

SEVP Conference Overview: SPRING 2013



Introduction

In the spring 2013 stakeholder conference season, the Student and Exchange Visitor Program (SEVP) presented upcoming changes within the program at numerous events around the country. These changes showcased SEVP's strides towards greater efficiency

efforts and increased stakeholder engagement. This summary encapsulates the presentation that SEVP provided during the spring 2013 stakeholder conference season.

School Certification Unit

INITIAL SCHOOL CERTIFICATION

SEVP is streamlining the initial school certification process by educating schools prior to petitioning, resulting in fewer requests for additional evidence. Currently, the process for initial certification petitioning is intensive and requires duplicative pieces of evidence with an average processing time of over 270 days. Once implemented, the new process will have an average processing time of 60 days. SEVP is standardizing the process to include evidence templates and definitions. An important part of this process is the requirement for schools to assemble evidence and submit payment with signed Form I-17 "Petition for Approval of School for Attendance by Nonimmigrant Students" upon filing. This streamlined process will save the school up to 90 days in review time.

To learn more about these new processes, visit *Study in the States* for step-by-step tutorials and evidence requirements.

RECERTIFICATION

SEVP-certified institutions must file for recertification every two years to remain in compliance with federal regulations. Some key things to remember regarding recertification:

- After receiving the 180-day notice, review Form I-17 and file necessary updates immediately.
- Only the Primary Designated School Official (PDSO) can file for recertification.
- All updates must be adjudicated prior to filing for recertification. Once your school has been notified for recertification, your established Certification Expiration Date (CED) will not change or be extended due to a pending update.
- Once your updates are adjudicated, send in your recertification package to SEVP via email to recert.sevis@dhs.gov and submit the recertification petition in SEVIS.

For any questions about the recertification process, call the SEVP Response Center at 703-603-3400 or visit our website at <http://www.ice.gov/sevis/schools/recertification/>.

FORM I-17 UPDATES

In response to stakeholder input, SEVP has changed procedures regarding Primary Designated School Official/Designated School Official (P/D SO) update processing times.

If the P/D SO has not served as the P/D SO at a different school, the school official should submit the update in SEVIS and email proof of citizenship or legal permanent residence and a signed Form I-17 to DSOPDSO@ice.dhs.gov. For timelier processing, schools should submit only P/D SO updates on the Form I-17.

If the P/D SO has served previously as a P/D SO at another school, the change does not require adjudication. The school can change this at any time by using the 'Existing P/D SO' button in SEVIS. For urgent P/D SO changes on a locked Form I-17 due to a pending update, contact the SEVIS Help Desk at 800-892-4829 or SEVISHelpDesk@hp.com.

School officials are encouraged to complete the Web-based P/D SO training and submit a copy of the issued certification to <http://www.ice.gov/exec/training/login.asp>.

Mission Support

Beginning summer 2013, SEVP will no longer mail Form I-797C “Notice of Action” for the I-901 fee payment. All I-901 fee payment confirmations will be available to print on the I-901 fee payment website (www.fmjfee.com). The printed receipt will serve as proof of payment of the I-901 SEVIS fee.

If you have any questions regarding the I-901 fee payment, please contact the case resolution unit by emailing fmjfee.sevis@dhs.gov.

STUDY in the STATES

SEVP continues to add new content and features to *Study in the States* (StudyintheStates.dhs.gov). Recently, SEVP added Google Translate to the website, making *Study in the States* available in 64 languages and encouraging international students to share information from *Study in the States* with family and friends in their home country. In addition to this new feature, we improved the site content for school officials. In 2013 we will add a step-by-step video tutorial for school officials on accurately completing Form I-17.

There are three new features on *Study in the States* that promote communication between SEVP and stakeholders. Stakeholders can

now provide their feedback and suggestions for content on *Study in the States* via a feedback form (StudyintheStates.dhs.gov/Feedback). Additionally, SEVP now uses *Study in the States* to gather input on SEVP draft guidance; during two-week feedback periods the international student community can download draft guidance from *Study in the States* and provide feedback via email. Finally, DSOs are encouraged to submit questions for a new blog series, “Questions from Designated School Officials.” SEVP subject matter experts answer a new DSO submitted question each week. To submit a question for the series, send an email to SEVPCommunications@ice.dhs.gov with “Questions from DSOs” in the subject line.



Be sure to follow *Study in the States* on Twitter (@StudyinStates) and Facebook ([Facebook.com/StudyintheStates](https://www.facebook.com/StudyintheStates)) for the latest information.

Policy

SEVP Policy is working on a rule revising 8 CFR 214 to support implementation of pending enhancements to SEVIS and expansion of enforcement capabilities for SEVP. Key components of the rule include:

- Requirements for F/M/J nonimmigrants and SEVIS users to establish SEVIS customer accounts
- Timeline for DSO input of new data and validation of data migration; consequences of non-compliance
- Improved protection of SEVIS security
- DSO training
- Removes “cap” on number of allowed DSOs
- Clarifies F/M nonimmigrant and DSO reporting requirements
- Allows broader accommodation for F/M students with disabilities/special needs

In addition to the rule changes, SEVP Policy is working with SEVP’s School Certification Unit and SEVP Analysis and Operations Center to address adjudication issues including short duration programs and short residency programs, student vacation, and change of school ownership. SEVP will be providing draft guidance on these issues on *Study in the States* where stakeholders can provide us their feedback.

SEVP Analysis & Operations Center

There have been many changes by our component agencies which impact the Form I-515 process and our stakeholders. U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) and U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) are no longer stamping the Form I-20, "Certificate of Eligibility for Nonimmigrant Student Status." CBP also plans to

phase out the paper Form I-94, "Arrival/Departure Record." Travelers will be able to print their Form I-94 information from the CBP website (www.cbp.gov). SEVP will have more information moving forward as to the impact on requirements for the I-515 process.

Please ensure the Form I-901 fee has been paid on the SEVIS ID associated with the Form I-515.

Field Representatives

In 2013, SEVP will hire field representatives in four separate rounds. The hiring for the first class of field representatives will be announced during the first quarter of 2013, with each subsequent class in following quarters (2nd class in 2nd quarter, 3rd class in 3rd quarter, 4th class in 4th quarter). Each class will have 15 field representatives, five from the Eastern region, five from the Central region, and five from the Western region. Upon hire, field representatives will undergo an eight-week training program in Washington, D.C.

If you are interested in applying for a field representative position, please visit www.USAjobs.gov. SEVP will send a broadcast message when each job announcement is posted.

SEVP Response Center

Since beginning operation in January 2009, the SEVP Response Center (SRC) has served as the primary point of contact for non-technical program inquiries. At present, the SRC is in the process of enhancing its capabilities. With the planned enhancements, the SRC will be able to provide a more timely first call resolution and assume responsibility of responding to or directing technical questions to the appropriate resource.

For policy and regulation related questions, contact the SEVP Response Center by phone at 703-603-3400 or email at sevp@dhs.gov.

If you need assistance with passwords or Student and Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS) technical help, call the SEVIS Help Desk at 800-892-4829 between 8:00 a.m. and 8:00 p.m. Eastern Time or email SEVIShelpdesk@hp.com

