



## **Spring/Summer 2015 Conference Presentation Script**

### **Chapter One: Welcome to the Spring/Summer 2015 Conference Presentation**

- Welcome to the Student and Exchange Visitor Program's (SEVP) Spring/Summer 2015 Conference Presentation. This season, we are engaging with our stakeholders through a number of conferences, webinars, and teleconferences. If you are unable to attend an event this season, this presentation will provide you with an overview of important SEVP updates and initiatives — most of which were requested by you, our stakeholders.
- SEVP strives to consistently meet our stakeholders' needs while ensuring the program keeps up with evolving trends in international education. Throughout this presentation, we will highlight tips and best practices for designated school officials, as well as the resources available on [Study in the States](#).
- This season, SEVP introduced a new, interactive viewing format that allows users to select from a list of topics, as well as watch brief, five-minute videos containing pertinent program news and updates.
- Following this introductory video, we recommend watching the complete video series to receive a comprehensive overview of upcoming SEVP priorities, as well as general program news and updates. During this presentation, we will discuss:
  - Recent regulatory changes, draft guidance documents previously available for comment on Study in the States, as well as upcoming draft and interim final guidance;
  - Current Form I-17, "Petition for Approval of School for Attendance by Nonimmigrant Student," update processing times and the fields on the Form I-17 that require adjudication;
  - Hot topics for international students and SEVP-certified schools;
  - Planned enhancements to the Student and Exchange Visitor Information System;
  - SEVP's commitment to improving stakeholder support through the SEVP Response Center and SEVP field representatives; and
  - How school officials can use Study in the States as a resource in their daily work and stay up-to-date with the latest program news and updates.
- Following this presentation, we invite you to share your feedback about this video and any additional SEVP presentations you attend. SEVP reviews your comments throughout the season and incorporates your thoughts and feedback into future presentations and



resources. The best way to provide your input is by taking the Stakeholder Satisfaction Survey on Study in the States at [StudyintheStates.dhs.gov/Survey](http://StudyintheStates.dhs.gov/Survey).



## Chapter Two: Policy and Regulatory Updates

- The U.S. Department of Homeland Security **amended its regulations** under the Student and Exchange Visitor Program (SEVP) to improve management of international student programs and increase opportunities for study by spouses and children of international students. The Federal Register published the Final Rule on April 29, 2015, with the amended regulations taking effect on May 29, 2015.
- Under the amended regulations, SEVP-certified schools have greater flexibility in determining how many designated school officials (DSOs) to nominate.
  - Previously, SEVP-certified schools could only nominate a maximum of 10 DSOs. The new regulation removes the cap and permits SEVP-certified schools to nominate an appropriate number of DSOs based on their school's specific needs.
- Additionally, the new rule permits dependents (F-2 and M-2) of international students to engage in part-time study at SEVP-certified schools. While schools are not required to report this data in the Student and Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS), they must be able to provide evidence that any and all dependents are participating in part-time, rather than full-time, study at the postsecondary level.
  - F-2 and M-2 dependents can still participate up to full-time in avocational or recreational studies, such as hobbies. Additionally, F-2 and M-2 minors can attend kindergarten through 12th grade full-time. However, if an F-2 or M-2 wants to enroll in a full course of academic study at the postsecondary level, they must apply for and obtain approval to change their nonimmigrant classification to F-1, J-1, or M-1.
- For frequently asked questions concerning these regulatory changes, please visit the Adjustments to Designated School Official Limits and Dependent Study FAQ at [ICE.gov/SEVIS/Schools](http://ICE.gov/SEVIS/Schools). You can access the FAQ under the "Helpful Documents" header on the Certification page.
  - If you have further questions, please contact the SEVP Response Center (SRC). For general questions about the rule, email [SEVP@ice.dhs.gov](mailto:SEVP@ice.dhs.gov). For questions about how to input additional DSOs in SEVIS, email [SEVISHelpDesk@ice.dhs.gov](mailto:SEVISHelpDesk@ice.dhs.gov). You can also contact the SRC via phone at 703-603-3400 or 800-892-4829.
- We will now briefly **review draft and interim final guidance documents** previously available for comment on Study in the States. As a reminder, draft guidance is *not* agency policy and is *not* the same as federal governing regulations. Additionally, draft guidance does *not* establish standards or requirements for SEVP adjudicators. In comparison, interim final guidance is official SEVP policy used by adjudicators, but remains open for public feedback. Schools are expected to comply with interim final guidance during an SEVP review.
- In autumn 2014, SEVP posted draft guidance on pathway programs, as well as interim final



guidance on the definition of the academic year, to Study in the States. The pathway programs draft guidance comprised the third of a three-part series on conditional admission and pathway programs.

- Posted in July 2014, the first part of the draft guidance series focused on **conditional admission** and addressed the practice of schools issuing a Form I-20, "Certificate of Eligibility for Nonimmigrant Student Status," to a student who does not meet all admissions requirements.
- The second draft guidance document addressed **the Form I-20 and the English proficiency field**, and provided instruction for school officials to consistently enter information into SEVIS.
- In September 2014, SEVP posted the third draft guidance document, which focused on **pathway programs** and provided a follow-up to the May 2013 draft guidance on bridge programs and conditional admission.
- The pathway programs draft guidance series received 100 stakeholder comments and is currently under review by SEVP. We appreciate your feedback and will review all input to develop additional guidance on the topic.
- Interim final guidance on the **definition of an academic year** received 60 comments. We are currently reviewing your feedback and will release the guidance in interim final form on [ICE.gov/SEVP](http://ICE.gov/SEVP).
  - School officials should remember that SEVP released this guidance in interim final status and all schools are expected to comply with the guidance during a review. To learn more about interim final guidance, or to view the academic year guidance document, visit the [SEVP Guidance for Comment](#) page on Study in the States.
- In response to an audit by the Government Accountability Office, upcoming **draft guidance** documents will primarily focus on student employment.
  - **Employment-related guidance** will address on-campus employment, off-campus employment, student internships with an international organization and emergent circumstances for F-1 students, as well as general employment — that is, content applicable to more than one type of employment benefit — for F-1 and M-1 students.
- Additionally, SEVP expects to release **interim final guidance** on the following topics previously available for comment and revised to incorporate stakeholder feedback. Upcoming interim final guidance topics include:
  - **F-1 Student Absence**, which explains how F-1 students leaving the United States during a school session can apply for a temporary absence, as well as the re-admittance process;



- **F-1 Annual Vacation and School Breaks**, which defines a vacation and explains when and under what circumstances an F-1 student may take an annual vacation, as well as addresses school breaks for F-1 students; and
- **M-1 Student Absence and School Breaks**, which explains how M-1 students leaving the country during a school session can apply for a temporary absence, the re-admittance process, and school breaks for M-1 students.
- For more information on SEVP policy guidance, and to register to receive alerts when SEVP posts new draft guidance, visit the [SEVP Guidance for Comment](#) page on Study in the States.



## Chapter Three: News from the School Certification Unit

- The Student and Exchange Visitor Program (SEVP) is currently processing Form I-17, “Petition for Approval of School for Attendance by Nonimmigrant Student,” updates from January and February 2015. Due to the high number of petition updates submitted daily, the average time frame for adjudication is at least 60 days, and may take longer depending on the nature of the requested update.
- Remember, an update to the Form I-17 **is not the same as the recertification process**. Schools are expected to maintain an updated Form I-17 throughout the year and respond to SEVP’s recertification notices.
- We want to remind designated school officials (DSOs) of tips and best practices to keep in mind when planning and making updates to the Form I-17. Following these tips will help prepare your school for recertification, and ensure updates are processed in a timely manner.

### **Tip Number One: Keep your Form I-17 up-to-date**

- We strongly recommend that DSOs review their school’s Form I-17 on a regular basis, and submit updates as needed. Regular updates to the Form I-17 — as opposed to updates made prior to recertification — will ensure accurate and timely processing, in addition to making the recertification process easier for you and your school.

### **Tip Number Two: Keep important dates in mind**

- School officials should remember that all changes to the Form I-17 must be adjudicated prior to filing for recertification. Therefore, we recommend that school officials always keep important dates in mind, such as the school’s certification expiration date (CED), when planning to submit an update.
- School officials will receive a notification through the Student and Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS) 180 days prior to the CED. We strongly recommend that DSOs do not wait until they receive the 180-day CED notification to update their school’s Form I-17. DSOs should update the Form I-17 continuously throughout the year to reflect the school’s current information. However, we recommend that DSOs review their school’s Form I-17 upon receipt of the 180-day CED notification and submit any updates, if necessary.

### **Tip Number Three: Check your email address in SEVIS**

- School officials should ensure that the principal designated school official (PDSO) email address listed in SEVIS is accurate so the school can continue to receive notifications and requests for evidence from SEVP.



- Additionally, we have several resources available on Study in the States to assist DSOs with completing and updating the Form I-17, including:
  - The [Form I-17 Tutorial](#), which provides a step-by-step overview of how to complete the Form I-17. Viewers can download an accompanying transcript and Form I-17 Fact Sheet for detailed information on SEVP certification, the Form I-17, and related information. You can access the tutorial through the School's Portal on Study in the States.
  - The [Fact Sheet: A Guide to the Form I-17](#), which reviews how to apply for initial SEVP certification, explains the certification process, provides detailed instructions to help you complete the Form I-17 in SEVIS and includes a glossary of terms to reference while filling out the Form I-17; and
  - In addition, the **"Questions from DSOs" blog series** allows school officials to submit general questions related to the international student process. Each month, SEVP answers your questions through a Study in the States blog post. Past blog posts answered questions such as, "How do I make changes to the Form I-17 during recertification?" You can submit questions for the blog series by email to [SEVPCommunications@ice.dhs.gov](mailto:SEVPCommunications@ice.dhs.gov) with the subject line "Questions from DSOs."
- School officials should keep in mind that several fields on the Form I-17 require adjudication when edited via petition update, including:
  - **Fields one through five**, which contain the petition designation (F, M, or both), the name of the school, the type of school, and its mailing address;
  - **Fields nine and ten**, which contain the location of the school (if different from the mailing address), as well as the name and address of the school's owner;
  - **Fields 12 through 16**, which contain the school's U.S. state license or exemption, name of the accrediting body, subject matter offered, as well as the degrees and education levels available to students;
  - **Fields 19 and 22**, which contain the course(s) of study offered and the school's average annual student population; and
  - **PDSO and DSO Listings and Form I-17B, "Record of Schools/Campuses."**
- For a complete listing of all fields that require adjudication on the Form I-17, download the **Recertification Checklist**, which is available through the [School's Portal](#) on Study in the States and at [ICE.gov/SEVP](http://ICE.gov/SEVP).



## **Chapter Four: Student and School Hot Topics**

- The Student and Exchange Visitor Program (SEVP) regularly monitors trends in the international student community. The I-901 Student and Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS) Fee, student employment, and Form I-515A, “Notice to Student or Exchange Visitor,” continue to be hot topics for international students. To ensure international students remain compliant with federal rules and regulations, we want to remind designated school officials (DSOs) of the following tips and best practices:

**Tip Number One: Remind students to pay the I-901 SEVIS Fee on their current SEVIS ID to ensure smooth travel. The SEVIS ID must correspond to the Form I-20, “Certificate of Eligibility for Nonimmigrant Student Status,” the student uses to enter the United States.**

- If a returning student receives a new Form I-20 with a new SEVIS ID, the student is required to pay the I-901 SEVIS Fee again. In most situations, the I-901 SEVIS Fee cannot be transferred from a student’s previous SEVIS record to a new record that the student will use or has used to enter the United States and maintain nonimmigrant student status.
- A student can request an I-901 SEVIS Fee transfer **only** when he or she received multiple Forms I-20 while in Initial status, and the I-901 SEVIS Fee is attached to a Form I-20/SEVIS record that was not used to receive a visa and enter the United States.
  - For questions concerning a student’s eligibility for a fee transfer, contact the SEVP Response Center by phone at 703-603-3400 or 800-892-4829, or via email at [SEVP@ice.dhs.gov](mailto:SEVP@ice.dhs.gov).
- In the case of a returning student with a different SEVIS ID, the student should pay the I-901 SEVIS Fee before traveling and/or their visa interview to facilitate a smooth re-entry into the United States.

**Tip Number Two: Remember important information regarding authorized periods of optional practical training (OPT).**

- Post-completion OPT can start no later than 60 days after the student’s program end date listed in SEVIS.
  - Students with approved post-completion OPT that do not begin their employment on the approved start date must report any time spent unemployed to their school official. Students with approved post-completion OPT are permitted up to 90 days of unemployment before falling out of status.





- The OPT period must end approximately one year after the approved start date, unless the student is eligible for a science, technology, engineering and mathematics extension.
- If the student's OPT approval dates on the employment authorization document appear to be an error, the student should contact U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) to request a correction.

**Tip Number Three: Ensure accurate OPT reporting.**

- Remember, a student's OPT employer and employer's address should be listed in SEVIS. Additionally, be sure to remind students submitting applications for OPT that they must keep their school officials informed of their current address and employment status while they are participating in OPT.

**Tip Number Four: Ensure students that receive a Form I-515A at a U.S. port of entry file all required documents with SEVP within 30 days of receipt.**

- If a U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) officer issues a Form I-515A to a student at a U.S. port of entry, DSOs *must* ensure that the student submits all relevant information in one package to SEVP within 30 days of receipt.
- As a reminder, the student's Form I-515A package must contain the following items:
  - The Form I-515A;
  - The student's Form I-20 with original signatures;
  - The printed copy of the Form I-94, "Arrival/Departure Record;"
  - A copy of the admission stamp from CBP; and
  - The student's I-901 SEVIS Fee receipt.
- Additionally, the DSO should assist the student with submitting any supplementary information to SEVP, such as documentation of a SEVIS correction request or reinstatement.
  - If a SEVIS student record correction request is pending, a DSO should provide the student and SEVP with the ticket number, along with any other associated paperwork; and
  - If a reinstatement or change of status is pending with USCIS, please be aware that USCIS may consider the change of status petition to be abandoned. For both a reinstatement and a change of status, the USCIS receipt number and any other associated paperwork should be provided.



- If a reinstatement is pending, a DSO should assist the student by submitting a cover letter attesting the student is enrolled in a full course of study.
- Additionally, Remedial Action Plans and out-of-cycle reviews continue to be hot topics for SEVP-certified schools. Therefore, we would like to remind school officials of what it means when they receive a Remedial Action Plan or an out-of-cycle review letter.
  - SEVP issues a **Remedial Action Plan** to a school upon discovery of deficiencies. The Remedial Action Plan outlines required actions the school needs to take to resolve these deficiencies. A Remedial Action Plan may be issued for minor clerical errors or for more serious issues that SEVP decides still do not require the withdrawal of SEVP certification.
    - Failure to resolve deficiencies and respond to SEVP confirming actions taken may result in additional action, including withdrawal of a school's SEVP certification. If your school believes it incorrectly received a remedial action plan, it is important to still provide a response with the information requested, as well as an explanation as to why your school believes SEVP issued the plan in error.
  - In comparison, an **out-of-cycle review** letter can be issued at any time to ensure the school complies with reporting and recordkeeping requirements, and to ensure continued eligibility in the program.
    - An out-of-cycle review may include a student record review, a request for the submission of documentation to verify accreditation, state licensure or other required evidence that proves a school's SEVP certification eligibility requirements, and/or be issued at a site visit.
    - Failure to respond to an out-of-cycle review letter could negatively affect the school's certification status and lead to withdrawal of SEVP-certification.
    - Remember, the school's response to an out-of-cycle review will not extend the school's certification expiration date.
  - SEVP may issue Remedial Action Plans prior to, in lieu of, or after an out-of-cycle review, as well as once a school receives a positive determination for recertification.



## **Chapter 5: SEVIS Enhancements**

- The Student and Exchange Visitor Program (SEVP) is working hard to enhance the Student and Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS). In the coming year, we plan to deploy multiple new enhancements within the current system.
- In June 2015, SEVP plans to implement new **standards for SEVIS names, addresses, and email addresses**. Once implemented, SEVIS will automatically convert existing nonimmigrant student names to the new standards, and validate all U.S. street and email addresses to ensure they are complete and legitimate. Additionally, all U.S. street and email addresses will require a standard input to improve deliverability.
  - School officials should be aware that all street addresses will be converted in incremental stages over a one-month period following the release. If an address does not update, school officials will receive a SEVIS alert and have the ability to view a report of addresses that did not convert.
  - Additionally, to support the June release, SEVIS will be offline starting Friday, June 26 at 8 p.m. EDT and will remain offline through Sunday, June 28 at 8 p.m. EDT. The system also may not be available on Monday, June 29. Study in the States will provide resources and guidance, such as job aids, to help designated school officials (DSOs) during the outage.
  - SEVP is currently working with batch vendors and carrying out extensive testing in preparation for the June release. We will continue to coordinate with our interagency partners to ensure a smooth conversion of all names, U.S. street and email addresses currently listed in SEVIS.
- The June 2015 SEVIS release will also feature a new **SEVIS Downloads page**, where school and sponsor officials can download reports identifying nonimmigrant records changed as a result of the name, address or email address standardization. Additionally, school officials will be able to request reprints of the Form I-20, "Certificate of Eligibility for Nonimmigrant Student Status," and Form DS-2019, "Certificate of Eligibility for Exchange Visitor (J-1) Status," for multiple nonimmigrants at one time.
  - SEVIS will produce PDFs of the forms and bundle them into a zip file available on the SEVIS Downloads page. School officials will be able to open the files and print or save as an individual PDF.
- To support this release, SEVP and the U.S. Department of State will **update the Form I-20 and DS-2019 to reflect the new name standards in SEVIS**. The Form I-20 will have a completely new look and include U.S. Department of Homeland Security branding.
  - Changes to the Form I-20 include:
    - Name fields,
    - Layout,



- Form branding,
  - New dynamic fields for employment authorizations, and
  - A new bulk printing option that allows DSOs to print multiple student forms at once.
- Additionally, the current bar code and area for port of entry stamp will be removed. The Department of State will make minor changes to the Form DS-2019 to include additional name fields.
- SEVP will also release the new Form 7002, "Trainee/Internship Placement Plan," to help SEVIS program sponsors ensure compliance with Department of State reporting requirements.
- SEVP is committed to providing stakeholders with information on SEVIS enhancements before, during, and after each release. To communicate upcoming enhancements, and to assist DSOs with SEVIS reporting requirements, we developed numerous [SEVIS resources](#) specific to the June 2015 release.
- SEVP recently launched the [SEVIS Help Hub](#) — a new tool for school officials. We designed this tool to provide school officials with easy access to SEVIS information in one place. You can access the SEVIS Help Hub through the "Tools" menu on the Study in the States home page.
  - The SEVIS Help Hub will eventually replace SEVIS User Manuals and the content currently in the Help Hub will grow over time. Any new or updated information in the SEVIS User Manuals will move to the SEVIS Help Hub. Additionally, all SEVIS-related content on Study in the States will migrate to the SEVIS Help Hub.
  - If you bookmarked any pages on Study in the States that are specific to SEVIS, Study in the States will automatically redirect you to the page's new location in the SEVIS Help Hub where you can bookmark the new link. However, please note that the layout will be different.
- As part of the ongoing **SEVIS Webinar Series**, SEVP will host multiple webinars for SEVIS users to learn more about enhancements coming in June 2015 and to ask questions through a moderated question and answer session.
  - Please be sure to check Study in the States, social media and SEVP broadcast messages for the latest news on future webinars.
- In addition to the June release webinars, we offer other resources — including **FAQ guides**, **job aids** and **fact sheets** — to assist school officials with SEVIS reporting requirements. Stakeholders can access these resources through the [SEVIS Help Hub](#) on Study in the States.
  - Examples of these resources include:
    - A SEVIS Name Standards User Guide,
    - The SEVIS Name Standards and Address FAQs,



- An SEVP Fact Sheet – SEVIS Name Standards, and
- The SEVIS Email Standards Job Aid.
- If you wish to access resources associated with previous SEVIS releases, you can visit the [SEVIS Archive](#) page on Study in the States.
- If you have questions concerning SEVIS releases, or suggestions for additional resources, please email us at [SEVISTechnicalFeedback@ice.dhs.gov](mailto:SEVISTechnicalFeedback@ice.dhs.gov).



## Chapter 6: Stakeholder Support

- The Student and Exchange Visitor Program (SEVP) is committed to providing effective and efficient support to our stakeholders. To enhance customer support and better address stakeholder questions, the ***SEVP Response Center (SRC) and Student and Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS) Help Desk merged support functions into a single location*** in the Washington, D.C. area. We are fully committed to answering stakeholder questions and appreciate your patience during this transition.
- Recently, we experienced a higher than normal call volume and stakeholders may have faced extended wait times due to the merge. In May 2015, the SRC received more than 15,415 calls.
  - To address the extended wait times, the SRC recently made adjustments to staffing levels and the configuration of the phone system to allow for more efficient routing of calls to representatives.
  - The SRC is happy to report that as of May 2015:
    - Ninety-seven percent of all tickets reported by phone were resolved within 24 hours, and
    - Ninety-six percent of all tickets reported via email were resolved within 24 hours.
  - The SRC permanently adjusted its hours from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. Eastern Time to support stakeholder inquiries. Stakeholders can continue to email general and case-specific questions and comments to [SEVP@ice.dhs.gov](mailto:SEVP@ice.dhs.gov), and technical questions to [SEVISHelpDesk@ice.dhs.gov](mailto:SEVISHelpDesk@ice.dhs.gov).
- The SRC has several enhancements planned to provide additional avenues for stakeholder support. In the next two years, stakeholders can look forward to:
  - A **chat feature** to provide immediate responses to stakeholder inquiries;
  - A **hold in place**, call back feature, that allows stakeholders the option to receive a call from the next available SEVP service representative during busy periods without losing their place in the queue; and
  - A **first-level option for password resets** that allows stakeholders to connect with a first-level SEVP service representative within seconds.
- To assist stakeholders during this period of heavy call volume, the SRC would like to offer the following tips for stakeholders with questions:
  - Tip Number One: Check [Study in the States](#) and [ICE.gov/SEVP](#)**
    - If you are experiencing an extended wait time, we encourage stakeholders to review resources available on [Study in the States](#) and [ICE.gov/SEVP](#) for answers to frequently asked questions.



- Stakeholders with general questions concerning SEVIS or the international student process can use the “Ask a Question” feature on Study in the States. This resource can help find answers to commonly asked questions by students and schools.
- Our website at [ICE.gov/SEVP](http://ICE.gov/SEVP) contains detailed information on SEVP policy and regulation, in addition to SEVIS reporting requirements.

**Tip Number Two: Have all necessary information on-hand**

- The SEVP service representative will generally ask for the following information at the beginning of your call to efficiently address your question:
  - Your first and last name;
  - If you are a student or a designated school official (DSO);
  - The school name or SEVIS ID in question; and
  - If applicable, whether or not the student in question is located inside or outside of the United States.
- It is important to have this information readily available when calling the SRC to ensure your call proceeds in a timely manner.

**Tip Number Three: Listen to all menu options when calling the SRC before making your selection**

- This action will ensure you are directed to the appropriate SEVP service representative to address your question.
- In addition to the SRC, SEVP provides localized support to our stakeholders through the **Field Representative Unit**.
  - In 2014, SEVP trained and deployed the first two classes of field representatives. Since deployment, field representatives have conducted over 6,500 school visits, and enhanced relationships with DSOs within their respective territories.
  - We are pleased to report that the first two classes of field representatives have received positive feedback from the academic community. An initial survey showed that the first and second classes received the highest overall rating of “Achieves Excellence” for their professionalism, punctuality, and courtesy demonstrated throughout a school visit.
  - SEVP has selected the third class of 16 field representative candidates. The third class will complete their eight week training course and deploy to their respective territories by September 2015.
  - SEVP anticipates hiring and deploying the fourth class of field representatives in 2015 and will continue to provide information on the deployment status of the fourth class.



- Your meeting with your territory's SEVP field representative is an opportunity to ask any general questions related to SEVP and the international student process.
  - Remember, field representatives meet twice annually with SEVP-certified schools in their territory that enroll active F and/or M students. Field representatives meet with certified schools without active F and M students once a year. Additionally, field representatives work closely with school officials to develop a meeting agenda prior to each visit.
- Each field representative has specific goals for their school visit, including:
  - Learning about the school and its international student population;
  - Noting any trends the school has experienced or observed;
  - Establishing a working relationship with school officials; and
  - Answering questions concerning federal regulations, upcoming SEVIS enhancements and other general topics, in addition to providing clarification on SEVP directives or guidance.
- For additional information, please visit the [Field Representatives](#) page on Study in the States.





## **Chapter 7: Engage with SEVP**

- Since its launch in 2011, [Study in the States](#) has established itself as a hub of official government information for school officials and nonimmigrant students interested in the international student process. As of May 2015, Study in the States has reached more than one million users from 229 countries and territories, and has received more than four million page views.
- Study in the States offers designated school officials (DSOs) free resources that address the international student and Student and Exchange Visitor Program (SEVP) certification processes.
  - You can visit Study in the States to **view and comment on SEVP policy guidance**. SEVP's Policy Unit periodically requests public feedback on draft and interim final guidance located on the [Guidance for Comment](#) page. On this page, stakeholders can view past and current guidance for comment opportunities, and register to receive notices when SEVP posts new draft guidance.
  - Beginning in 2015, SEVP will host a series of **topic-specific webinars** on Study in the States. This webinar series will allow stakeholders to learn more about key topics, such as the U.S. Department of Homeland Security's regulatory framework. These webinars will also allow viewers to engage directly with SEVP staff through a question and answer session. Be sure to watch Study in the States and social media for more information about this upcoming webinar series.
  - Study in the States also contains **videos and tutorials** designed to help school officials learn more about SEVP, as well as how to navigate the Form I-17, "Petition for Approval of School for Attendance by Nonimmigrant Student," and I-901 Student and Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS) Fee payment process.
    - Our [SEVP 101 Video](#) explains how SEVP supports the Homeland Security Investigations mission within U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement to help protect national security.
    - To assist international students going through the [I-901 SEVIS Fee payment process](#), and DSOs [completing the Form I-17](#), SEVP has developed step-by-step tutorials detailing both of these processes.
- Study in the States also offers numerous resources for international students and their parents. Using the translation feature, students and their families can access Study in the States information in **90 different languages**.
  - Whether a student is looking to study in the United States, or is completing a program of study, Study in the States provides helpful resources, such as the [Study Guide to the States](#).



- We recently updated the Study Guide to the States to help students and school officials navigate information about each step in the international student process. From searching for an SEVP-certified school, to completing a program of study, the Study Guide provides access to detailed information at each step in the process.
- The Study Guide to the States can also be viewed from a smartphone or tablet. You can find this resource through the [Students Portal](#) on Study in the States.
  - Additionally, prospective or current students can access a **searchable map of SEVP-certified schools**. The [School Search](#) page allows students to search for SEVP-certified schools by name, address, state, education, or visa type.
- SEVP is constantly working to improve content on Study in the States. Study in the States recently launched the [Mapping SEVIS by the Numbers](#) feature. This interactive tool allows users to view data from SEVIS by continent, region and country, including where international students come from, the male and female breakdown of students from each geographical area, and the most popular programs of study. Please check back throughout the year to see new enhancements and features.
- We encourage our stakeholders to connect virtually with SEVP, and stay up-to-date with the latest program news and updates, as well as engage with us through social media.
  - The Study in the States [blog](#) posts daily content with best practices, current events, answers to frequently asked questions, and other topics related to international education.
  - SEVP is also a monthly contributor to the [U.S. News and World Report's "International Student Counsel"](#) blog. SEVP Director Lou Farrell writes blog posts focusing on different aspects of the international student process, such as transferring schools and financial obligations. The blog is available on the U.S. News and World Report's website. We encourage you to share Director Farrell's latest blog posts through your personal social media networks.
  - To further engage with our stakeholders, SEVP publishes the SEVP Spotlight. The SEVP Spotlight is a quarterly newsletter distributed to more than 35,000 DSOs, as well as top academic associations and SEVP's government partners. Each newsletter provides updates on the latest information affecting our stakeholders and the program. If you would like to read the latest quarterly SEVP Spotlight Newsletter, please visit the [Conferences and Outreach](#) page on Study in the States.
- For the latest government news and updates about international students, join the more than 8,700 users following us on **Twitter** ([@StudyinStates](#)) and more than 26,700 accounts that "like" us on **Facebook** at [Facebook.com/StudyintheStates](#)!



- SEVP also recently joined [LinkedIn](#)! We encourage DSOs to follow us to get the latest SEVP news, updates and reminders.
- SEVP is constantly expanding our outreach through stakeholder conferences and events, and welcomes the opportunity to participate in your conference or event. To inquire about SEVP attending your upcoming conference, submit a request that includes event details to [SEVPOutreach@ice.dhs.gov](mailto:SEVPOutreach@ice.dhs.gov).
  - The **SEVP Conference Bulletin** is a monthly one-page newsletter to inform our conference stakeholders of the latest SEVP news and events. Past topics include seasonal tips and reminders for DSOs, news on the latest SEVP publications, as well as updates on SEVP's participation at stakeholder conferences and events. To subscribe to the SEVP Conference Bulletin, please email [SEVPOutreach@ice.dhs.gov](mailto:SEVPOutreach@ice.dhs.gov) and we will add you to our distribution list.
- SEVP wants to hear from you about this presentation and any other SEVP presentations you attend. The best way to provide your feedback is through the Stakeholder Satisfaction Survey on Study in the States. The survey is available at [StudyintheStates.dhs.gov/Survey](http://StudyintheStates.dhs.gov/Survey).
  - We review your comments throughout the year and incorporate your feedback into future presentations. Your opinion is vital to SEVP continuing to meet your needs. Please complete the survey as soon as this presentation is over.
- If you have questions related to the international student process, please contact the SEVP Response Center (SRC) by:
  - Phone at 703-603-3400 or 800-892-4829, or
  - For case-specific questions, email [SEVP@ice.dhs.gov](mailto:SEVP@ice.dhs.gov).
  - For technical issues, email [SEVISHelpDesk@ice.dhs.gov](mailto:SEVISHelpDesk@ice.dhs.gov).
- The SRC is open Monday through Friday, from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. ET, except holidays.
- For additional contact information, please visit our [Contact Page](#) on Study in the States.
- Thank you for tuning into our Spring/Summer 2015 Conference Presentation. SEVP looks forward to engaging with our stakeholders during this conference season. Once again, we encourage you to provide your feedback on this presentation, or any other SEVP conference or event, through our Stakeholder Satisfaction Survey at [StudyintheStates.dhs.gov/Survey](http://StudyintheStates.dhs.gov/Survey).