

## **Government Voices Webinar: What to Expect at a U.S. Port of Entry May 16, 2018 Webinar Script**

**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 Based on this guidance, some information in this document may be out of date.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**

#### **Kelly:**

- Hi everybody!
- Welcome back to our Government Voices Webinar series—today’s webinar is about what to expect at a U.S. port of entry.
- Some of you may have noticed that we adjusted the webinar time and it is now ending at 3, rather than 3:30 as advertised. ○ Unfortunately, we learned this morning that SEVP’s building is conducting county-mandated fire alarm testing beginning at 3 today. ○ This does cut our live Q&A time short, so if a question pops into your head during the webinar, make sure you submit it and we’ll do our best to answer it. ○ And you can always reach out to SRC or CBP’s toll-free number if you have further questions. ○ All contact information for SEVP and CBP is listed in the hyperlink appendix, which you can access in the “Webinar Resources” pod.
- That said, over the next hour, we’ll take a deep dive into what students can expect when seeking admission to the United States at a port of entry, and how DSOs can support students going through this process.

- Before we get started, we ask that you please take a moment to complete the polls on your screen.
- You may have submitted questions for this webinar, and we incorporated a lot of those into our presentation today. However, if something you hear sparks another question, feel free to submit it using the “Questions and Technical Difficulties” pod, which is located currently located under the “Agenda” pod, but will later move below the PowerPoint pod.
  - At the end of the presentation, we’ll be answering some of your questions live, so make sure you stick around to hear answers to some of those questions.

### **SLIDE 3: Housekeeping Notes**

#### **Kelly:**

- Before we get started, I want to cover a few brief housekeeping notes.
- First, please download and look at our hyperlink appendix, which includes links to all the webpages mentioned during today’s presentation. We’ll be referring to this document throughout the webinar, and you can access that appendix in the Webinar Resources pod, which is located to the right of the main presentation on your screen.
- 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 the 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 following this webinar.
- At the bottom of each slide, you’ll see the names of the different entities presenting today. We put this information here to help make it clear which entity is responsible for that piece of the student entry process. Sometimes you’ll see both CBP and SEVP listed, which illustrates where in the student life cycle we collaborate to facilitate student entry.
- If you experience technical difficulties at any point during today’s session, please explain your problem through the “Questions and Technical Difficulties” pod and we’ll do our best to assist you.

- Finally, if any of your colleagues couldn't 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**

### **Kelly:**

- I'm Kelly Pilleux-Petronia and I am your moderator.
- I'm excited to be joined by one of my colleagues from SEVP, as well as our partners from U.S. Customs and Border Protection, also known as CBP.
- David, would you mind introducing yourself first?

### **David:**

- Hi, I'm David Campos and I am a program manager in CBP's policy division, working on program implementation and port of entry operations oversight, such as programs, entry and exit, and biometrics. I've been with CBP since 2013.

### **Kelly:**

- Some of you may remember Barry from our first Government Voices webinar and we're excited to have him back!

### **Barry:**

- Hello again everyone, my name is Barry Kobe. I serve as the team lead in SEVP's Analysis and Operations Center, also known as SAOC, focusing on the Form I-515A.

### **Kelly:**

- And last, but not least, another familiar voice for those of you who tuned in to our January webinar, Jeni Best is on hand to help answer your questions. Jeni?

### **Jeni:**

- Good afternoon, my name is Jeni Best and I have been with 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.

## **SLIDE 5: Presentation Overview**

### **Kelly:**

- Thank you, everyone.

- Before we get into it, let's look at today's agenda. As you can see, we're going to be addressing a lot of information, and are looking forward to answering some of your questions as well.
- We would really love to hear your feedback on this webinar, so make sure to respond to the polling questions at the end of today's presentation!

### ***SLIDE 6: Arriving to the United States [Transition Slide]***

#### **Kelly:**

- To kick it off, I'd like to first turn to Barry. I know we addressed student entry and travel a little bit in the first Government Voices webinar, but can you start our discussion today?

### **SLIDE 7: Arriving to the United States—After Receiving a Student Visa**

#### **Barry:**

- As you can see, we're starting from the very beginning of the entry process, which starts once a student is approved for and receives an F-1 or M-1 nonimmigrant or J-1 exchange visitor visa. ○ I want to quickly note that students from Canada and Bermuda do not receive an actual visa in their passport, but they are still processed the same way as students from other countries.
- While there may be some students who were granted a new visa status via change of status, and are therefore already in the United States, I want to be clear that today we're focusing on students who received a visa while *outside* of the United States who have to pass through a port of entry to begin their studies.

#### **Kelly:**

- That's an important distinction to make; thanks for pointing that out, Barry. So, for those students who are in their home country or elsewhere in the world, what are their next steps upon receiving their visa?

- 

**Barry:**

- If they haven't already done so, then we recommend students book their travel arrangements at this time.

They should also begin to get their documentation in order, as they will need to present certain forms and evidence to the CBP officer at the port of entry.

- And of course, students should start packing their bags to begin their studies!

**Kelly:**

- Seems straightforward so far; do you have any tips for students at this point?

**Barry:**

- We're going to stress throughout this webinar how important it is that students keep their DSOs informed about their travel plans—when they expect to travel, both in the United States and on campus, and anything that occurs during their travel.
- Students: Remember that school officials may be able to help you with some arrival logistics, such as arranging transportation to your location of study once you arrive. It doesn't hurt to let them know when they can expect you at the local arrival terminal nearest your school or program of study.

**Kelly:**

- Now earlier you mentioned students needing to have their documentation in order. Could you talk about the specific documents to which you're referring?

## **SLIDE 8: Arriving to the United States—Travel Documentation**

**Barry:**

- Yes, but I think this is a good moment for David to step up, since it's CBP officers who are checking for this documentation.

- 

**David:**

- I'd be happy to, Barry!
- There are a few documents that CBP officers are looking to see at the U.S. port of entry. This includes a valid passport and visa, as well as an original Form I-20 with the school official and student ink signatures on the first page of the Form I-20. ○ We recommend that DSOs sign the form using blue ink to help CBP officers differentiate between the original form and a copy.

We also recommend that students keep their acceptance letter, evidence of financial support and DSO contact information handy. The officer determining admittance may not request these items, but it's always good to keep them in your carry-on.

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

## **SLIDE 9: Pre-submitted Question**

**Kelly:**

- Speaking of that Customs Declaration form, we had a pre-submitted question asking if nonimmigrant students can use CBP's new Mobile Passport app. You may have seen advertisements for this in your local airport. So, David, are nonimmigrant students able to use this tool as well?

**David:**

- No, the Mobile Passport app can only be used by U.S. citizens and Canadian visitors. All nonimmigrant students must fill out the Customs Declaration Form, if given prior to arrival, in its paper form.

**Kelly:**

- 
- Good to know, thanks David.
- Turning back to forms used at U.S. ports of entry, in our previous Government Voices webinar, I know we received some questions about when students are expected to use the original, ink signature Form I-20. Barry, would you be able to clear that up for our audience?

## **SLIDE 10: Arriving to the United States—Form I-20**

### **Barry:**

- Yes, we know there was a little confusion about that so I'm glad you asked, Kelly.
- We circled up with our colleagues at the U.S. Department of State and determined that the student is expected to have their original Form I-20 on-hand for their visa interview.
- This version is also required at U.S. ports of entry.



- CBP officers are looking for the original form with recommended blue-ink signature, and if not presented, then it's possible the student could be issued a Form I-515A.

**Kelly:**

- And are there any instances when a student could use a copy?

**Barry:**

- There are limited circumstances in which the consular officer may accept a copy of the Form I-20 before the student receives their original form.
  - *School officials* should contact the U.S. Department of State with further questions.
  - *Students* should contact the embassy or consulate at which they are interviewing to determine if the office will accept a copy of the form as part of their interview.
- Hopefully this clears it up for all our viewers!

## **SLIDE 11: Arriving to the United States—Student Travel Reminders Prior to Departure**

**Kelly:**

- I think it will, thanks for addressing it! Now that we've talked about the Form I-20, let's get back to the preparation process.
- It's likely the school officials watching this are well-versed in this information, but for the students out there, could we get a quick rundown of what they should pack in their carry-on, and review any restrictions on what they can bring to the United States?

**David:**

- Well, the key things students should have in their carry-on are those required documents we just talked about, like the Form I-20 and a valid passport with the valid visa inside.
- We also recommend students carry other documents that may be requested at the U.S. port of entry. Things such as:

- School official contact information; ○ Letter of acceptance from their school; ○ Transcripts or grade point average reports; ○ Financial statements; and
- Class schedule showing the minimum number of units the student must be enrolled in per semester or quarter.
- Finally, it’s always a good idea to have copies of all your documents; carrying copies with you in your carry-on, as well as leaving copies with your family in your home country, will provide some insurance in case one of your documents is lost or damaged.
- While in queue at the U.S. port of entry, students will have the opportunity to gather all of their entry documents from their carry-on and have it in hand to present to the CBP officer.

### **Kelly:**

- And what about restrictions? We all know there’s a list of things travelers cannot bring into the United States—where can students and school officials find guidance on that?

### **David:**

- A comprehensive list of what students cannot bring into the United States is available on [CBP.gov](https://www.cbp.gov).
- CBP prohibits and restricts these items because we believe they could injure community health, public safety, American citizens, domestic plant and animal life, or defeat our national interests.
- The link to the page is included in the hyperlink appendix for further information.

## **SLIDE 12: Arriving to the United States—Student Reminders Prior to Departure**

### **Kelly:**

- Thanks, David. Speaking of the hyperlink appendix, if you haven’t downloaded it yet, it’s in the “Webinar Resources” pod located below the presentation pod on your screen.

- Now let's pivot back to SEVP and talk about what students need to keep in mind before their departure. Barry?

**Barry:**

- One of the most important things school officials need to stress to students is their entry date.
  - Students can only begin to enter the United States up to 30 days before their official program start date.
- While we certainly encourage students to report directly to their school, they are not required to do so until the program start date listed on their Form I-20.
  - School officials: if you have any orientation programs for nonimmigrant students that take place before they start their program of study, but within the 30 days they can enter, please be sure that they know when to arrive to attend orientation.
- I also want to let our DSOs know that, ultimately, it is the student's responsibility to communicate their arrival process to you.
  - They should have your contact information in their carry-on, and should be able to connect with you upon arrival.
- Even if a student is late or failed to enter the United States for the term listed on their Form I-20, they should be communicating their travel plans and expected arrival date with you.

***SLIDE 13: Entering the United States [Transition Slide]***

**Kelly:**

- Great! So, let's move along to the next phase, where we'll address what happens when students enter the United States. We've got a lot to discuss with you, David, as this is the point where students interface with CBP officers.
  -

## **SLIDE 14: Entering the United States—Primary vs. Secondary Inspection**

### **David:**

- That's right, Kelly, and one of the main reasons we wanted to participate in this webinar with SEVP was to, as much as possible, demystify that process.
- At this point, the student has arrived at a U.S. port of entry.
- A CBP officer will review all those required documents and possibly some of the recommended documents for validity, and verify the SEVIS record in real time.
  - CBP officers at the U.S. port of entry use this time at primary inspection to speak with travelers and closely examine their documentation to determine their reason and intentions for traveling to the United States.
  - If the student's documents appear valid, they may be admitted into the United States.

Documents are only one portion of any passenger or student's inspection. The student must also prove to the CBP officer that they are coming to the United States for a bona fide reason, consistent with their visa class.

Once admitted into the United States, a student will proceed to the baggage control area, where they will retrieve their luggage. It's worth noting that they may still be selected for a baggage examination, which is conducted randomly. ○ If a passenger is not selected for a baggage exam, or once an exam is finished, they will proceed out of the Federal Inspection Site and into the rest of the airport arrivals terminal. ○ It is not the intent of CBP to subject travelers to unwarranted scrutiny, and students and school officials can rest assured that CBP inspection procedures are designed to facilitate entry for those who can readily establish their admissibility. ○ Ultimately, we rely on individual CBP officers to use their judgement to determine the extent of examination necessary, while also expecting them to conduct their duties in a professional manner, and treat each traveler with dignity and respect.

- If a further inspection of documents is needed, the student is escorted to secondary inspection, where CBP officers have more time and systems to review all available information in more detail. ○ 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. ○ 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.

## **SLIDE 15: Pre-submitted Question**

### **Kelly:**

- We have another pre-submitted question from our audience, David. When CBP officers are reviewing SEVIS information at the point of entry, what are they looking at specifically to determine a student's admissibility?

### **David:**

○

- 
- We get this question a lot, but the simple answer is we take all SEVIS information into consideration.
- While we CBP officers do focus on student record status, such as active, initial, completed or terminated, when reviewing information, ultimately, we are looking at the whole record to make our determination.

## **SLIDE 16: Entering the United States—Ports of Entry**

### **Kelly:**

- Thanks for that explanation, David.
- Now that we've talked about what students can expect during the entry process, let's spend some time talking about the differences between the U.S. ports of entry themselves.

### **David:**

- Students will find that air and sea ports are similar in their setup and the way CBP officers conduct their review of the student's documentation and information when they are applying for admission at the port.
- Students arriving at these ports do not need to complete the paper Form I-94, "Arrival/Departure Record." ○ CBP automatically populates this information from electronic travel records.
  - We do encourage students to get their Form I-94 number so they can verify their entry information, including duration of status. Students can do this even after they arrive at their school.
  - A link to the Form I-94 website, where students can get that information, is included in the hyperlink appendix, and we recommend that school officials share the link with students upon arrival or during orientation.
- At air and sea ports, CBP officers have a controlled environment in which to process applicants for admission in primary inspection. ○ Officers also receive passenger manifests, which carriers transmit to CBP while passengers are en route, giving CBP more time to prescreen visitors.

- Like air and sea ports, students are still required to present all their original documentation at land ports of entry. It is also possible that students at land ports of entry may be sent to secondary inspection.

Remember, secondary inspection is a place that gives CBP officers more time to review and verify documentation. Being sent to secondary inspection does not mean a prospective student has done anything wrong.

This is especially relevant for schools with border commuter students, as they are the students who deal with these types of ports much more often than students arriving at air or sea ports.

- Unlike air and sea ports of entry, land ports of entry do not have passenger manifests and still distribute paper Forms I-94.

## **SLIDE 17: Entering the United States—Tips for Border Commuter Students**

### **Kelly:**

- I know a lot of students entering via land ports of entry are border commuter students. David, could you take some time to address their unique entry processes.

### **David:**

- Yes, but I want to split some of my speaking time with Barry, as some of the information on this slide is based upon SEVP regulation and guidance.

### **Barry:**

- As I'm sure our viewers who attend or work at schools near U.S. land borders are probably aware, border commuter students are nationals of Canada or Mexico.

○

- 
- They are admitted to the United States under certain rules as an F-1 or M-1 student to enroll in a full course of study at an SEVP-certified school located within 75 miles of a United States land border. ○ These students may have employment or other responsibilities that require them to reside in their home country, which is why these students can, and typically do, study part time.
- Students who believe they are eligible to be a border commuter student should contact the DSO of their prospective school.
- For some U.S. port of entry processing tips for border commuter students and their DSOs, I'll turn it back over to David.

**David:**

- Just like we advise all other nonimmigrant students, we recommend that border commuter students carry all their required and recommended documentation for each border crossing.
- As a reminder, that includes:
  - An original Form I-20 with valid ink signature;
  - A valid passport and visa, except for Canadian students who only need a valid passport;
  - School official contact information; ○ Letter of acceptance from their school; ○ Transcripts or grade point average reports; ○ Financial statements; and
  - A class schedule showing the minimum number of units the student must be enrolled in per semester or quarter.
- We also want to encourage these students to enroll in CBP's Trusted Traveler programs.
  - Doing so facilitates faster processing at U.S. ports of entry for these students.
- For Canadian border commuter students, they would enroll in NEXUS.



- For Mexican border commuter students, they would enroll in the Secure Electronic Network for Travelers Rapid Inspection, otherwise known as SENTRI. ○ For more information about these programs, their requirements, and how to apply, our viewers can find links to their respective pages on CBP.gov in the hyperlink appendix.

## **SLIDE 18: Entering the United States—Handling a Form I-515A**

### **Kelly:**

- Thanks, David.
- I'd like to quickly review what happens when a student's documentation is deficient at the U.S. port of entry, but they are still granted admission with a Form I-515A. Since we have SEVP's Form I-515A expert with us today, I'll turn it over to Barry.

### **Barry:**

- The most important thing for both students and DSOs to remember is that this is another piece of the travel process that is, ultimately, the student's responsibility. ○ Students: If you receive a Form I-515A, you must notify your DSO.

School officials: You will, of course, receive notification that the Form was issued via email, but this comes back to what we've been stressing today, which is that it is important for students to keep those lines of communication with their DSOs open during their travels to the United States, and especially if they receive a Form I-515A.

To our student viewers: Your DSO will work with you to make sure that everything is in order, and can help you collect the necessary paperwork to mail to SEVP.

- Upon receiving the form, students have 30 days from the date of issuance to submit correct paperwork to SEVP's Form I-515A processing team. ○ The corrected paperwork must be submitted before the "admit until date" listed on your Form I-94.

○

- 
- Students: If you are issued a Form I-515A and you fail to comply in those 30 days, it will negatively affect your nonimmigrant student visa status, and you may be required to depart the United States.
- Once SEVP receives the required documentation, which will be listed on the student’s Form I-515A, SEVP adjudicates the documents and notifies school officials if the student is granted permission to stay in the United States for the “duration of status.” ○ Notification is not sent via email or SEVIS alert; school officials can consider the student has been notified and that they are permitted to stay by the return of submitted documentation and receipt of a compliance letter from SEVP through the U.S. mail.

**Kelly:**

- Now Barry, recently we learned through a February Broadcast Message that SEVP transitioned to a new Form I-515A processing system. Did that transition have an effect on the process by which students and schools respond to the Form I-515A?

**Barry:**

- The only thing that changed for school officials as a result of SEVP changing its processing systems, is that DSOs now receive two emails rather than one. ○ The first email notifies the DSO that the student has received a Form I-515A.
  - The second email contains a password that allows the DSO to open the first email.
- This change, as seen by school officials, was a small piece of wider enhancements SEVP made to ensure student privacy is protected.
- The process of how students and DSOs respond to the Form I-515A remains unchanged.

**Kelly:**

- Okay, that’s good to know.
- Turning back to how to respond to the form—while we encourage students to make sure they have the proper documentation from the beginning so that they don’t receive a

Form I-515A, the process to correct the deficiencies sounds straightforward. Does SEVP have any resources available to help navigate this process?

**Barry:**

- Yes, SEVP has a few specific resources I want to bring up.
  - The Study in the States Resource Library hosts a one-page infographic that illustrates the Form I-515A receipt and response process, which is very helpful. ○ We also have a one pager on how to avoid receiving a Form I-515A.
  - The [Study in the States] “What is a Form I-515A?” page is a great hub of information with frequently asked questions that both students and school officials should look through if they have questions about the process. ○ And if your question remains unanswered, you can always reach out to SRC or email our I-515A team at [SEVIS.I-515@ice.dhs.gov](mailto:SEVIS.I-515@ice.dhs.gov).

**SLIDE 19: Pre-submitted Question**

**Kelly:**

- Our final pre-submitted question of the day is about a unique situation. David, some school officials wanted to know what they or their students can do if they are admitted under the wrong visa classification. Do you have any advice?

**David:**

- For any students who encounter this issue, they can have their information reviewed and corrected before deferred inspection.

**SLIDE 20: Student Travel [Transition Slide]**

**Kelly:**

- Good to know.

- Well, thank you both for that comprehensive look at the U.S. port of entry. I do want to talk a little bit more about how these processes come into play when students are traveling, though.

## **SLIDE 21: Student Travel—Domestic and International Travel**

### **Kelly:**

- David, do you have any tips to share with us?

### **David:**

- Yes, so, while it's ultimately the student's responsibility to maintain their status while traveling, DSOs play an important role in helping them do so, which is why we have a few key reminders for them.
  - As DSOs, please be certain to verify record status for students who are traveling domestically or internationally. This will help the student pass through U.S. ports of entry.
  - 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.
  - Finally, make sure students know that every inspection at a U.S. port of entry is unique. Just because a student was previously granted entry does not mean that the same will occur in the future at other U.S. ports of entry.

### **Kelly:**

- Great. Thank you, David! Barry, are there any other resources that either CBP or SEVP provides to support DSOs and students with domestic and international travel plans?

### **Barry:**

- I previously mentioned the "Handling a Form I-515" one pager, as well as the "What is a Form I-515?" webpage, which I want to bring up here again, in addition to a few other resources.
- Our "What is Secondary Inspection?" page [on Study in the States] contains 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, please direct your students to these resources before they leave campus so they're prepared for any type of travel.

**Kelly:**

- As mentioned, the links to those Study in the States pages and SRC contact information are in the hyperlink appendix.

**SLIDE 22: Student Travel—Duration of Status, Program Completion Date and Grace Period**

**Kelly:**

- Finally, while we have both SEVP and CBP at the table, I want to briefly go over duration of status and program completion date. David, could you first explain duration of status for our viewers?

**David:**

- Yes, so, thinking back to when a CBP officer is determining a student's admissibility, once they conclude the student can enter the United States, they provide a "D/S"—meaning duration of status—admission stamp. ○ This permits the student to remain in the United States as long as they maintain their nonimmigrant status, and their Form I-20 has not expired.
  - Students should only see a date of admission instead of a "D/S" if they were issued a Form I-515A or if they are a border commuter student. ○ You

can find this date marked either on the passport admission stamp or on the paper Form I-94 for students seeking admission via U.S. land ports of entry. ○ Students without a paper form can look up their date of admission on the Form I-94 website.

- Students are required to keep the paper Form I-94 card received at a U.S. land port of entry for the duration of their program. ○ We recommend that border commuter students staple each new Form I-94 they receive to the inside of their passport to ensure all their documentation stays together.

**Kelly:**

- Okay, and Barry, in comparison, what about the program completion date?

**Barry:**

- As part of maintaining your status, students should complete their program of study by the program end date listed on the Form I-20.
- It's different from duration of status in that it is based on a student's program start date, and how long it should typically take a student to complete that program.

**Kelly:**

- That's an important distinction to make.
- I also know our colleagues at the Department of State's Bureau of Consular Affairs would like us to remind our viewers that the visa expiration date does not determine the permitted length of stay in the United States.
- Students and DSOs can go to [Travel.State.gov](https://travel.state.gov), which we've included in the hyperlink appendix, to find more information about the visa expiration date.
- Now, here's where it gets a little complex. Barry, could you explain the student grace period in relation to program completion dates?

**Barry:**

- This can appear complicated, even though it's relatively simple.
- As I'm sure all our school officials watching today are aware, F-1 nonimmigrant students have a 60-day grace period to:
  - Apply, be accepted and have their SEVIS record transferred to a new academic program that starts within five months;
  - Apply to USCIS for a change of visa status; or
  - Travel within the United States before departing.
- M-1 students have a 30-day grace period to:
  - Apply to USCIS for a change of visa status; or
  - Travel within the United States before departing.
- A student's grace period begins following the program completion date listed on their Form I-20.

### ***SLIDE 23: Helpful Resources [Transition Slide]***

#### **Kelly:**

- Thank you, David and Barry for taking the time to speak with us today. We want to leave plenty of time for our live Q&A, so before we wrap up the presentation portion, I want to make sure that we highlight the resources that are available to our stakeholders.
- These are the official, free 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 24: Helpful Resources—U.S. Customs and Border Protection**

#### **David:**

- Thanks Kelly.
- If you're a DSO with students traveling to the United States for the first time, or are planning to travel during their program of study, I want to encourage you to share CBP's links on travel tips and reminders with them. A complete understanding of the U.S. port of entry process will help students avoid receiving a Form I-515A.

- Additionally, on our travel 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:
  - Admission at the U.S. port of entry, ○
  - Bringing food to the United States, and ○
  - Form I-94 instructions and expiration dates.
- The Travel Redress Inquiry Program, or TRIP, is a joint effort between DHS and the Department of State that offers a single point of contact for individuals who may have inquiries or seek resolutions pertaining to difficulties experienced during their travel screening at transportation hubs or while crossing U.S. borders.
- 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 25: Helpful Resources—Student and Exchange Visitor Program**

### **Barry:**

- And while we have highlighted the numerous Study in the States resources, I also want to point our audience towards [ICE.gov/SEVP](https://ice.dhs.gov/SEVP).
- This site hosts technical information geared towards school officials, such as our regulations and policy guidance.

## **SLIDE 26: Helpful Resources—Presenter Contact Information**

### **Kelly:**

- If you want to get in touch with either CBP or SEVP, you can view their contact information on the slide displayed on your screen. As a reminder, these websites, emails and phone numbers are included in your hyperlink appendix, so no need to write these down if you've already downloaded it.



## **SLIDE 27: Live Q&A [Transition Slide]**

### **Kelly:**

- Okay thank you to all of you who submitted questions for our presenters; feel free to keep sending in questions and we'll answer as many as we can in the time we have left.
- Barry, I'm going to start with a question for you about Forms I-515A. Can you talk a little about the processing time once you receive them?

### **Barry:**

- If the student sits down with the DSO, they go over the instructions, and be sure that all the information that was requested is enclosed in the envelop they send us, usually, our adjudicators can process a Form I-515A within a day or two.
- Now, we have what we call peak seasons. Where we get a lot of Forms I-515A at the same time, which is when a lot of students are traveling to the United States in September and January. It may take a little longer than usual.
- But if the student does everything as he or she is told to do, we should get this done within a couple of days.

### **Kelly:**

- We have a question related to that: If the student fails to comply with the I-515A within 30 days and does not depart the U.S., what happens then?

### **Barry:**

- Unfortunately, if the student refuses to comply with the requirements of the Form I-515A, the student's name is turned over to ICE officials. He or she may be required to leave the United States and will lose their duration of status. Once you have lost your duration of status, you are considered to be illegally in this country.
- You then have two options: Number one, go to USCIS to ask for reinstatement of status, or two, you depart the country.

- It is very important for students to know this is an important document. If you are given one at the port of entry by a CBP officer, please be sure to sit down with your DSO to fill out everything and get it to us as soon as possible.

**Kelly:**

- Thank you for that. Jeni, did you have any questions that came in?

**Jeni:**

- Yes, we have quite a few questions related to CBP. There have been a few associated to students that have been denied entry into the U.S.
- David, can you explain briefly if a student is denied entry, what documentation we provide to them and what information we would give them?

**David:**

- If the student is denied entry into the United States, we're almost always going to provide them with a Form I-275 if they have withdrawn their application from the United States.
- We are also going to provide them with a series of questions we ask the students. We are going to provide a copy of that information to them. They are going to be given back all their documents that they presented to the CBP officer to bring back to their home country. Generally, these documents are kept in case they want to apply for a new visa to come back into the United States.

**Jeni:**

- Thanks, David. We also have a few questions about Forms I-94 and Form I-94 issues. Can you provide some information [on] how a student can go about correcting their Form I-94 entry?

**David:**

- If you have a Form I-94 issue, we recommend you go to [CBP.gov](https://www.cbp.gov) and look for our Deferred Inspection Offices page. The Deferred Inspection Offices also conduct Form I-94 corrections. You can get in touch with this office via phone. Their hours of operation are

listed on the website. You can also get in touch with them via email, which is also listed on the website.

- If you are going to send an email or call, we request you have all your documents ready to go, such as passport number, full name and date of birth. We ask that you don't email your full name, passport number or date of birth all together because it is personally identifiable information. We ask that you leave your date of birth out. If you are calling, the CBP officer may ask you for additional information, such as the numbers on your visa or your Form I-20 end number.
- If you have an issue with your admission class, it can generally be fixed by a CBP officer via phone or email. However, some issues do require you to present yourself in person to a CBP officer at the Deferred Inspection Office at your local U.S. port of entry.

**Jeni:**

- Thank you. Another question is what is required of an F-1 on OPT to re-enter the United States during their OPT period?

**David:**

- An F-1 on OPT will generally have the same requirements as an F-1 on regular status. However, you are also going to have an employment authorization, which is a small card somewhere inside of the license that they are going to have to present with themselves.

**Jeni:**

- If CBP is going to contact a school, what is the typical scenario? Who do they contact first, the PDSO or the DSO?

**David:**

- Usually when CBP is going to contact a school, it is under specific circumstances where a student has some document deficiencies when entering the country. We will try to call the PDSO or DSO, whoever is more readily available, and can help the student by providing information about the status of their application to the university or college. We don't usually reach out at the U.S. port of entry unless we have to reach out. The majority of the time, it has to do with document deficiencies.

**Jeni:**

- Thank you. Can you explain re-admission on a Form I-94? If someone goes to Mexico, then they travel back to the U.S., or someone travels to Canada.

**David:**

- If a student travels outside the United States to Mexico, Canada or one of the adjacent islands, perhaps if they take a cruise to one of the nearby islands, they are admitted back to the United States based off their initial admittance. We still request students to travel with their same passport, same visa and their Form I-20. The more documentation, the better to confirm their status is active.

**Jeni:**

- The next question is—does CBP require a new visa if the SEVIS number on the Form I-20 does not match the SEVIS number on the student's visa?

**David:**

- CBP does not require a new visa if the SEVIS number on the Form I-20 is different. All CBP requires is a valid visa that has not expired, and a valid Form I-20 with a valid ink signature and a valid course date, as discussed earlier in the webinar. You can have a different visa and number, and a different Form I-20 and number.

**Jeni:**

- Thank you. There have been quite a few questions on the endorsement on the Form I-20. How often does it have to be renewed?

**David:**

- The endorsement on the Form I-20 should be renewed every year. It is only valid for one year.

**Jeni:**

- The student is academically dismissed from their program and therefore violates their status. The DSO reports their status on their Form I-20. How long do they have to depart the country?

**David:**

- If the student's status is terminated, or the student's status is just complete, they have 30 days to depart the country, unless they get a reinstatement from USCIS before those 30 days are up.

**Jeni:**

- David, can you discuss the reasons why we might deny entry to a student?

**David:**

- Some reasons we might deny entry to a student, and what we mean by deny entry is they could be expeditiously removed or they might have withdrawn their application for admission. The most common reasons are because of: document deficiencies, their visa may be expired, their Form I-20 might not be properly completed, or there may be some lapses in their course of study in the past which might cause them to overstay their admission time. These are some of the most common reasons someone might be denied entry.

**Jeni:**

- How long does it take before a student sees their updated information on the Form I-94 website?

**David:**

- Generally, this information is available within 24 hours of their admittance to the United States. However, if it's not immediately there, we ask that you wait up to 72 hours. If the information is still not there, then we recommend you look at your visa and your passport to see if there are differences in the way your name is presented on these documents. You can try to use different combinations on the Form I-94 website.

**Jeni:**

- If the visa has an expiration date, but the stamp by CBP says “D/S,” do you still need to get an updated visa?

**David:**

- If the stamp says “D/S,” then you only have to get an updated visa once you depart the United States and then try to come back in, if the visa is expired. You need a valid visa to enter the United States, even if the stamp has said “D/S.” Once you leave, the “D/S” is no longer applicable, and you will need a new visa. While you are inside the United States, if your visa expires, but you still have the “D/S” stamp, you are okay to stay if your program is still ongoing.

**Jeni:**

- Here is a scenario based question: If a student is applying for STEM OPT, which is currently pending, and wants to travel back home then travel back to the United States. The student would be entering the country after their OPT is done, but they’re allowed to work while their STEM OPT EAD card is pending. Is the Form I-20 with STEM OPT pending enough at that point, or would they need other documentation to enter?

**David:**

- Generally, one of the OPTs will have to be active and valid, and can’t be pending. If one has ended and the other is still pending, we advise the student to wait to come back in until the second OPT has approved, in this case the STEM OPT.

**Kelly:**

- This one comes up a lot at the end of a student program. During the 60-day grace period, can the student travel to Canada, then re-enter during the grace period?

**David:**

- If the student travels to Canada and re-enters during the 60-day grace period, they will be okay because they fall under the contiguous territories.

**Kelly:**

- There was a little bit of confusion, David, about status violation. Is there a 60-day grace period for students that are in status, as opposed to a student who has fallen out of status, a student who is departing the country after their program ends has the 60-day grace period when in F-1 status?

**David:**

- Yes.

**Jeni:**

- Here is a question we haven't addressed yet. It's related to the Department of State process. I think we can address it here. Do dependents go through an interview process, as well?

**David:**

- When dependents enter the United States, they do go through an interview process, just like any other person entering the United States. CBP officers are looking to see if the principal applicant, or the person traveling with them at the time, has at least started their program if they are not here in the United States.
- For example, an F-1 principal applicant might sponsor their F-2 spouse to come into the United States during their course of study. An F-2 or the dependent cannot come to the United States prior to the F-1 principal applicant entering the United States.

**Jeni:**

- David, I have a question for you about changing the start date of an I-20.
- This individual says we are a language program offering sessions every four weeks. If the student is approved for a visa, but not able to attend the session, do they need to push the date forward and an updated Form I-20?

**David:**

- Yes, they are going to need an updated Form I-20 with the correct dates.

**Jeni:**

- We are getting a few questions about the 60-day grace period. There was a little confusion earlier.
- If the student finishes their program, they have 60 days to depart the United States. The grace period after program completion for the F-1 student is 60-days.

**Kelly:**

- As we mentioned in the webinar, the grace period for the M-1 student is 30 days. What David referred to earlier was a status violation, in which they needed to leave immediately after the status violation.

**Jeni:**

- This is related to the denial at the port of entry. If a student is denied entry at a port of entry, and the application for admission is withdrawn, is the visa automatically canceled?

**David:**

- No, the visa is not automatically canceled.

**Kelly:**

- We have another question regarding the Form I-20. If a student receives a Change of Education Level Form I-20, then travels outside the United States, is it treated like an Attendance Admission Form or should the Travel Endorsement Form be signed?

**David:**

- Yes, they should always have the Form I-20 signed and endorsed.

**Jeni:**

- We have quite a few questions about traveling outside the country during the 60-day grace period.
- Once you are within the grace period and you depart the country, your grace period is over. You cannot re-enter the country, but if you have other travel documents, then you



can. If you have a B-1, B-2 or a F-1 visa, you can re-enter the United States once CBP determines you are admissible. If you are a Visa Waiver Program Applicant and you have a valid approved essay, then you can re-enter the country.

**Kelly:**

- I think we have covered this one in a couple of different questions, but just to clarify, can a student travel after their program end date, but during the grace period with an EAD for OPT that has not yet started?

**David:**

- Yes.

**SLIDE 28: Webinar Closing Slide**

**Kelly:**

- Before we sign off, I want to once again thank Barry for joining us, and David for participating in his first Government Voices Webinar. And thanks to Jeni for answering some questions.
- It's been a pleasure to have you all here.
- 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.
- On behalf of everyone here today, I want to thank all of you for tuning in! I hope you can join us in September for the next Government Voices Webinar!