Student and Exchange Visitor Program   *U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services*
U.S. Customs and Border Protection   *U.S. Department of State*
January 2018 Government Voices Webinar—Script

Government Voices Webinar:
Exploring the International Student Life Cycle
Jan. 31, 2018
Webinar Script

To access resources mentioned in this script, visit the [Government Voices Webinar: Exploring the International Student Life Cycle Hyperlink Appendix](#) on Study in the States.

Note: On Nov. 1, 2021, the SEVP published Policy Guidance: Use of Electronic Signatures and Transmission for the Form I-20, outlining the procedures for the use of electronic signatures and transmission of the Form I-20. Based on this guidance, some information in this document may be out of date. Read the guidance for more information. [Read the guidance](#) for more information.

Slide 1: Pre-webinar Title Slide

Slide 2: Title Slide

MARISSA:

- Hi everybody!
- I am Marissa Tinsley and welcome to Exploring the International Student Life Cycle—this is the first in our new Government Voices Webinar Series. Before we get started, we ask that you please take a moment to complete the polls on your screen. You'll see a few more polls today where our presenters would like get your opinion on new resources and hot topics.
- As I mentioned, this webinar is part of the new Government Voices Webinar Series, which brings together different government partners with a role in the international student life cycle to discuss how they work together on joint issues.
- Today's presentation is going to be more of a 101 to provide you with background information for future webinars. Over the next hour, our presenters from CBP, USCIS, SEVP,

Student and Exchange Visitor Program *U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services*
U.S. Customs and Border Protection *U.S. Department of State*
January 2018 Government Voices Webinar—Script

and the U.S. Department of State will talk about the ways they work together to facilitate student and school compliance. **Slide 3: Housekeeping Notes**

MARISSA:

- But before we get started, I want to cover a few brief housekeeping notes.

- First, please download and take a look at our hyperlink appendix, which includes links to all of the web pages mentioned during today's presentation. We'll be referring to this document quite a bit throughout the webinar, and you can access that appendix in the Webinar Resources pod, which is below the main presentation on your screen.

- And, while you're looking at that pod, you'll also notice that you can download a PDF of today's PowerPoint presentation, as well as a glossary that defines key terms and acronyms mentioned during the webinar. These will also be available for download on the Study in the States Government Voices Webinar page.

- One thing I also want to point out is at the bottom of each slide, you'll see the names of the different entities presenting today. This indicates which entities have responsibility for that particular step in the process of the international student life cycle—consider it a cheat sheet to help you better understand where we overlap!

- Additionally, if you experience technical difficulties at any point, please explain your problem through the Technical Difficulties pod and we'll do our best to assist you.

- And finally, if any of your colleagues weren't able to join us, please make sure you direct them to our webinar recording, which will be posted on the Study in the States Government Voices Webinar page in the coming days.

Slide 4: Today's Presenters

MARISSA:

- Okay, so as I mentioned, I'm Marissa Tinsley, I will be your moderator for today's webinar. I'm excited to be joined by several of our colleagues from our partner entities throughout the federal government.

Student and Exchange Visitor Program   *U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services*
U.S. Customs and Border Protection   *U.S. Department of State*
January 2018 Government Voices Webinar—Script

- However, I'd like to let our presenters introduce themselves—so would you all briefly go around the table—let's start with our colleague from the U.S. Department of State, Laura Stein.

LAURA:

- Hi everyone—my name is Laura Stein and I started working at the Department of State's Bureau of Consular Affairs in 2007. Currently, I work on policy and procedural issues affecting our embassies and consulates that adjudicate student and exchange visitor visa applications.

MARY:

- Hi everyone⎯I'm Mary Herrmann and I'm here on behalf of USCIS. I work in our Customer Service and Public Engagement Directorate. Our role is to respond to inquiries and engage in a dialogue with the public to inform the agency and to gather feedback.

JENI:

- Good afternoon, my name is Jeni Best and I have been at CBP since 1998. My current responsibilities include maintenance and operations of the Arrival and Departure Information System, which we refer to as ADIS, the Form I-94 website and traveler compliance.

BARRY:

- Finally hello to everyone, my name is Barry Kobe. I serve as the team lead in SEVP's Analysis and Operations Center, focusing on the Form I-515A.

Slide 5: Presentation Overview

MARISSA:

- Thanks, everyone.
- Before we get into it, let's take a look at today's agenda. While it might not look like a lot, I can guarantee you that we are going to cover quite a bit of ground today. Our discussion is going to follow the international student life cycle, from when a student applies to a

Student and Exchange Visitor Program   *U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services*
U.S. Customs and Border Protection   *U.S. Department of State*
January 2018 Government Voices Webinar—Script

program of study, all the way to when they complete that program, and just about everything in between.

- I also want to stress up front that we really do want to hear your feedback on this webinar, especially since this is the first in our new series, so make sure to take the polling questions at the end of today's presentation because they are going to help us shape future webinars in the series!

Slide 6: International Student Life Cycle [Transition Slide]

MARISSA:

 Let's start with this first step in the international student life cycle, which is initial application and acceptance into an SEVP-certified school.

Slide 7: Preparing to Study—Acceptance to an SEVP-certified School

MARISSA:

- At this stage, there's some slight overlap between SEVP and the U.S. Department of State. So Barry, I'd like to start with you first. Could you quickly remind us about what happens for both students and DSOs at this point in the international student life cycle?

BARRY:

- Of course, Marissa. As many of our viewers are probably aware, once a school accepts a student, DSOs create an initial record in SEVIS using student information. This information will be reflected on the Form I-20, so it's important that DSOs carefully check that SEVIS information is valid prior to issuing the Form I-20.
- Once the DSO completes and prints the Form I-20, they must send the original, signed form to the student.
  - o This can be done via email or postal mail, depending upon how quickly the student needs to receive the form.

Student and Exchange Visitor Program   *U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services*
U.S. Customs and Border Protection   *U.S. Department of State*
January 2018 Government Voices Webinar—Script

- o Students who receive the form via email may be able to use this at the port of entry, but we recommend students bring the original form with ink signature.
- Prospective students are also required to pay the I-901 SEVIS Fee, which they can do on SEVP's FMJFee.com website. We've made several enhancements to the website over the past year to assist students with making and checking the status of their I-901 SEVIS Fee payment.
  - o For instance, you can view the I-901 SEVIS Fee Payment Tutorial on [Study in the States](). We've included a link to the tutorial in your hyperlink appendix. This is a great resource for DSOs to share with your prospective students.
- With the Form I-20 and the I-901 SEVIS Fee paid, the student should be ready to apply for an F-1 or an M-1 visa at the U.S. embassy or consulate, which is where my colleague from the Department of State, Laura Stein, comes into the life cycle.

MARISSA:

- Thanks for that information, Barry. We now know what actions DSOs and students need to take so the student can apply for a nonimmigrant student visa. I'd now like to pass it over to Laura, who can describe the visa application and interview process.

Slide 8: Ask the Audience—Quiz

LAURA:

- Absolutely Marissa, but before I kick it off, we have a short quiz for our audience members to take.
- We want to know when you, as a school official, think students should apply for a visa. Is it:
  - o Once they have an airline ticket; o As early as possible after the student has the Form I-20; or o Whenever the student prefers, even if it's as soon as two weeks before their program start date.
- I'll give our viewers now a moment to chime in!

[PAUSE]

Student and Exchange Visitor Program   *U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services*
U.S. Customs and Border Protection   *U.S. Department of State*
January 2018 Government Voices Webinar—Script

LAURA:

- Okay, thanks everyone for your input! Overwhelmingly, you have gotten the answer correct!
    - Students should apply for their visas as early as possible after they have their Form I-20.

Slide 9: Visa Application—Initial Process

LAURA:

- For the visa interview, students need to have the Form I-20 from the school they plan to attend. Once a student receives that original, signed Form I-20 from the DSO at the school, they need to make an appointment at their nearest U.S. embassy or consulate.

- We encourage prospective students to visit Travel.State.gov—this link is on the slide and also included in the hyperlink appendix—for information about visa interviews, including wait times and what documents to bring. We'll discuss these documents in detail later.

- We also recommend that applicants—in this case a prospective student—visit their local embassy or consulate website. There they can find location-specific information for things like how to schedule a visa appointment, pay the visa application fee and what documents to bring to the interview besides the Form I-20.

MARISSA:

- That sounds pretty straightforward, Laura. Do you have any advice for DSOs that they could share with their prospective students to help prepare them for that visa application and the interview process?

LAURA:

- Yes. I want to stress that DSOs should issue the Form I-20 to their students as early as possible to enable students to schedule their interviews well in advance of their program start date.

- We recommend DSOs emphasize to their students the importance of scheduling an interview as early as possible.

Student and Exchange Visitor Program
U.S. Customs and Border Protection
January 2018 Government Voices Webinar—Script

U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services
U.S. Department of State

- That said, Consular Affairs can expedite visa interview appointments and administrative processing, as needed.
- Consular officers also understand that qualified nonimmigrant students must arrive in the United States with enough time to begin their program of study. Therefore, our officers do their best to ensure that students who are approved for a visa to study receive that visa with enough time to arrive in the United States before their program start date.

Slide 10: Visa Interview—Required Documentation

MARISSA:

- Thanks for that information, Laura.
- Preparing for the visa interview seems to be a hot topic for many prospective international students. Would you mind reviewing what documents students need to have prepared for their visa interview?

LAURA:

- Sure. Before an applicant arrives for their visa interview, they need to be certain that they have all required documentation in order and are ready to present these documents to the consular officer.
- We've listed the required documentation on this slide. I want to note that students can print the confirmation page of their Form DS-160 visa application at the Consular Electronic Application Center website, which you can access at Travel.State.gov.

Slide 11: Visa Interview—What Students Can Expect

MARISSA:

- We've also included that link in our hyperlink appendix. Okay so next Laura, many students ask about the type of information they should be expected to discuss at their interview. Would you be able to shed some light on that?

LAURA:

Student and Exchange Visitor Program   *U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services*
U.S. Customs and Border Protection   *U.S. Department of State*
January 2018 Government Voices Webinar—Script

- For the interview itself, consular officers typically focus on four factors, which we have listed on this slide:

     o Who the applicant is, o What the applicant wants to do, o How the applicant plans to fund their study, and o What the applicant intends to do once they complete their program.

- I want to caution our listeners that if they are searching for information about interviews on the internet, what they find may not be accurate. The best place to find official information about the visa interview is on U.S. government websites, such as Travel.State.gov and Study in the States. We want to encourage all school officials out there to tell your students to stick to these websites, rather than relying on nongovernment sources.

Slide 12: Visa Issuance—Possible Outcomes

MARISSA:

- It is always a good idea to exercise caution in that regard. We hear a lot about students who find information on a local web forum and then later discover that this information is not correct, so we definitely want to make sure school officials are recommending government websites to their students.

- I also want to mention that the two links that Laura just referenced are in the hyperlink appendix. If you haven't taken a chance to download that document yet, I'd like to strongly encourage that you do so.

- The student attends their visa interview, and what happens after that?

LAURA:

- There are two possible outcomes after a student conducts their visa interview. In most cases, applicants are issued a visa. o In fact, 73 percent of student applications for F and M visas were approved and issued in fiscal year 2017.

- For students issued a visa, the embassy or consulate will place the visa, which you can see on this slide, inside the student's passport. I do, however, want to note that, while the visa

Student and Exchange Visitor Program   *U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services*
U.S. Customs and Border Protection   *U.S. Department of State*
January 2018 Government Voices Webinar—Script

gives the student the ability to come to the United States and apply for entry, it does not guarantee that the student will be granted entry.

MARISSA:

- What are some of the reasons a student might be refused a visa?

LAURA:

- There are several common reasons for visa refusal, including:
  - The applicant did not sufficiently demonstrate qualification as a nonimmigrant student;
  - The applicant did not overcome presumption of immigrant intent; o The student's application is incomplete and/or further documentation is required; or o The student's application requires additional administrative processing after the interview.

MARISSA:

- I know that you also receive a lot of questions about administrative processing specifically. Would you be able to go in to a bit more detail about that?

LAURA:

- Sure. Some visa applications require administrative processing, which takes additional time after the consular officer conducts the visa interview. It may include resolving questions about an applicant's eligibility or any other question the consular officer may need to resolve to be able to overcome the refusal.

- Most administrative processing is resolved within 60 days of the visa interview, although the exact timing will vary based on the individual circumstances of each case. Again, we do our best to ensure administrative processing is completed to allow timely travel before program start dates.

- I also want to point out that students that are refused because their applications require administrative processing should keep listening during their interviews for any further instruction from the consular officer—for instance, the officer may need the student to

Student and Exchange Visitor Program   *U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services*
U.S. Customs and Border Protection   *U.S. Department of State*
January 2018 Government Voices Webinar—Script

provide additional documents. While this is a refusal, administrative processing may be followed by visa approval and issuance.

MARISSA:

- Good to know. We also receive a lot of questions about what to do if a student is denied a visa. Is there anything a DSO can do to assist a student in this situation?

LAURA:

- Unfortunately, there is not. If a prospective student is found ineligible for a student visa, the student will receive a letter at the U.S. embassy or consulate that explains and cites the section of law under which the student was found ineligible. DSOs should be aware that consular officers cannot discuss details of specific cases with anyone but the applicant.

- I would like to note that students found ineligible under section 214(b) of the Immigration and Nationality Act may reapply, but need to be able to present evidence of significant changes in circumstance since they last applied.

- And, of course, the hyperlink appendix contains a link that further discusses visa denial reasons.

Slide 13: Ask the Audience—Quiz

LAURA:

- And before I pass it back to Marissa, we have another quiz for you to take!

- Based on what you heard so far today, we want to know what sources you will direct your students to when they apply for a visa. Is it:

    o They should talk to anyone they know who has ever applied for a visa; o They should turn to social media to hear how the visa interview went for others; or o They should go to official U.S. government sources, including Travel.State.gov and Study in the States?

- Again, I'll give you all a moment to respond.

[PAUSE]

Student and Exchange Visitor Program   *U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services*
U.S. Customs and Border Protection   *U.S. Department of State*
January 2018 Government Voices Webinar—Script

LAURA:

- Okay, wonderful! You all passed, you got it correct. They should be directed to official U.S. government sources!

Slide 14: Change of Status—What to Know

MARISSA:

- Happy to hear that everyone passed! We are, of course, kidding, but thank you for participating in the quiz!

- I'd like to bring our USCIS colleague into the conversation. As many of our viewers may know, USCIS oversees change of status and reinstatement. Mary, could you discuss these processes and explain how they're different than the one that's followed by those who are seeking a visa for the first time?

MARY:

- Certainly, Marissa. We know there are people currently in the United States who may want to change the purpose of their visit to pursuing a certificate or degree. Those individuals must file a request with USCIS using the Form I-539 before the authorized period of stay on their current visa expires.

- I do want to stress that to file the Form I-539, individuals must already be accepted by an SEVP-certified school and must have received a signed Form I-20 from the school. At that point, the student can pay the I-901 SEVIS Fee.

- In general, nonimmigrants may apply to change their visa status if they have adhered to the conditions outlined on this slide.

Slide 15: Reinstatement of Status—What to Know

MARISSA:

- That's good to know. What about students who need to have their status reinstated? Is this different than a change of status?

MARY:

Student and Exchange Visitor Program   *U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services*
U.S. Customs and Border Protection   *U.S. Department of State*
January 2018 Government Voices Webinar—Script

- The process for the prospective student isn't necessarily different—the applicant must still file a request with USCIS using the Form I-539 and submit a completed Form I-20 that includes a DSO signature and a recommendation to restore status.
- However, in cases of reinstatement, before issuing a Form I-20, the DSO must certify that the student met the conditions, again, that are outlined on this slide.

MARISSA:

- And once USCIS adjudicates a reinstatement decision, how do you all communicate that decision to the student and DSO?

MARY:

- We will notify the PDSO and DSO once a decision is reached via a SEVIS-generated email. If a decision is unfavorable, a student may file a motion with the USCIS office that issued the decision using Form I-290B. The student can then supply additional evidence that may lead to a change in the reinstatement decision.

Slide 16: Intragovernmental Support—SEVIS Interface

MARISSA:

- Barry, let's bring you back into the conversation since I know there is some overlap here. Besides the Form I-20, does SEVP have a broader role in change of status or reinstatement?

BARRY:

- Yes; our role in this situation is primarily SEVIS oversight and maintenance. As many people know, SEVIS interfaces with multiple government systems, including USCIS case management systems.
- As Mary just mentioned, once USCIS accepts or rejects an applicant for reinstatement, SEVIS automatically emails the decision to the PDSO and to the DSO that requested the reinstatement.
- For students whose reinstatement request is approved, DSOs should remember to change the student's SEVIS record from Terminated to Active via the correction request in SEVIS.

Student and Exchange Visitor Program   *U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services*
U.S. Customs and Border Protection   *U.S. Department of State*
January 2018 Government Voices Webinar—Script

From there, SEVP advises DSOs to follow the registration process for the initial session.

☐ If, however, a reinstatement request is denied, the SEVIS record needs to remain in Terminated status.

Slide 17: Arriving in the United States—Port of Entry Process

MARISSA:

- Thank you to Barry, Laura and Mary for going over those initial processes in the international student life cycle.

- I want to switch gears and get our colleague from CBP, Jeni, involved in the conversation. At this point in the life cycle, a student has received their visa, or USCIS has approved the student's request to change status or be reinstated. Many students are now preparing to enter the United States at a U.S. port of entry. Jeni, can you describe what happens from when a student is on their U.S.-bound flight to when they arrive at the port of entry?

JENI:

- Sure thing, Marissa. While on a U.S.-bound flight, some nonimmigrants may be asked to complete a Customs Declaration prior to arrival. Many ports of entry no longer require this form, but for those ports that still do, the air carrier will continue to hand them out onboard the plane.

- Once the student arrives at a U.S. port of entry, a CBP officer will review all documents for validity and verify the SEVIS record in real time. If the student's documents appear valid, they will be admitted into the United States. From there, a student can retrieve their checked luggage and proceed to the baggage inspection area.

- If any further research is needed, the student is escorted to secondary inspection where CBP officers have more time and systems to review all available information.

- In secondary inspection, a CBP officer may review emails and school transcripts, or call the student's DSO, if possible. If a traveler in secondary inspection proves they are admissible, they will be granted entry into the United States. Additionally, if issues arise and appear to be correctable within 30 days, CBP may grant the student a 30-day admission to the United States and issue a Form I-515A with detailed instructions for the student to follow.

Student and Exchange Visitor Program   *U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services*
U.S. Customs and Border Protection   *U.S. Department of State*
January 2018 Government Voices Webinar—Script

MARISSA:

- Thanks for that explanation, Jeni. It is always good to hear about what happens in secondary. On that note, are there any tips you want to share with our viewers that they can relay to their students about when they travel to the United States?

JENI:

- Yes, for all of the DSOs watching today, please make sure your students know that they will be asked to present their original Form I-20 at the port of entry. We recommend you encourage students to store the Form I-20 in their carry-on luggage, and not in their checked luggage.

- You should also let students know that they may be required to present other documents at the port of entry, such as:

  - o Transcripts or grade point average reports; o Financial statements; and/or o Class schedule showing the minimum amount of units the student must be enrolled in per semester or quarter.

- Students should make sure that they have all entry documents ready to present to the CBP officer while in the queue at the U.S. port of entry.

Slide 18: Intragovernmental Support—SEVIS Interface

MARISSA:

- Before we move on, let's briefly highlight an interagency connection. Jeni, can you go into detail about how CBP systems at the port of entry interface with SEVIS?

JENI:

- Of course, Marissa. One of the ways we work with our government partners is through ADIS. In ADIS, CBP officers can access student information from SEVIS. Additionally, student information from the port of entry is sent to and reflected in SEVIS.

- But before I go into too much detail, I'll turn it over to Barry to tell you about how SEVP is working to improve the system interfaces and some of our recent achievements.

BARRY:

Student and Exchange Visitor Program   *U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services*
U.S. Customs and Border Protection   *U.S. Department of State*
January 2018 Government Voices Webinar—Script

- Thanks, Jeni. Over the past two years, we have worked closely with DHS's IT offices and our government partners to help improve the system interface between SEVIS and ADIS, including:
    - Deploying a CBP-unified interface, which consolidates SEVIS data pushed to ADIS; o Deploying updates to ADIS and SEVIS interfaces to enhance arrival and departure data in SEVIS; and
    - Deploying updates to SEVIS' artificial intelligence interface so that CBP receives complete SEVIS data about students on OPT.
- We hope that these changes will decrease issues experienced by students at U.S. ports of entry.

Slide 19: Working in the United States—Reminders

MARISSA:

- It's always good to hear that the entities are working together on something like data interface.

- Now we're at the point in the international student life cycle where the student is completing their program and is expected to maintain their nonimmigrant status. This entails attending all classes and staying on top of their school work, but as I'm sure our audience is well aware, some students also have access to benefits, such as employment, while in the United States. Let's move to another area of shared responsibility, since SEVP and USCIS work together to determine the conditions for approved employment.

- Mary, I think we can agree that our mutual priority is to ensure that students know what is required of them to participate in work or training; could you explain the basis of employment for F and M students?

MARY:

- Sure Marissa; we work closely with SEVP to be certain student employment is beneficial, and in cases of practical training, an extension of what students are learning in the classroom.

Student and Exchange Visitor Program   *U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services*
U.S. Customs and Border Protection   *U.S. Department of State*
January 2018 Government Voices Webinar—Script

- I want to review a few basics about employment before we get into practical training, which as you know is a bit more complex.
    - First, F-1 students may not work off campus during their first academic year, but they may accept on-campus employment subject to certain conditions and restrictions. You can learn more about these restrictions on the Working in the United States page on Study in the States.
    - Second, F-1 students may engage in off-campus employment through OPT or a STEM OPT extension after their first full academic year. However, there are restrictions on this type of employment for F-1 students engaged in English language training. For more information on these restrictions, again, we encourage you to visit Study in the States or ICE.gov.
    - Finally, M-1 students cannot engage in practical training until after they complete their studies. M-1 students must gain employment authorization from USCIS prior to working.

Slide 20: Working in the United States—Practical Training Opportunities

MARISSA:

- Thank you for that information. As you mentioned, practical training benefits seem to be a hot topic for many students and DSOs. If you wouldn't mind, let's do a quick dive into the world of practical training. Mary, can you go into more detail about the requirements DSOs and students need to keep in mind?

MARY:

- Sure thing, Marissa! The most important thing for all parties to remember is that practical training must be directly related to the F-1 student's major area of study. As long as that is confirmed, then the student can apply for up to 12 months of employment authorization.
- Where we at USCIS come into the picture is that all students participating in OPT must be authorized by our agency, based on the DSO's recommendation, before the student begins work. Students may begin OPT once the Form I-765 is approved and an EAD is issued to the student.

Student and Exchange Visitor Program   *U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services*
U.S. Customs and Border Protection   *U.S. Department of State*
January 2018 Government Voices Webinar—Script

MARISSA:

- The Form I-765 is approved and USCIS issues an EAD to the student, but how does a DSO know if the student is approved to begin OPT?

BARRY:

- That's actually where SEVP comes into the picture, Marissa. Once USCIS adjudicates a decision and logs it into their CLAIMS database, SEVIS automatically updates with approval or denial of the employment authorization. DSOs will be able to view this information in the student's SEVIS record.

MARISSA:

- It's good to hear that a process is in place to make this as seamless as possible. I know that SEVP works closely with our partners at USCIS to constantly improve the flow of data between CLAIMS and SEVIS.

- Turning back to OPT, Mary, we covered regular OPT, but didn't really touch on STEM OPT. How is it different than regular OPT?

MARY:

- You're absolutely right that STEM OPT is different from regular OPT, Marissa; specifically the requirements.

- DHS's March 2016 rule allows certain F-1 students who receive STEM degrees and meet other requirements to apply for a 24-month extension of their post-completion OPT. The recent rule ensures more program supervision and benefits for F-1 students participating in STEM OPT.

- For information on how to apply for STEM OPT, you can visit our website at USCIS.gov, as well as the STEM OPT Hub on Study in the States. You can find both these links in the hyperlink appendix.

BARRY:

- I just want to jump in again to mention that Study in the States also has a lot of resources related to types of employment, not just STEM OPT. I know we've mentioned the hyperlink

Student and Exchange Visitor Program   *U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services*
U.S. Customs and Border Protection   *U.S. Department of State*
January 2018 Government Voices Webinar—Script

appendix, but I also want to put a plug in here for some of the employment-related links that we're also including for you in this document, such as:

> o The Working in the United States section of Study in the States; o The Form I-983 tutorial on STEM OPT students; o A list of eligible CIP codes DSOs can access to help students apply for STEM OPT; and o A multitude of other webpages intended for the students and DSOs who want to learn more about nonimmigrant student employment.

Slide 21: Traveling on a Student Visa—Domestic and International Travel

MARISSA:

- Thanks for pointing that out, Barry. If you all have not downloaded that appendix yet—and I sincerely hope most of you have, because we've talked about it so often—it's located in that Webinar Resources pod at the bottom of your screen.

- Let's continue to focus on maintaining student status. I know many students will likely want to travel either stateside or even internationally during their course of study. Jeni, do you have any tips to share with us?

JENI:

- DSOs play an important role in helping students maintain their status while traveling, which is why we have a few key reminders for you all.

  - o As DSOs, please be certain to update deactivated or canceled records for students who are traveling domestically or internationally. This will help ensure the student can smoothly pass through a U.S. port of entry.

  - o Also, remind your students that the Form I-20 travel endorsement is only valid for one year. Check that their travel dates do not overlap the travel signature endorsement period or program end date.

  - o Finally, verify that students know that every inspection at a U.S. port of entry is unique. Just because a student was previously granted entry, it does not mean that the same will occur in the future at other U.S. ports of entry.

Student and Exchange Visitor Program   *U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services*
U.S. Customs and Border Protection   *U.S. Department of State*
January 2018 Government Voices Webinar—Script

MARISSA:

- Great; thank you, Jeni! Barry, are there any other resources that SEVP provides to support DSOs and students with domestic and international travel plans?

BARRY:

- Yes, Marissa. We have numerous resources available on Study in the States for students, including:
  - Our What is Secondary Inspection? page and What is a Form I-515? page, both of which contain information to help prepare students for the U.S. port of entry.
  - Study in the States also has blog posts with reminders for students traveling within the United States, whether during the semester or on a school break.
  - We've included these links in your hyperlink appendix.
- Students can also call SRC if they have any questions or experience any issues while traveling. For those DSOs watching, I strongly encourage directing your students to these resources before they leave campus so they're prepared for any type of travel.

MARISSA:

- The links to those Study in the States pages and SRC contact information are, you probably guessed it, in the hyperlink appendix. We'll also be sure to display SRC's contact information at the end of this presentation for everyone to see.

Slide 22: Completion of a Program of Study

MARISSA:

- Alright, let's round out the international student life cycle. After a student has completed their program of study and exhausted all employment options, F-1 and M-1 students have unique grace periods after which they must take certain actions. Barry, could you elaborate?

BARRY:

- Of course. F-1 students have 60 days to:

Student and Exchange Visitor Program   *U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services*
U.S. Customs and Border Protection   *U.S. Department of State*
January 2018 Government Voices Webinar—Script

- o   Apply and be accepted to a new academic program that starts within five months of the end of enrollment of their most recent program of study;

- o   Apply for a change of class of admission with USCIS; or o Travel within the United States and make preparations to depart at the end of the grace period.

- In comparison, M students have just 30 days to:

   - o   Apply for a change of class of admission with USCIS; or o Travel within the United States and make preparations to depart at the end of the grace period.

- We also want to point out that SEVIS auto-completes a student's record after the appropriate grace period passes. Students are not able to depart and return to the United States during their grace period, meaning if a student departs the country during the grace period, the remainder is lost. This is something very important for both students and the DSOs to understand.

- If you want to find further information about actions DSOs should take in SEVIS when a program is completed, download the hyperlink appendix to find helpful links.

Slide 23: Intragovernmental Collaboration Spotlight [Transition Slide]

MARISSA:

 I want to briefly switch gears here to take a deeper dive into intragovernmental collaboration, or how the entities here today work together, both behind the scenes and at conferences or other public events. Some viewers may already be familiar with this information, but I'd like to take a chance to highlight a few examples.

Slide 24: Collaboration—Working Groups and Knowledge Sharing

MARISSA:

- With that in mind, let's look at some of the tangible ways the different entities here work together. Laura, can you tell us more about working groups and some of the other ways that CBP, USCIS, SEVP and the Department of State all coordinate efforts?

LAURA:

Student and Exchange Visitor Program   *U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services*
U.S. Customs and Border Protection   *U.S. Department of State*
January 2018 Government Voices Webinar—Script

- Yes, Marissa. What our viewers may not realize is that we frequently meet with one another in both formal working groups and on an ad hoc basis. Some examples of our working groups include:
  - The International Student Working Group, ○ The K-12 Working Group, and ○ The Homeland Security Academic Advisory Council.
- Through these working groups, we keep each other informed about what we're doing, the resources we're developing and discuss the information that stakeholders will want to know about.

MARISSA:

- Working groups are one way to communicate and share information. Would you mind explaining some of our knowledge-sharing efforts?

LAURA:

- Sure thing. Our knowledge sharing involves cross-training each other, collaboration on policy decisions with broad implications, and co-presenting at stakeholder conferences and events. For example, Consular Affairs representatives provide training to new SEVP field representatives and adjudicators, while our partners at SEVP provide training to both consular officers and locally employed embassy or consulate staff.

BARRY:

- If I could just jump in here, Laura, SEVP also supported USCIS call center training following the release of the STEM OPT rule.
- We worked closely with USCIS during the STEM OPT rule development and implementation periods to ensure consistency in messaging between the agencies.
  - USCIS also provided subject matter expertise when SEVP developed worksite enforcement procedures for STEM OPT.

LAURA:

Student and Exchange Visitor Program   *U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services*
U.S. Customs and Border Protection   *U.S. Department of State*
January 2018 Government Voices Webinar—Script

- Thanks for that information, Barry. I know that the Department of State was also kept up to speed with STEM OPT news since it was such a large development within the international student community.

- And, finally, all of us—well, us and other government representatives—often present together at stakeholder conferences and events. Whether it involves representatives from out in the field, or staff members from Washington, D.C., it's likely you have already seen us presenting together to different trade groups or the academic community. In fact, the Government Voices Webinar Series was born out of a 2017 panel presentation at a stakeholder conference. We all felt this information was important enough to share with the wider academic community.

MARISSA:

- Thanks for that, Laura and Barry. It's really encouraging to see that not only are we working together, but that we are proactively trying to find ways to deepen our partnerships that benefit our stakeholders.

- Are there any other examples you all could share? **Slide 25: Collaboration—Study in the States**

BARRY:

- If I could, I'd actually like to talk a little about Study in the States, Marissa.

MARISSA:

- Please do, Barry!

BARRY:

- As most of our viewers are aware, Study in the States is a DHS website where school officials, international students and their parents can find information about different aspects of the international student life cycle.

- Our team here at SEVP maintains the site, and we make sure that links to our partner entity websites are current and provide visitors with the most accurate, up-to-date information.

Student and Exchange Visitor Program
U.S. Customs and Border Protection
January 2018 Government Voices Webinar—Script

U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services
U.S. Department of State

- We try to provide links from our government partners on Study in the States as much as possible.
- For example, website visitors can filter blog posts to show topics involving SEVP's government partners, such as the new Form I-765 from USCIS, cybersecurity reminders from the DHS Office of Academic Engagement and natural disaster resources from FEMA.

MARISSA:

- Thanks, Barry. I also want to emphasize that we'd like our viewers to know that Study in the States is a great place to start when you need information that may have oversight from multiple entities. We really encourage our webinar viewers to visit the site and utilize all of our free, available resources, including our links to partner entity pages.

Slide 26: Collaboration—System Interface

MARISSA:

- Before we move into our last section, I want to talk a bit more about how our different government data systems work together. We've already discussed how these systems interact throughout this presentation, but I'd like to tie it all together.

MARY:

- I'll kick off that discussion, Marissa. And again, this is Mary.
- First and foremost, I want to stress to our audience that when it comes to data interface, we are absolutely working together to ensure system integrity and to make the exchange of information as seamless as possible for all users.
- For example, there are several teams that meet regularly to look at specific interfaces. For USCIS, we have teams that meet with SEVP to address different points of data exchange between SEVIS and CLAIMS. We also have teams that work with the Department of State and CBP in this same regard.
- Although we may have different focuses and responsibilities, our overall objective is to safeguard data integrity and make every effort to share correct data in the most effective and efficient manner.

Student and Exchange Visitor Program   *U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services*
U.S. Customs and Border Protection   *U.S. Department of State*
January 2018 Government Voices Webinar—Script

JENI:

- To echo an earlier point—this is Jeni—I want to note that we at CBP use all systems with information about F and M nonimmigrants when conducting queries at primary and secondary inspection at U.S. ports of entry. We're getting information from all available sources too.

LAURA:

- To round things out—this is Laura from the State Department—ensuring visa data integrity and evolving intragovernmental system interfaces is a top priority, especially since our consular officers use SEVIS data to carry out adjudication of student visas.

MARISSA:

- It sounds to me that SEVIS is the conduit between different government partners when it comes to student data, correct?

BARRY:

- Yes, and I think that's a good way to think about it, Marissa.
- As you've heard from all of us today, data that goes into SEVIS informs consular affairs visa interviews, ports of entry inquiries, and is sent to CLAIMS to help USCIS make decisions to grant benefits like CPT and OPT. To that point, it is extremely important that DSOs make certain that the data they put into SEVIS is up to date and accurate.
- Also, remember that federal regulation requires DSOs to report changes to student information within 21 days of the change. Old or incorrect information could adversely affect the student and their school, and potentially result in withdrawal of a school's SEVP certification.
- I want to emphasize how important it is for DSOs stay on top of updates to Form I-20 information, in addition to the updates they make to their school's Form I-17.

Slide 27: Helpful Resources [Transition Slide]

MARISSA:

Student and Exchange Visitor Program   *U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services*
U.S. Customs and Border Protection   *U.S. Department of State*
January 2018 Government Voices Webinar—Script

- Thank you for all of that great information. We're getting close to the end of our time together, but before we wrap up, I want to make sure that we highlight the resources that are available to our stakeholders.

- As we pointed out at the beginning of this presentation, these are the official, U.S. government resources that DSOs and international students should use to learn more about the different parts of the international student life cycle.

Slide 28: Resources—USCIS

MARISSA:

- Let's quickly review the resources from each of our government partners. And, because I'm sure you are all wondering, yes, every link in this presentation is included in your hyperlink appendix.

- I know our audience can see the sites listed here, but, Mary, would you mind explaining why these USCIS websites are important?

MARY:

- Sure. I want to encourage our viewers to visit the main USCIS website, USCIS.gov. The site has a virtual assistant called Emma who answers user questions about the site in real time.

- We also have another website called myUSCIS. The site allows users to view their case status online using their receipt number found on notices sent by USCIS. Users can also sign up on myUSCIS to receive automatic case status updates by either email or text message.

- We also have a number of other digital tools available at USCIS.gov/Tools. From this page you can submit an online inquiry about your case, change your address online and check case status information.

- We have another great resource, which is our USCIS Processing Time Information. This page helps stakeholders understand how we process cases and allows them to view field office and service center-specific processing information about the forms that are handled by USCIS.
  - And we plan to update this page in early March to include even more useful information about case processing.

Student and Exchange Visitor Program   *U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services*
U.S. Customs and Border Protection   *U.S. Department of State*
January 2018 Government Voices Webinar—Script

- I also want to point the audience to the SAVE CaseCheck website. Many government agencies use the SAVE program to verify immigration status, and this website offers a fast and free way for the academic community to access that information. Users can visit the site and find a status update on things like the Form I-20 or their employment authorization card.
- And lastly, but not least, I want to mention our Avoid Scams Initiative. Combating immigration scams and fraud is a priority for USCIS. On our website, USCIS.gov/Avoid-Scams, you can find:
  - ○ Tips on how to avoid common scams; ○ How to find qualified legal assistance; ○ A resource center with public education materials; and ○ Information on how to report immigration scams and fraud.

Slide 29: Ask the Audience—Poll

MARY:

- While we're discussing USCIS resources, I want to take a quick pulse on how our audience utilizes pages like myUSCIS.
- We'll give you all a moment to let us know which USCIS resources you have used—and feel free to select all that apply.

[PAUSE]

MARY:

- Okay great! Well, I think that tells me everybody is going to our main USCIS website and you're checking your case status fairly often. Or you're checking processing times, I should say, fairly often so that is very helpful to us; thank you!

Slide 30: Resources—CBP

JENI:

Student and Exchange Visitor Program   *U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services*
U.S. Customs and Border Protection   *U.S. Department of State*
January 2018 Government Voices Webinar—Script

- For CBP information, CBP.gov is a great resource. In particular, I want to encourage our audience to send CBP's travel tips and reminders link to students traveling to the United States for the first time, or who plan to travel during their program of study. A complete understanding of the port of entry process will help students avoid receiving a Form I-515A.

- Additionally, on our webpage specifically for international visitors, students can view resource videos to help them prepare for travel and arrival, as well as links to learn about:

    o Admission at the port of entry, o Bringing
    food to the United States, and o Form I-94
    instructions and expiration dates.

- DHS TRIP offers a single point of contact for individuals who may have inquiries or seek resolution pertaining to difficulties experienced during their travel screening at transportation hubs or while crossing U.S. borders. DHS TRIP is a joint effort between DHS and the Department of State.

- Finally, I want to point the audience toward the official Form I-94 website. This is a site for visitors to the United States, where they can apply for or retrieve their Form I-94, travel history and access other resources about their travel status in the United States.

Slide 31: Ask the Audience—Poll

JENI:

- And speaking of the Form I-94 website, we do want to take a pulse on what our audience thinks about the site, and have two poll questions for you.

- Our first question is: is the Form I-94 website user friendly? Please feel free to use the comment pod to provide more information about your experience using the website. □ We'll give you all a moment to respond.

[PAUSE]

JENI:

- Okay great! It looks like most of you find our I-94 website user friendly, that's really good to hear!

Student and Exchange Visitor Program *U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services*
U.S. Customs and Border Protection *U.S. Department of State*
January 2018 Government Voices Webinar—Script

Slide 32: Ask the Audience—Poll

JENI:

- Moving on to the next question, our second question is if you think the Form I-94 website travel history is useful. Again, please use the comment pod to provide any additional information.

- Again, we'll pause so you can respond.

[PAUSE]

JENI:

- Great, once again it looks like the website and the information we are providing to the public are useful, so thank you for that!

- And I'll turn it over to Laura with State Department.

Slide 33: Resources—Department of State

LAURA:

- I'll speak to the Department of State's resources. We have several different websites available to help students navigate visa application and adjudication, some of which I mentioned earlier in this presentation.

- For prospective students, we recommend visiting EducationUSA's website to read more about the learning opportunities available in the United States, as well as scholarship information.

- I also previously mentioned the Consular Affairs travel website—Travel.State.gov—which hosts links to local embassy and consulate websites. Students can use the site to schedule an appointment for a visa interview and learn about the documents they'll need for the appointment. This is also the source for information about how to apply for a student visa.

- Finally, for students who want to check their U.S. visa application status, they can do so by visiting the Department of State's visa status check website.

Student and Exchange Visitor Program   *U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services*
U.S. Customs and Border Protection   *U.S. Department of State*
January 2018 Government Voices Webinar—Script

Slide 34: Resources—SEVP

BARRY:

☐ I'll close out our discussion of resources by highlighting what SEVP has available for students and schools. I know we have talked a lot about how Study in the States is a fantastic website for students, school officials and parents, but I also want to point our audience towards ICE.gov/SEVP. This site hosts technical information geared towards school officials, such as our regulations, our policy guidance and our school operating procedures.

Slide 35: Ask the Audience—Polls

BARRY:

- And just like Jeni and Laura, SEVP has a few questions for our audience, specifically about how you utilize SEVP resources.
- Our first three questions are:
    - o Do you use Study in the States as a starting point when you have questions about the international student life cycle?
    - o We also want to know if you trust the information that is on Study in the States.
    - o And finally, do you recommend Study in the States resources to students, parents or colleagues?
- I'll give our audience a moment for some feedback.

[PAUSE]

MARISSA:

- So Barry, it looks like the overwhelming response is yes, yes, and yes!

BARRY:

- We have a winner!

Student and Exchange Visitor Program
U.S. Customs and Border Protection
January 2018 Government Voices Webinar—Script

U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services
U.S. Department of State

Slide 36: Ask the Audience—Polls

BARRY:

- I would like to ask two more questions for everyone.
- First, what types of Study in the States resources are you sharing? Feel free to select as many responses as you wish.
- And last, if you are not recommending Study in the States resources, we would like to know which resources you are recommending to your students. Again, feel free to select as many responses as you wish.
- We'll wait briefly for the audience to respond.

[PAUSE]

Marissa:

- We're actually getting some really interesting, very varied answers. It looks like everyone is using all of the available resources at hand, which is exactly what we want to see.
- Thank you all very much for that!

Slide 37: Contact Information [Transition Slide]

MARISSA:

☐ Before we finish today's presentation, I want to highlight, as promised, some contact information.

Slide 38: Intragovernmental Panel—Entity Contact Information

MARISSA:

☐ If you want to get in touch with any of the entities from today's webinar, you can view their contact information on the slide displayed on your screen. As a reminder, all of these websites, emails and phone numbers are included in our hyperlink appendix—so for those

Student and Exchange Visitor Program   *U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services*
U.S. Customs and Border Protection   *U.S. Department of State*
January 2018 Government Voices Webinar—Script

of you out there furiously writing down these emails and phone numbers, just download that hyperlink appendix and you'll have all the information you see here.

Slide 39: Webinar Closing Slide

MARISSA:

- With that, we have now come to the end of our first Government Voices Webinar! Before we sign off, I want to again thank all of our presenters—we've been really excited to begin this series, and we're really glad to have had you all at the table today.

- As we're wrapping up, please be certain to take the polls on your screen if you haven't already. Your input will help us plan those future Government Voices Webinars.

- As we said at the beginning, this series will bring together our government partners who play a role in the international student life cycle. Our future webinars will involve more in-depth discussions about specific topics, and, for those future webinars, we will solicit pre-submitted questions from the audience. Make sure you stay tuned to Study in the States to find out how you can submit your questions in advance of future Government Voices Webinars.

- On behalf of everyone here today, I want to thank all of you for tuning in! I hope you can join us in May for the next Government Voices Webinar!