



SEVP Ask the Experts Webinar: Behind the Scenes of Form I-17 Updates July 27, 2017 Webinar Script

Slide 1: Pre-webinar Title Slide

[Adobe Connect room opens approximately 15 minutes prior to webinar. Slide 1 displays until the start of the webinar at 2 p.m. EDT]

Slide 2: Webinar Title Slide

MARISSA:

- Good afternoon, everybody. Thank you for tuning in to SEVP Ask the Experts Webinar: Behind the Scenes of Form I-17 Updates.

Slide 3: Housekeeping Notes

MARISSA:

- I'm going to start by discussing some housekeeping notes for this webinar.
- I want to note that we will address pre-submitted questions from stakeholders throughout the presentation and we want to take the time to thank everyone who submitted these questions before the webinar.
 - As a quick side note, we will not answer case-specific questions during today's webinar. This means that we will be unable to respond to questions about your specific petition update during this webinar. Unfortunately, we don't have the time and don't have SEVIS in front of us.
- If you haven't already done so, please take a moment to complete the polls on your screen, including the webinar attendance poll. Also, so you know, we will have polls throughout the presentation to gauge your insight on topics related to the Form I-17. We really appreciate your responses to these questions.
- Now, on to a few more quick housekeeping notes for you:



- Please download the items in the webinar resource pod at the bottom of screen: [hyperlink appendix](#), [PDF copy of today's presentation](#) and [glossary](#) of key terms.
- If you have any questions about Form I-17 updates, please submit those questions throughout the webinar using the Questions for SEVP and Technical Difficulties pod.
- Finally, if you are having technical difficulties, please submit a brief, detailed description of your issue in this pod as well.
- Finally, a copy of the webinar recording and resources will be available on the Study in the States [SEVP Ask the Experts Webinar](#) page so if there's anyone at your institution who was unable to join, we will have the presentation recording uploaded for them to view.

Slide 4: Presentation Overview

MARISSA:

- Before I hand it over to our presenters, I want to quickly run through today's webinar agenda. We're going to start with an overview of the Form I-17, before discussing the Form I-17 update process, special considerations, changes to recertification, and helpful resources on Study in the States.
- Lastly, please provide feedback on this presentation through the [Stakeholder Satisfaction Survey](#). The link is at the bottom of your slide and in your [hyperlink appendix](#). We appreciate your response and really do use the feedback that you provide us to inform our processes and communications.
- Now, I will turn it over to our presenters to introduce themselves.

Slide 5: Presenters

ZOBAIDA:

- Hello, I'm Zobaida Karim. I'm a section chief within the SEVP School Certification Unit and I have been with SEVP for 10 years now. I am happy to be here.

ELISABETH:

- Hello everyone, I'm Elisabeth Catterton. I am also a section chief for the SEVP School Certification Unit and have also been with the program for 10 years.



Slide 6: Ask the Audience

MARISSA:

- Thanks for that introduction, Zobaida and Elisabeth.
- Alright, let's begin with a brief poll question to get a sense of how often you interact with Form I-17 on a regular basis. We want to know:
 - Do you work with the Form I-17 as a regular part of your job, either as a DSO or PDSO?
- We'll give you a couple seconds to complete the poll.
- So, it looks like the vast majority of you are answering yes, and for those of you who answered no, we appreciate you listening in to learn more. Thank you for that feedback!
- With that, I'll turn it over to Zobaida to begin.

Slide 7: Form I-17 Overview

ZOBAIDA:

- We're going to first do a quick overview of the Form I-17—even though most of you deal with the form on a daily basis and are probably familiar with its purpose and fields. This section will discuss what the Form I-17 is, its life cycle, and the difference between updates and recertification.

Slide 8: What is the Form I-17?

ZOBAIDA:

- As many of you know, the Form I-17 is known as the “Petition for Approval of School for Attendance by Nonimmigrant Student.” This is a petition that is submitted and maintained by DSOs in SEVIS, and is necessary for SEVP certification to enroll F and M students. I'm also sure many of you know, but schools and programs of study must be certified by SEVP to issue Forms I-20 to prospective international students.
- The Form I-17 is a living document that includes information such as a school's location and contact information, state licensure, courses of study offered, accreditation, international student population, and PDSO and DSO information.



Slide 9: Form I-17 Life Cycle

ZOBAIDA:

- Your school’s Form I-17 will periodically go through reviews and changes, including petition updates. Petition updates occur when a school makes changes to information on the Form I-17. This is typically done through submitting an edit in SEVIS, which then comes to SEVP for adjudication.
- There’s also recertification, which is required by law every two years. For clarification, this is every two years from the date of your school’s initial certification. Recertification is an opportunity for SEVP to review information on your school’s Form I-17.
- Additionally, we also have out-of-cycle reviews, which are reviews of Form I-17 information that occur outside of recertification. These reviews can be triggered for a variety of reasons.
- There are 26 fields that require review by an SEVP adjudicator on the Form I-17. SEVP federal adjudicators must review changes and evidence before approving updates to these fields. I also want to note that PDSOs are able to make changes to multiple fields at one time and can submit multiple updates to SEVP at once.
 - Examples of fields that require adjudication include the school’s mailing address and physical location, ownership, PDSO and DSO additions or deletions, and any changes to regulation.
- Remember, federal regulation requires PDSOs to report changes to information on the Form I-17 within 21 days. Schools that are unable to report changes via a petition update must contact SEVP for assistance.
- You can view a complete list of all sections requiring adjudication under the Petition Updates tab at [ICE.gov/SEVIS/Schools](https://ice.gov/SEVIS/Schools). This link is included in your [hyperlink appendix](#).

Slide 10: Pre-submitted Question

MARISSA:

- Thank you for that information, Zobaida. Now, I want to jump in with our first pre-submitted question about fields requiring adjudication on the Form I-17.
- One stakeholder has a bit of feedback and asks the following question:



- The field to enter admissions requirements on the Form I-17 is quite small. Some schools have many programs of study and specific admissions requirements for programs of the same level—for example, a bachelor’s level—but with different majors, and are unable to include this information in the space provided.
- So, our question is, are DSOs expected to provide specific admission requirements for all programs or just general policies on the Form I-17? And, are DSOs required to update the Form I-17 as these specific admissions requirements change?

ZOBAIDA:

- First, thank you for your feedback regarding the character limit for the admissions requirement field. SEVP will take this feedback to our SEVIS team.
- To answer your question, due to character restraints, DSOs can provide general policies for your school’s admissions criteria in this field. And, yes, DSOs must update the Form I-17 if there are any changes to the school’s admissions policies. Federal regulations require DSOs to report changes to information on the Form I-17 within 21 days.

Slide 11: Form I-17 Updates and Recertification

ZOBAIDA:

- Alright, we’ll now discuss the difference between Form I-17 updates and recertification. DSOs should remember that Form I-17 updates are not the same as recertification. Updates to the Form I-17 occur when a school’s information changes, while as mentioned earlier, recertification occurs every two years.
- DSOs will receive a recertification notice from SEVP 180 days before the school’s CED. I want to stress that Form I-17 updates do not affect a school’s CED or the recertification process. But remember, schools cannot file for recertification with pending Form I-17 updates.
- Before we move on, we have a quick tip for DSOs:
 - Do not wait until recertification to make updates to the Form I-17. As I noted before, DSOs must update the Form I-17 within 21 days of a change. Finally, schools without pending updates must apply for recertification by the CED or risk withdrawal.
- Now, I am going to hand it over to Elisabeth, who will discuss the Form I-17 update process.



Slide 12: Form I-17 Update Process

ELISABETH:

- Thank you, Zobaida. In this next section we'll discuss the Form I-17 update process, from PDSOs submitting an update to notification of the decision, as well as evidence gathering and recent Form I-17 update processing times.

Slide 13: Editing the Petition in SEVIS

ELISABETH:

- As Zobaida just mentioned, federal regulation requires DSOs to update the Form I-17 within 21 days of any material change. Failure to adhere to federal regulation may result in withdrawal of a school's SEVP certification. Upon a change to school information on the Form I-17, the PDSO must log into SEVIS, make the appropriate edits and click submit.
 - It is important to note that the Form I-17 is locked once submitted until SEVP adjudicates the updates. If you need to make an update during this time, contact SEVP for assistance.
- DSOs should review the Form I-17 on a regular basis to ensure it is up to date and accurate. Any DSO at a school can make changes and save a draft of the Form I-17, but only the PDSO at the main location can submit these changes to SEVP. Material changes include changes to any field on the Form I-17. In addition, PDSOs can submit multiple Form I-17 updates at once. However, it's important to note that using the Cancel button in SEVIS will wipe all changes and erase draft petition edits.
- In certain cases, schools may need to pay a fee associated with a Form I-17 update. This may include a \$655 site visit fee for edits to the main location address to be a true change in physical location, and a \$1,700 filing fee for edits made to school ownership that are determined to be a true change in ownership. Schools will receive an email requesting payment, if needed.



Slide 14: Evidence Gathering and Submission

ELISABETH:

- As we've mentioned in previous webinars, PDSOs must submit all evidence required for adjudication electronically at the time of filing in SEVIS. We introduced this requirement as part of SEVIS Release 6.29 in October 2016, and we require it of all schools since January 2017. I want to note that future SEVIS releases will allow PDSOs to upload and submit evidence directly through SEVIS. However, this functionality is currently not available.
- Evidence varies depending on the school's accreditation status and section being updated. Failure to submit all required evidence at the time of filing will result in SEVP canceling the request. I want to note that the PDSO must provide evidence within two to three business days of update submission in SEVIS.
- Evidence requirements and filing instructions are located under the Petition Updates tab at [ICE.gov/SEVIS/Schools](https://ice.dhs.gov/SEVIS/Schools), which is included in your [hyperlink appendix](#).
 - I also want to make a quick note that the links to the PDF evidence guides on ICE.gov will change in the coming months. We're working to revise our organization of information in the current evidence guides and will post an updated hyperlink appendix on [Study in the States](#) to reflect the new links.

Slide 15: Poll Question

MARISSA:

- Thanks for that information. Let's now pause for a brief poll question about evidence guides on [ICE.gov/SEVP](https://ice.dhs.gov/SEVP). We receive a lot of questions about what documents to provide as evidence to support different types of Form I-17 updates, so we want to know:
 - Did you know where to find evidence requirements for Form I-17 updates before this webinar?
- Please select "yes" or "no." This is a great way for us to make sure that we are putting the content out there and that it is easily accessible to you. So, like before, we'll give a few seconds for everyone to respond.
- Okay, it seems that the responses are 50 percent yes and no. We will take this back to our team to make sure that we can make this information more accessible to our stakeholders.



And, if you have any suggestions on best practices to present this information, please add that information to the [survey](#).

Slide 16: Pending Form I-17 Updates—SEVP Review and Adjudication

ELISABETH:

- Moving on to our next section, we'll discuss how SEVP handles incoming updates. So, once SEVP receives an update, it's filed into the appropriate internal SEVP queue for review and adjudication. These internal queues are organized based on the type of update. For example, there is a separate queue for PDSO and DSO updates.
- An SEVP case analyst reviews a school's Form I-17 update package for completeness—not content—before assigning to an adjudicator for additional review. This means that SEVP may need some additional clarification about a file that is submitted before we can make a decision.
 - We may request additional evidence for adjudication by sending an RFE to the school. These requests are sent to DSOs via a SEVIS-generated email, which will include a deadline for the school to provide necessary evidence to SEVP.
- I have a quick tip for DSOs:
 - Make sure that you remember the deadline for an RFE from SEVP. Please follow instructions included on the RFE, and ensure that SEVIS emails are not blocked by your email systems. Finally, any additional evidence must be emailed to SEVP by the deadline on the RFE.

Slide 17: Pre-submitted Question

MARISSA:

- Great information. I want to jump in quickly with another pre-submitted question. Elisabeth, we have a stakeholder question about pending Form I-17 updates. The question is:
 - I made an error when submitting my update. How do I cancel my pending update request?

ELISABETH:



- Good question. DSOs can cancel a pending update if they believe there is an error in the submission by emailing Update.SEVIS@ice.dhs.gov. When cancelling an update, include the name of the school and school code in the email subject, and include the reason for cancellation in the body of the email. Upon completion of the cancellation request, DSOs will receive an automated email from SEVIS that confirms the cancellation.
- I want to note that the time frame for cancellation depends on status of the update within the adjudication process. So, there is no set time for when SEVP will cancel your request.
- I also want to note that SEVP will keep the Form I-17 update in the queue rather than pull it out if the school needs to submit additional evidence, so that once the additional evidence requested is completed, the now completed Form I-17 can be submitted all together.

Slide 18: Pending Form I-17 Updates—School Operations

ELISABETH:

- Generally, Form I-17 updates do not affect a school's operations under their current SEVP-certified petition. As we've reinforced before, DSOs may not enroll students in programs of study at campus locations that have not been certified by SEVP. On the other hand, schools may enroll students and issue Forms I-20 for SEVP-certified programs of study.
- However, the following types of updates require approval from SEVP before the school can enroll nonimmigrant students.
 - For new programs of study, schools cannot issue Forms I-20 until SEVP approves the program.
 - For new instructional sites, schools cannot offer classes for F or M students until SEVP approves the site. Also, a change of location for a school or instruction site requires a site visit to be scheduled and conducted.

Slide 19: Pre-submitted Question

MARISSA:

- Okay, now for our next stakeholder question. This question is concerning pending Form I-17 updates. The questioner asks:
 - I have a pending update with SEVP to add a new program of study and a new instructional site to my school's Form I-17. Can we offer this program while waiting



for SEVP to adjudicate the update, and can we offer classes at the new instructional site while waiting for SEVP approval?

ELISABETH:

- Thanks for this question. As I noted earlier, DSOs can enroll domestic students in any program of study, but cannot enroll nonimmigrant students into these new programs until they have been approved by SEVP. I really want to stress that an SEVP adjudicator must approve any program of study before the school enrolls an F or M nonimmigrant student in the program.
- Also, as I also mentioned, SEVP must approve the new instructional site before the school can issue a Form I-20 for any of the programs at that site. Remember, failure to adhere to federal regulations may negatively impact a school's SEVP certification status.

Slide 20: Notification of Decision

ELISABETH:

- Moving on, we'll discuss the final part of the update process. SEVP federal adjudicators approve, deny or withdraw a school based on their review of the Form I-17 update. A notification of SEVP's adjudication decision will be sent to DSOs via a SEVIS-generated email, which will outline approval or denial of the update.
- In some cases, we may send a Notice of Intent to Withdrawal to a school after adjudication. This notice outlines an allegation of noncompliance, time frame and the steps the school can take to overcome the allegation.
- We've mentioned several times that important notifications, such as approval or denial of an update are SEVIS-generated and sent through the system to school officials. However, any official notice that impacts the school's certification status will be sent via an SEVP email.
- Another tip for DSOs:
 - Given the number of important emails coming through SEVIS, we want to remind DSOs that you should ensure there is an accurate email address in SEVIS so your school can receive all SEVP-related communications. SEVP uses SEVIS for communications, including RFEs, notices and adjudication decisions.



Slide 21: Update Processing Times

ELISABETH:

- Next, let's talk about processing times for Form I-17 updates. Updates are processed in the order in which they are received via a first-in, first-out processing system. However, I really want to stress that Form I-17 processing times vary depending on complexity and type of update submitted.
 - For example, if a school submits an update to one field, such as their contact information, the processing time will most likely be shorter than if a school submits an update to all 26 fields at the same time.
- Processing times for all types of Form I-17 updates vary from month-to-month, but on average, it takes about 90 business days for SEVP to process an update. That said, it is possible that your school's processing time may take less or more time.

Slide 22: Average Processing Times—PDSO and DSO Updates

ELISABETH:

- For standalone PDSO or DSO updates, SEVP has a 10-business day turnaround time. As we mentioned, SEVP eliminated the backlog on PDSO and DSO updates in 2016. We consider these updates a priority and assign them to an adjudicator for review.
- SEVP developed resources to assist school officials with PDSO or DSO updates. The [SEVP Fact Sheet 8.1: Designated School Official Submissions](#) is a great resource. You can find this fact sheet in your [hyperlink appendix](#) and at [ICE.gov/SEVIS/Schools](https://ice.dhs.gov/SEVIS/Schools) under the Petition Updates tab.

Slide 23: Special Considerations

ELISABETH:

- This next section focuses on special topics of interest to stakeholders related to Form I-17 updates, including adding new programs of study and pathway programs to the Form I-17.

Slide 24: Adding New Programs of Study

ELISABETH:



- As previously noted, SEVP must approve new programs of study prior to enrollment of F or M students. DSOs cannot issue Forms I-20 for programs with pending SEVP certification or without SEVP certification. In addition, adding programs of study requires a school to provide information on the types of education the school offers, areas of study, degrees available, and the time needed to complete the program of study. This information is located in Section 2 of the Form I-17.
- The evidence requirements for adding programs of study are dependent on school type and accreditation status. As we've mentioned before, these evidence guides are located at [ICE.gov/SEVIS/Schools](https://ice.dhs.gov/SEVIS/Schools) under the Petition Updates tab.

Slide 25: Pathway Programs

ELISABETH:

- As many folks are probably aware, SEVP published policy guidance [S7.2: Pathway Programs for Reasons of English Proficiency](#) in October 2016. This policy guidance focuses on pathway programs with English language training components. The requirement is that schools must comply with all the guidance standards by Oct. 28, 2017.
- In addition to the policy guidance, SEVP released an accompanying fact sheet with information for DSOs that explains how to input pathway program information onto the Form I-17, and covers what fields to edit and the information that goes into those edits. Form I-17 updates will include the addition of a pathway program, and it will be treated like any other petition update, so there is no specific processing time for updates to add a pathway program.

Slide 26: Pre-submitted Question

MARISSA:

- I want to jump in here quickly because our next stakeholder question focuses on evidence requirements for pathway programs. One stakeholder wants to know:
 - What are the specific state licensure requirements that DSOs should submit for a pathway program?

ELISABETH:



- The state licensure requirements for pathway programs are the same as the requirement for any other program. As noted in both of our evidence guides, schools must submit:
 - “Evidence from your state educational oversight body that shows the school has authorization to operate in the state or is exempt from authorization to operate in the state. If applicable, the evidence submitted must indicate the effective expiration date of state licensure or exemption.”

MARISSA:

- And, as we’ve mentioned throughout the webinar, these documents are located under the Petition Updates tab at [ICE.gov/SEVIS/Schools](https://ice.gov/SEVIS/Schools) and in your [hyperlink appendix](#).
- Alright Zobaida, I’m going to hand it off to you to cover recent changes to recertification.

Slide 27: Changes in Recertification

ZOBAIDA:

- Thanks, Marissa. This next section highlights recent changes to recertification introduced with SEVIS Release 6.35, which occurred in July 2017. This release includes changes to CEDs and updating the Form I-17 during the recertification application process.

Slide 28: Certification Expiration Date Changes

ZOBAIDA:

- Since SEVP started the recertification process, schools received a placeholder CED in SEVIS; these are the dates with all sevens or eights. Moving forward, schools will have a permanent CED listed in SEVIS. Upon recertification, schools will be able to view an actual CED. It may be beneficial to bookmark the new date for future reference.
- However, as before, schools can only apply for recertification upon receipt of the 180-day recertification notice from SEVP. For example, if a school’s CED is in July 2019, the system will not allow the DSO to file for recertification until they receive the 180 day notification via SEVIS.

Slide 29: Recertification Application Changes

ZOBAIDA:



- Our next change is about editing the Form I-17 while applying for recertification. DSOs can now edit the Form I-17 as part of the recertification application process. In the past, DSOs would submit multiple Form I-17 updates before submitting for recertification, which created a huge backlog. With this change, schools can submit edits with recertification submissions, which will cut down processing times for updates.
- Schools must determine when to file a recertification application with edits or when to file it as a Form I-17 update. For more information on new features introduced with SEVIS Release 6.35, visit the [SEVIS Help Hub](#) on Study in the States. As always, this link is also included in [hyperlink appendix](#).

Slide 30: Recertification Application Changes

ZOBAIDA:

- There are certain types of edits not allowed when filing for recertification. These updates are substantial changes and include a change in ownership, or a change of main campus location or instructional site.
- I want to note that SEVP will cancel recertification applications submitted with these changes and the school will be required to file the change as a Form I-17 update.

Slide 31: Helpful Resources

MARISSA:

- Thank you Zobaida and Elisabeth for all of that information. Before we get to your live questions, I want to walk through a couple helpful resources for DSOs to use.

Slide 32: Petition Updates—ICE.gov/SEVIS/Schools

MARISSA:

- We've mentioned our first resource throughout this presentation; the Petition Updates tab on our website at [ICE.gov/SEVP](#). Stakeholders can navigate to the Petition Updates tab from the Schools page on the website. Once you're on the page, just expand the tabs to locate information and supporting documents.



- The Petition Updates tab contains information about the Form I-17 update processes, including a list of fields requiring adjudication, directions on how to submit an update and an explanation of fees associated with updates to the Form I-17.
- School officials can also locate evidence requirements for petition updates. These are broken down for Accredited School/Program of Study Filing Evidence and Non-Accredited School/Program of Study Filing Evidence.
- School officials can also locate instructions for updating school officials and obtain a fact sheet on how to update PDSO and DSO information. The site has a great fact sheet that walks DSOs through updating PDSO and DSO information specifically.
- Finally, this page contains information for how to voluntarily withdraw SEVP certification. In some circumstances, schools may no longer wish to be SEVP-certified. So, this is good information for schools that no longer want to enroll F and M nonimmigrant students.
- And, one final tip for DSOs, be sure to bookmark this page to easily access evidence requirements.

Slide 33: SEVIS Help Hub—Form I-17 Update Resources

MARISSA:

- Our next resource is related to the SEVIS Help Hub on Study in the States. SEVP launched a redesigned SEVIS Help Hub home page and reorganized Help Hub content in July 2017. The new design allows DSOs to more easily find information, including how to maintain school records.
- On the SEVIS Help Hub, you can navigate to a page with resources to assist with Form I-17 updates. A link to this page is included in the webinar [hyperlink appendix](#), and the pages are also accessible through the Form I-17 Petition Update page listed on slide.
- Through this page, DSOs can view step-by-step instructions for filing a petition update, learn how to add or remove degree programs and review how to edit or add programs of study on the Form I-17. So, it's another great resource to assist with the update process.

Slide 34: Save the Date—SEVP InFocus Webinar

MARISSA:



- We also want everyone listening to please save the date for the next SEVP InFocus Webinar, which will be held on Aug. 30, 2017, from 2 to 3 p.m. EDT. This webinar will cover our latest program news and updates for DSOs, including recent SEVIS enhancements, field representative updates, and new Study in the States resources beyond what was discussed in this webinar.
- A recording of the live webinar and resources will be available on Study in the States after the event. Stakeholders can also learn more about this webinar and other upcoming SEVP webinars on the Study in the States [Stakeholder Webinars](#) page. A link is available in the [hyperlink appendix](#).

Slide 35: Engage with SEVP—Stay Connected

MARISSA:

- Before we wrap up, I want to cover some ways to stay up to date with information from SEVP. Our blog is updated regularly with best practices, current events and our [publications](#) include the quarterly SEVP Spotlight newsletter and the SEVP Outreach Bulletin.
- As always, please engage with us through conferences; we know that the conference season is gearing up again. SEVP welcomes the opportunity to participate in your conference or event, just submit a request for SEVP to attend an upcoming conference through the [Event Request Form](#).
- Also, follow our social media, including [Study in the States on Twitter](#), “Like” [Study in the States on Facebook](#) and connect with [SEVP on LinkedIn](#).

Slide 36: SEVP Values Your Feedback

MARISSA:

- Please remember to fill out our [Stakeholder Satisfaction Survey](#) after this webinar. This is a really good avenue for you to give feedback on the webinar and to let us know how to better present material. We use this to inform future content and webinars.

Slide 37: SEVP Response Center

MARISSA:



- As a final note, contact SRC by phone at 703-603-3400 and 800-892-4829, or by email at SEVP@ice.dhs.gov for case-specific questions or SEVISHelpDesk@ice.dhs.gov for SEVIS technical issues.
- SRC hours of operation are Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. ET, except holidays. And for additional contact information, visit the [Contact Us](#) page on Study in the States or contact your local SEVP field representative for questions about SEVP policies, processes and updates like we spoke about today.

[To view the top questions addressed during the live question and answer session, visit the [Top 10 Questions about Form I-17 Updates](#), which is accessible from the [SEVP Ask the Experts Webinar: Behind the Scenes of Form I-17 Updates](#) page on [Study in the States](#).]