Q: What if there are multiple sets of double carets?

A: We have seen this once. The first double carets seem to delineate a space between the first surname and the second surname. The second set of carets delineates the two-part surname from the rest of the name.
P<JORABDEL<<RAHMAN<<OSAMA<AKRAM<KHALED
Surname: Abdel Rahman   Given Name: Osama Akram Khaled

Al or No Al?

Q: Omani family names have Al in the VIZ but not in the MRZ. They all say that the Al is part of their name. So we should no longer put the Al in the Surname/Primary name field, correct? Will all Omani Form I-20s need to be reprinted without the Al?

A: If available, compare this to the U.S. visa stamp. If "Al" appears on the visa, do include "Al" in SEVIS. If the U.S. visa is not available, use the MRZ as a guide, and exclude the "Al" prefix. If the U.S. visa is issued later with the "Al," you can change it later. In the meantime, you can complete the name using "Al" in the Preferred Name field.

Q: A nonimmigrant with a name in the VIZ as "Al Lawati, Mohammed Saad I" but MRZ shows "Lawati, Mohammed Saad I" (no "Al"), how should the name appear in SEVIS and on the Form I-20?

A: Use the MRZ as a guide, and exclude the "Al" prefix. If the U.S. visa is issued with the "Al," you can change it later. In the meantime, you can complete the name as Al Lawati in the Preferred Name field.

Q: What should we do with names prefaced by Al? For example, we have nonimmigrants whose names appear as Al space, Al hyphen, and Al with no space?

A: It is not uncommon for people to have hyphenated last names. In SEVIS you will be replacing hyphens with a space. If there is not a space between Al and the rest of the name, enter it without a space.

Honorifics and Titles

Q: **How will you handle honorifics, such as DK, PG or HJ, that are included in the MRZ of Brunei passports?**

A: We do not have much familiarity with passports from Brunei. We would appreciate if you could send us some examples, so we can give you better guidance.

Q: **Last month one our Thai nonimmigrants had her first name listed as Miss Prutera on her passport. Should this be included in SEVIS?**

A: This partly depends on what portion of the passport indicated "Miss." This is a really interesting case, and we'd appreciate a sample of that passport biographic page to compare the VIZ and MRZ. It is very possible that the VIZ allows for more variation than the MRZ. If it is not in the MRZ, it is probably an honorific and you would not use it.

Special Characters in a Name

Q: **Should we stop entering accents and special character in the name fields?**

A: It would be wise to stop entering accents or special characters from this date forward. This will ensure that nonimmigrant interactions with different government agencies have one standard document that won't change in the middle of a particular process.

Q: **Do we need to fill in the Passport Name if a nonimmigrant's name is Yi-Cheng; or will it be fine if we only put Yi Cheng in the Given Name without the hyphen? Can we enter the special characters in the Preferred Name field?**

A: It is fine to put Yi Cheng in the Given Name field without the hyphen. The Passport Name is never a required field, regardless of the punctuation in the VIZ. (Remember, punctuation is not allowed in the Passport Name field either.) You can always enter the name with a hyphen (or any other special character appearing in the VIZ) in the Preferred Name field only.

Q: **Please confirm that when the name has a national-specific character, we should spell the name displayed in the machine readable zone of the passport. For example, Wahlstrøm would be spelled Wahlstroem, if that is how it is spelled in the MRZ.**

A: Enter the name as reflected in the machine readable zone. If the nonimmigrant wants the name written with the special character, you can put that in the Preferred Name field.

Q: **If a name in SEVIS has a special character in it, e.g. Ö, will SEVIS automatically change it to add the extra letter OE? Countries seem to vary on whether the extra letter is always added in the machine-readable section or if the special character is simply removed and written as O?**

A: In the SEVIS conversion, SEVIS will convert Ö to OE. After the conversion, the Surname/Primary, Given and Passport name fields will not accept Ö. You will get an error message. The preferred name field will accept Ö.

Q: I noticed that the German Eszett, the double S character listed in the screen shot of the SEVIS standardization impact report, was standardized to just a single, upper-case S. However, in the webinar handout materials, it lists the transliteration for the Eszett represented by two SS's. Can you clarify?

A: At the time of the first webinar, we were using a set of characters that is now outdated. We have since decided to completely standardize the characters set, based on the international passport standards. Here are the changes: ü=ue, ä=ae, æ=ae, Ö=oe, ø=o, Đ=D, ß=ss, þ=th.

Q: What are the definitions of FNU and LNU?

A: FNU can mean multiple things: generally, Family Name Unknown, or First Name Unknown. LNU is used for Last Name Unknown.

Q: You have stated that FNU is no longer allowed. Did you mean that FNU would no longer be allowed in the Surname field, the Given Name field, or both?

A: FNU is not to be used in any of the name fields.

Q: Will "NLN" (No Last Name) be included in the conversion process, or will those have to be updated by the university?

A: The institution will have to update these cases. Do not use NLN in lieu of a last name.

Q: A point of clarification for how we handle nonimmigrants with single names; for example, "Jyoti," if we will no longer use FNU, LNU, or UNK – what do we put?

A: If there is only one name for a nonimmigrant, put that name, "Jyoti," in the current Surname/Primary Name field. Leave the Given Name field blank.

Q: If SEVIS will no longer accept FNU, will it be a problem if the visa still indicates FNU?

A: No, this will not be a problem in SEVIS. We are coordinating our efforts to standardize names in SEVIS with other government partners, so they are aware of these changes.

Q: What if FNU (Family Name Unknown) appears in the MRZ of the passport?

A: We have not seen FNU in the MRZ of the passport. Make sure you are looking at the biographic page in the passport and not the visa page (where FNU sometimes appears). If you have an example of FNU appearing on the biographic page of a passport, email a copy to SEVISTechnicalFeedback@ice.dhs.gov for consideration.

Q: How would a Real-Time Interface (RTI) user provide confirmation of a real name in the case of UNK or NA?

A: SEVIS will ask the RTI user to confirm that UNK and NA are real names, before it will accept the submission of those values.

Q: **We have seen a passport with a period as a family name, and it is in the MRZ. Are you saying that we should leave this out, even though in the MRZ?**

A: This sounds like a typo. SEVIS will not allow you to use a special character (period) in the Given or Primary Name fields. You will need to put the VIZ given name in the Surname/Primary Name field.

Q: **Can a DSO enter a period in the First Name field, if the nonimmigrant only has one name?**

A: No, once the names standards are implemented, periods will not be allowed in any name field.

Q: **Do the name requirements apply only to EVs or also to hosts? I'm with an au pair sponsor and we enter host family names into SEVIS, as well as the EV names.**

A: This will only apply to nonimmigrant names. Sponsor names will not be affected.

General Questions about Names

Q: **Will any regulations change to reflect these validations?**

A: No; these are validations, so they do not require any regulatory changes.

Q: **I have a nonimmigrant with a machine-readable passport that shows first name as XXX when run through the I-94 system. He has to get it fixed every time.**

A: Please send us a copy at SEVISTechnicalFeedback@ice.dhs.gov so we can review it. We will give you feedback and update our guidance with additional examples.

Q: **Would it be a problem for nonimmigrants if the standard used in SEVIS doesn't match the one used by the institution's database? For example; if we get an RFE requesting transcripts, it is very likely that the name on the transcript will not match the name in SEVIS. That can easily happen with Vietnamese names.**

A: The name in the institutional database can be entered into the Preferred Name field. This would link the record.

Q: **Aren't school/sponsor officials required to see a copy of the passport before creating the Form I-20/Form DS-2019?**

A: No, there isn't any regulatory requirement to reference a passport before creating a record in SEVIS; but it is a good practice to look at a copy of the passport prior to entering the name into SEVIS so it is consistent with the passport.

Q: **What should we do if we don't have the passport to refer to when creating the Form I-20/Form DS-2019?**

A: Use the best information available to you at the time. You can update the Name field once you are able to match it to a passport.

Q: **Why would the name in the SEVIS record differ from what is on the passport?**

A: The entry of names is often confusing. Some organizations do not have a passport to consult while creating the SEVIS record. These organizations can use the name that

appears on a nonimmigrant's application or the name that is fed through batch software from their institutional database, as long as it complies with SEVIS standards. SEVP suggests it is best practice to base the SEVIS name on the passport name, whenever possible.

Q: **Will the name conversion affect the I-901 Fee Payment System?**
A: No, the Form I-901 matching will be updated so either the new surname/primary name or the legacy SEVIS last name can be entered.

Q: **Primary usually indicates first. Why is SEVP using primary for family name?**
A: In this case, primary indicates the most important name. This is also the term used in the passport standards.

Q: **We had a J-2 dependent with more than 25 characters in her last name. Her surname included her village and her father's name. How would this be handled in the new format?**
A: Compare the name the nonimmigrant has given on the application to the passport MRZ. If it matches, enter the entire name. However, if there is a U.S. visa that contradicts the passport MRZ, but matches the nonimmigrant's name, follow the U.S. visa.

Q: **Can we enter a name that is only one character long?**
A: Yes.

Q: **Are there restrictions on the lengths of the name fields? Some nonimmigrants have names over 50 characters long.**
A: Yes, name fields are restricted to the following character lengths:

Name Field	Character Limit
Surname/Primary Name	40
Given Name	80
Preferred Name	145
Passport Name	39

Q: **Is there a standard way to handle a last/first name combination that exceeds the MRZ printable length?**
A: Enter the surname in its entirety in the Surname/Primary Name field. The same goes for the given name in the Given Name field. If you are completing the Preferred Name field, you can enter the entire name there also. However, enter the name as it is typed in the MRZ in the Passport Name section. (See the SEVIS Name Standards User Guide.)

Q: **We are concerned that the Last Name field of 40 characters will not allow Spanish, Portuguese, or Latin family names. Could it not allow 80 characters as the Given Name field does? Why is the Primary Name field much shorter?**

A: We are keeping the same length that we have had for SEVIS of 40 characters for the Surname field. You can put the additional names into the Preferred Name field. A 40-character minimum in the Surname field better matches other systems that use SEVIS names.

Q: Should we honor capitalization conventions? In your name example, if D'Amico had been written with a lower case "d" and a capital "A," should we input the name in SEVIS that way? What about McDonald or MacDonald?

A: You can honor the capitalization conventions. We will not control capitalization on names. If you put it in in all caps, SEVIS will take it in all caps. (We discourage using all caps.) If you use an initial small letter as opposed to a capital letter, SEVIS will honor that as well. The same would go for McDonald or MacDonald.

Q: We currently put all capitals for Last/Family Name. Is it possible to use all capitals for a family name with the new name standard?

A: Yes, the new fields will accept any combination of capital and lowercase letters.

Q: How should we deal with initials; for example, a nonimmigrant with the name Abdullah K S M A Al Muhana?

A: First, identify the surname in the MRZ and see if it matches the VIZ. The rest of the name, plus initials, belongs in the Given Name field. Remember, you can enter the name as the nonimmigrant wishes in the Preferred Name field too.

Q: In your examples of the MRZ, I assume CAN means Canada. Why isn't there a filler character in between the last name and the issuing state?

A: The MRZ standards were established by the International Standards Organization and accepted by most countries around the world. Their standard does not include a separating caret between the country abbreviation and the start of the primary identifier.

Q: Do we need to make changes to current nonimmigrants whose names fall under the old SEVIS standards, even if it creates differences between what it in SEVIS and what's on their passport or visa?

A: SEVIS will automatically make changes in 2015, when these standards take effect. At that point, SEVIS will print both the current name and the SEVIS legacy name on the Form I-20/Form DS-2019.

Q: Will F-2 dependent names be affected by the naming standards?

A: Yes, name standards will apply to dependents.

Q: What if you have an international nonimmigrant that has gotten married and is a dependent. How would that be listed?

A: For dependents, the name should reflect whatever is on their passports. If they have not updated their passports, we would not recommend that you update their names in SEVIS until they have gotten new passports.

SEVIS Names FAQ

Form DS-2019

Q: **Is the Form DS-2019 going to be updated to adhere to the name standards you are implementing; i.e., removal of the middle name, showing the preferred name, as well as, the MRZ compliant name?**

A: Yes, all changes are occurring on both certificates of eligibility, the Form DS-2019 and Form I-20.

Q: **Must the name that populates on the Form DS-2019 match the I-901?**

A: Yes, when creating the Form I-901, use the name on the Form DS-2019. If the name is changed as part of the conversion, this will not cause an issue with the fee payment.

Q: **Is it correct the Middle Name field will be eliminated from the Form DS-2019? Will this take effect in the spring of 2015 or earlier?**

A: Our form is going to be modified to show the Surname/Primary Name and the Given Name fields. The Given Name field will display what was previously the first name and the middle names together. However, for the time being, the Middle Name field will continue to display.

Notification to School/Sponsor Officials of Changed Nonimmigrant Names via Standardization Impact Report

Q: **Will school/sponsor officials get a list of nonimmigrant names that will change prior to the Name Conversion?**

A: Yes, school/sponsor officials can download a report that lists the nonimmigrant/exchange visitor name as it currently exists in SEVIS and as it will be after the conversion in 2015. This report is accessible from the Nonimmigrant or Exchange Visitor Lists page in SEVIS. It is updated once a week.

Q: **Will the report only include nonimmigrants with active or initial records?**

A: Yes, it only contains primary nonimmigrants with active records and initial records. Dependents will not be included.

Q: **If we see a problem with a name on the Standardization Report, do we contact SEVP to change it or do we change the name ourselves?**

A: If there is a problem with a name on the report, you can either:
- Email SEVP (SEVISTechnicalFeedback@ice.dhs.gov), if it is about the transliteration of a name with special characters.
- Correct the name yourself, if the removal of disallowed values (LNU, FNU, unknown, N/A, etc.) will result in a loss of all names.

Q: **How will officials be notified if SEVIS changes a nonimmigrant's name after the conversion?**

A: You will be able to download a list for all active and initial nonimmigrants, whose names were changed in the conversion. Dependents will be included on the list.

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Q: **Will nonimmigrant names of completed records be standardized?**

A: The actual release will standardize every nonimmigrant name in SEVIS, including dependents and inactive, terminated, and completed records.

Q: **Do we only change current names or the entire group of names, including completed records?**

A: You are not required to do any standardization for past participants. The system will do it. Before standardization, you only need to focus on initial and active records.

Q: **What about terminated records for nonimmigrants who will be applying for reinstatement and/or nonimmigrants using "termination" as the work around for leave of absence?**

A: All records will be converted. If the record status is terminated, you will be able to see the change but cannot edit it until recommending reinstatement.

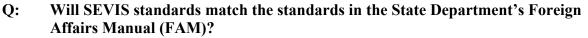## Printing Form I-20 or Form DS-2019 for Nonimmigrants Whose Names Were Converted

Q: **Do Form I-20s that have already been made for nonimmigrants arriving after the name standardization have to be reprinted again, if their names have been standardized, i.e., have special characters?**

A: No, it's not required, but it may be a good idea prior to standardization, if the name change is significant.

Q: **Do we have to print Form I-20s/Form DS-2019s for all nonimmigrants whose names changed?**

A: This is a decision each school and sponsor must make individually. The August SEVIS Name Standardization Impact Report shows how nonimmigrant names will change next year. You can assess how this would affect your institution. Depending on work load, you may only want to reprint forms for those whose names have changed dramatically.

Q: **If we have to print Form I-20s for nonimmigrants whose names have changed, will there be an easy way to print them *en masse* or would we have to do it record by record?**

A: The ability to print updated Form I-20s all at one time is a good suggestion and one we will take back for consideration. Send any comments on this suggestion to SEVISTechnicalFeedback@ice.dhs.gov.

Q: **Will the field names and labels be changed in SEVIS? For example, on the first screen it asks for Visa Type and Family Name. Will this change to Surname/Primary Name?**

A: Yes the field names will change in SEVIS. There will be instructions on the fields.

Q: What exactly will print out on the Form I-20 with these various name conventions: surname/primary name, given name, passport name, preferred name, or all of the above?

A: The Form I-20 will be updated to print all the names.

Q: Are you considering a complete redesign for the Form I-20/DS-2019?

A: SEVP: Yes, we are redesigning the Form I-20.
Department of State: Yes, we are in the process of updating the Form DS-2019.

Q: When the name changes to convert to the new standard, will the Form I-20s/Form DS-2019s with old names be invalid?

A: The existing forms will not be immediately invalid. SEVP will provide guidance on when nonimmigrants must have updated forms.

Coordination with Other Government Agencies

Q: Will the names of OPT-approved nonimmigrants with issued EAD cards need to be modified on the Employment Authorization Documents (EAD)?

A: No, EADs will not have to be changed. You will be able to get a Form I-20 with both sets of names on it. We are also going to be working with USCIS to make sure their systems and adjudicators have access to SEVIS and the additional names.

Q: Is SEVP coordinating the new name standards with other government agencies, such as the state Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) or the Social Security Administration (SSA)?

A: Yes, while we are not working with each individual DMV, we are coordinating with the Systematic Alien Verification for Entitlements (SAVE) agency that coordinates with the DMVs. We are also discussing this with the Social Security Administration. These standards should improve SEVIS interfaces with other government agencies.

Q: If the Department of State allows FNU and LNU, but SEVIS does not, what will happen when nonimmigrants go to the DMV and SSA and they try to validate the nonimmigrant?

A: DMVs validate nonimmigrants via SAVE. We are working closely with the people at SAVE, who welcome these new name standards. There should be limited issues.

Q: Currently we get many participants that report Social Security issues, based around the absence of accent marks or the absence of middle names listed under their first name, even though it appears that way on their passport. When is the Social Security process going to be updated to comply with the new SEVIS standards, as Social Security currently rejects applicants that already adhere to the standards?

A: This is something that we will bring up with the Social Security Administration at the Headquarters level – it does not always trickle down, as well as it should to the offices. In addition though, we do have a liaison here at SEVP to help you deal with Social Security issues (dmvssa.sevp@ice.dhs.gov).

Q: **Will SEVIS standards match the standards in the State Department's Foreign Affairs Manual (FAM)?**

A: School/Sponsor officials should not rely on the FAM. Use the name in the MRZ of the passport first; and if that doesn't work, follow the individual country's naming conventions, as seen on the U.S. visa or noted in the SEVIS Names Standards User Guide.

Q: **After removing FNU from the Form I-20, will the nonimmigrants be required to update the visa when returning to their home country? The visa will no longer match the Form I-20 and I'm sure this will cause concern from the nonimmigrant.**

A: Eventually, the Form I-20 will list the nonimmigrant's name, as it appeared before the standardization (legacy name). There will not be any need to update the nonimmigrant's visa.

Q: **Will these new standards be used by consulates issuing visas for nonimmigrants coming this fall?**

A: No, we share our naming standards with other government entities, but there isn't a government-wide standard for entering names into the different name fields across the government systems. The Department of State is aware of SEVP's new naming standardization and it should not affect the visa applications.

Q: **We were recently informed by a nonimmigrant in India that the DS-160 application for an F-1 visa advised that he use LNU. Can you confirm that to your knowledge, the Department of State has been informed of this name change and is working on updates to the DS-160?**

A: We can confirm that Department of State knows about the change. We can also confirm that they are probably not going to change the Form DS-160, nor will they change their procedure to use LNU. Students will need to complete the Form DS-160 as suggested by the Department of State.

Q: **For nonimmigrants who have applied for visas with a pre-standardization name, how will they be affected if the names are standardized and their application has not been adjudicated?**

A: We are working with Department of State to minimize the effect of the SEVIS name conversion on nonimmigrants with pending visa applications.

Q: **Are you also talking to Custom and Border Protection (CBP) with regard to the name changes, as their name in SEVIS may no longer match the Form I-20 or Form DS-2019? It is possible this will cause border entry issues.**

A: Yes, we are talking to CBP about the name changes. As a reminder, as a DSO you always have the option to reprint the Form I-20/DS-2019 for any nonimmigrant whose name has been changed.

Q: **Custom and Border Protection's on-line I-94 retrieval system requires first AND last names. What will the I-94 indicate if the nonimmigrant only has one name? Which field will be used – the First or the Last Name field?**

A: CBP Port of Entry (POE) Officers will continue using name standards that apply to their systems. However, SEVP is working with them to ensure that SEVIS and POE interfaces work properly.

Q: **Many I-94s have "incorrect" names where multiples are listed without spaces. Are I-94s generated via reading of the MRZ as well? Does this pose a problem with matching?**

A: SEVP must defer to CBP on questions about how the names on I-94s are generated.

Names in the Batch Environment

Q: **Are you publishing information about the batch process and how it is affected by the name standardization?**

A: Yes, the batch process will be affected by the name standardization in pretty much the same way that RTI will be, as far as how the rules apply. The Names Schema is available by request at SEVISTechnicalFeedback@ice.dhs.gov.

Q: **If we don't know anyone in the batch working group or our institution is not represented, how can we get informed of their decisions?**

A: Write us at SEVISTechnicalFeedback@ice.dhs.gov; we will put you on the mailing list for batch users. We have periodic webinars for batch users.

Q: **Can the preferred name also be batched to SEVIS?**

A: Yes, the preferred name can be entered into SEVIS via batch.

Q: **If our system requires a first and last name, and there is only a single name, what can we use as a placeholder for the First Name field – a period? Is this something that must be addressed with our software vendor?**

A: You must discuss this with your batch vendor. If a person has only one name, SEVIS should reflect only one name, and it should appear in the Surname/Primary Name field. SEVIS will reject a record where there is a period in any name field.

Q: **Please explain any impacts to batch processing with the new name standards.**

A: Batch schema will be changed to reflect the new name standards. SEVIS will reject batches that do not conform to the new schema and records that do not meet the new naming standards.

Q: **What will be the consequences of attempting to batch an unaccepted character in the Names field? Will the whole batch fail to upload or will an error code be returned upon batch download?**

A: An unacceptable character in the Name field will cause an error for the record. It will not cause rejection of the entire batch file.

Q: **After the name standards take effect, what will SEVIS do if middle names are batched? Will they be fed to the First Name field or will the middle name be rejected?**

A: The batch schema will be changed to allow only the transmission of the new data fields. The Middle Name field will not be part of that schema. If the batch file contains a Middle Name field, it will be rejected for a schema violation. Contact your batch vendor for information on how they plan to address these changes.

Q: **Our banner system requires that there must be a character in the Given Name field. For nonimmigrants without given names, can we use a period?**

A: We have been in discussion with the batch vendors. Since we are changing the batch schema requirements, the vendors must adapt their programs to adhere to the new schema. Contact your batch vendor to discuss this issue with them.

Q: **Are there any implications to batch for nonimmigrants with UNK or NA in their name or does this just affect real time users?**

A: This is just going to affect real time users. We are going to make the assumption that batch users will be using UNK and NA for nonimmigrants or exchange visitors that actually have these names. So we will accept these names in batch without additional confirmation.

Q: **How can I obtain the new batch schema?**

A: Draft schemas for names and addresses are now available. Email SEVISTechnicalFeedback@ice.dhs.gov to request a copy.

Names-Related Resources

The following resources are available on Study in the States:

- SEVIS Name Standards User Guide
- SEVIS Name Fields Job Aid

Document Revision History

Date	Summary of Release
July 11, 2014	Initial Release – Name-related questions from 5/16/2014 Names and Addresses Webinar
July 21, 2014	Name-related questions from 6/27/2-14 Names Webinar added
October 30, 2014	Updated to reflect revised name standards.