



The Student and Exchange Visitor Program (SEVP) will modify the name standards in the Student and Exchange Visitor information System (SEVIS), effective late spring/early summer of 2015. The new name standards will:

- Improve the ability to search for records in SEVIS.
- Improve data matching between government databases.
- Apply to all students, exchange visitors, and spouses/dependents.

SEVIS Name Fields

The name fields in SEVIS will change:

Current Field in SEVIS	Becomes	Description
Last Name	Surname/Primary Name	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• This relabeled field is required.• If a person only has one name, that name is entered in this field.
First Name	Given Name	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• This relabeled field includes first and middle names, if applicable.• If a person only has one name, this field is blank.• If a person has more than one name, any names not entered in the Surname/Primary Name field are entered here.
Middle Name		<ul style="list-style-type: none">• This field will no longer exist in SEVIS.• Middle names will be moved into the Given Name field following the first name.
Suffix	Suffix	No change
	Preferred name	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• This optional new field allows for the entry of the name as the nonimmigrant prefers it.• Some special characters are allowed in this field: ~, ^, ` , ' , ° , .
	Passport Name	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• This optional new field is for the entry of the nonimmigrant's name exactly as it appears in the machine-readable zone of the passport.

Allowable Character Sets

SEVIS will limit the characters entered into the name fields. Only the characters A through Z with no special accents are allowed in any name field, other than the new Preferred Name field. SEVIS will convert existing names to the new standards by:



- Replacing letters that have special characters with the appropriate A through Z letter. [Example: Hélène Garçon becomes Helene Garcon]
- Deleting any periods or spaces that appear to be placeholders in a required name field.
- Replacing hyphens with a space. [Example: Thompson-Craswell becomes Thompson Craswell]
- Deleting apostrophes and their space. [Example: D'Amico becomes DAMico]
- Deleting anything between quotes or parentheses. [Example: Wei Lin "Helen" Chen becomes Wei Lin Chen, and Sook Eun (w/o Kim) Lee becomes Sook Eun Lee]
- Moving middle names after the first name in the Given Name field, separated by a space.
- Deleting FNU, LNU, Unknown, and N/A.

Role of the Machine Readable Zone of the Passport (MRZ)

When possible, school and sponsor officials are encouraged to use the Name section of the passport's machine readable zone as a guide for deciding:

- How to enter names into SEVIS that contain special characters.
- Which parts of a name are considered the primary identifier; therefore, to be entered into the Surname/Primary field. The parts of the name before the double carets (<<) are seen as the primary identifier.

The home country has already made these determinations. In cases where the MRZ appears to be wrong or is not available, school and sponsor officials can rely on the U.S. visa or their own judgment.

Understanding the MRZ

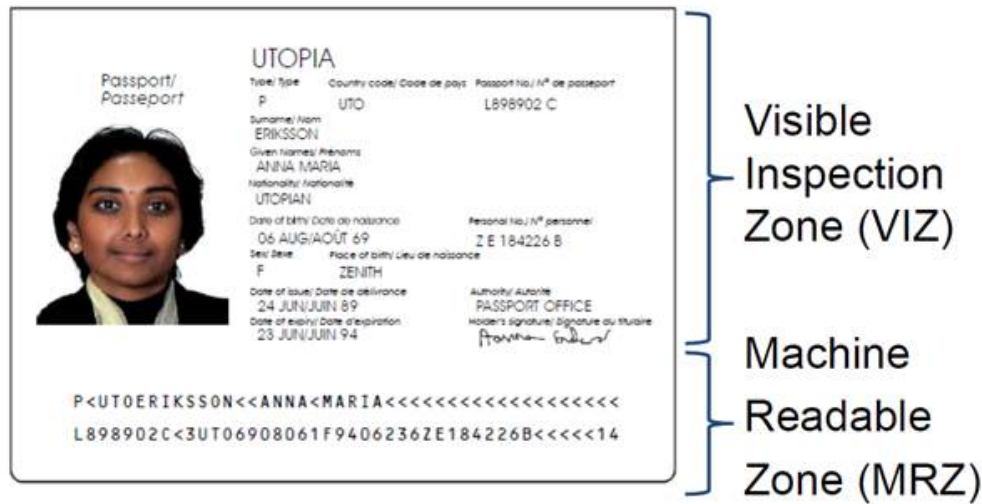


Figure 1: Image taken from Appendix 5 to Section IV Document 9303 Machine Readable Travel Documents Volume I (ICAO), page IV-38

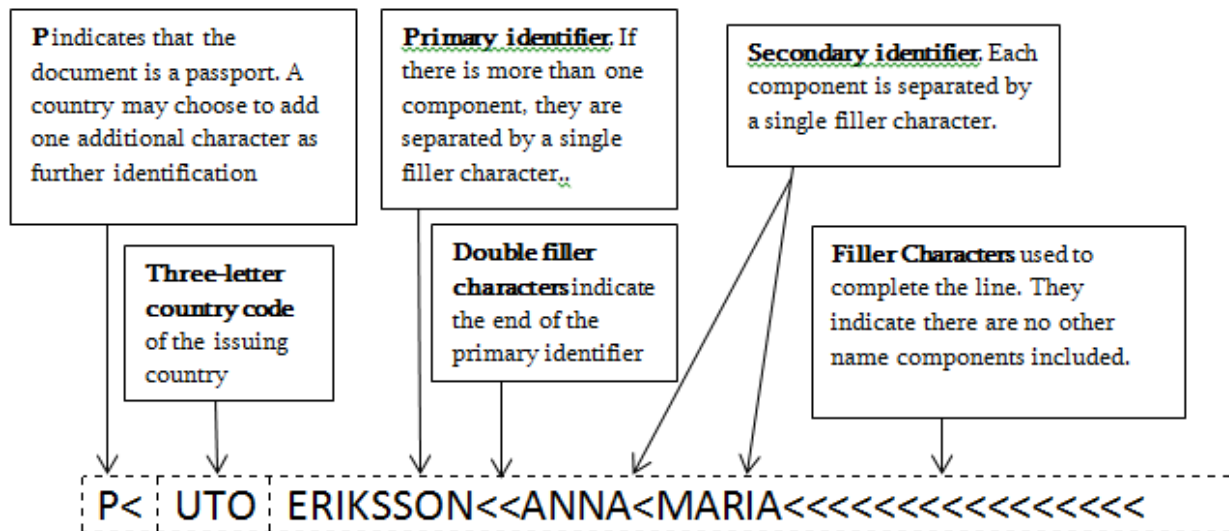


Figure 2: Construction of the name portion of the MRZ recreated from Appendix 6 to Section IV in Document 9303 Machine Readable Travel Documents Volume I (ICAO), page IV-42

Form I-20 and Form DS-2019

The Form I-20 and the Form DS-2019 will be modified to display the new name fields.

Communication with Other Government Agencies

SEVP is working with its government partners on these changes.



Recommended Actions for Schools and Sponsors

School and sponsor officials are encouraged to assess how these changes will affect their institution and formulate appropriate plans for managing this transition.

Although these changes are initiated by SEVP, and will be automatically implemented by SEVIS in 2015, schools and sponsors are encouraged to use these new standards when creating a Form I-20 or Form DS-2019. This will minimize the number of records affected by the name conversion in 2015.

Additional Resources

- SEVIS Name Standards User Guide
- SEVIS Name Standards FAQ
- [Document 9303 Machine Readable Travel Documents](#), published by the International Civil Aviation Organization