



Top Ten Questions from Designated School Officials (DSOs) about Form I-17, “Petition for Approval of School for Attendance by Nonimmigrant Student,” Updates

Note: This document provides answers that interpret U.S. government regulation, but does not serve as a replacement for federal regulation or official Student Exchange Visitor Program (SEVP) policy guidance. Questions have been edited for grammar and style. Questions are taken from the [SEVP Ask the Experts Webinar: Behind the Scenes of the Form I-17](#).

1. Are there updates to the Form I-17, “Petition for Approval of School for Attendance by Nonimmigrant Student,” that take substantially longer to adjudicate than others?

- A. Yes, change of school ownership and mergers are two types of Form I-17 updates that can take substantially longer to adjudicate than other petition updates.

Reviews and adjudication associated with a change of ownership are similar to when a school files a Form I-17 with SEVP for initial certification. During adjudication, SEVP adjudicators may review changes to the structure and organization of the school associated with the change in ownership. Schools have 21 days to report a change in ownership to SEVP as part of their current Form I-17. However, if a school reports a change in ownership outside of this allotted time period, it must file a new, initial petition.

Additionally, school mergers take considerable SEVP school certification resources due to complexities associated with the change. Mergers often have many moving pieces, such as location changes, student record changes and personnel changes. Therefore, these updates are often assigned to a specific SEVP adjudicator to manage the case.

Remember, Form I-17 updates are processed in the order in which they are received via a first-in, first-out processing system, but processing times vary depending on the complexity and type of update submitted.

2. Where can DSOs find evidence requirements? What is the link?

- A. DSOs can locate evidence requirements for both accredited and non-accredited schools and programs of study under the Petition Updates tab at [ICE.gov/SEVIS/Schools](https://ice.dhs.gov/SEVIS/Schools).



3. Can DSOs submit multiple Form I-17 updates at once? Is there any situation where DSOs would want to submit Form I-17 updates separately?

A. Yes, DSOs may make multiple changes to the Form I-17 at once. SEVP recommends that DSOs submit PDSO and DSO updates as separate updates, as opposed to submitting with other petition changes. Additionally, remember that federal regulation requires PDSOs to report changes to information on the Form I-17 within 21 days of the change.

4. What is the time limit for schools to submit evidence to SEVP after updating the Form I-17? Should schools submit evidence the same day as making the update request in the Student and Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS)?

A. SEVP encourages schools to submit evidence required for adjudication at the same time they submit the update in SEVIS. However, SEVP allows schools two business days to submit required evidence. SEVP will cancel update requests for schools that fail to provide all necessary evidence within two business days of filing.

5. Can schools make Form I-17 updates after submitting for recertification?

A. DSOs cannot edit the Form I-17 after filing for recertification. DSOs may change PDSO or DSO information during recertification by following the directions outlined in [SEVP Fact Sheet 8.1: Designated School Official Submissions](#), located on [ICE.gov/SEVP](https://ice.gov/SEVP).

SEVP deployed functionality allowing DSOs the ability to edit the Form I-17 as part of the recertification process. Schools must determine whether to file for recertification with petition edits or whether to file it as a Form I-17 update, whichever works best for the school's timeline. However, this functionality does not allow DSOs the ability to submit changes in ownership or main campus location during the recertification process.

6. Can schools make PDSO and DSO changes on the Form I-17?

A. Yes, schools may make changes to the Form I-17, including PDSO or DSO changes, at any time. If a school is pending adjudication for recertification and needs to update PDSO or DSO information, DSOs can follow the instructions on the [SEVP Fact Sheet 8.1: Designated School Official Submissions](#) to update school official information. This fact sheet also includes information about supporting evidence needed to adjudicate a PDSO or DSO update. Remember, SEVP requires school officials to provide all necessary evidence up front when requesting a change to PDSO or DSO information.



7. Can schools edit program information on the Form I-17?

- A. Yes, schools may make changes to the Form I-17 at any time, including edits to program of study information. Remember, federal regulation requires PDSOs to report changes to information on the Form I-17 within 21 days of the change—including a change to program information. DSOs can find information about evidence required for adding or removing a program of study in the appropriate evidence guide under the Petition Updates tab on [ICE.gov/SEVIS/Schools](https://ice.dhs.gov/SEVIS/Schools). SEVP provides evidence guides for both accredited and non-accredited schools and programs of study.

8. Can schools add new programs, including pathway programs, to the Form I-17?

- A. Yes, schools can add new programs, including pathway programs, to the Form I-17 at any time. Remember, SEVP must certify any program of study before the school can issue Forms I-20, “Certificate of Eligibility for Nonimmigrant Student Status,” to prospective nonimmigrant students. SEVP published final [SEVP Policy Guidance S7.2: Pathway Programs for Reasons of English Proficiency](#) in October 2016. This policy guidance contains information for DSOs to input pathway program information on the Form I-20. SEVP will treat Form I-17 updates to add a pathway program like any other type of petition updates.

9. Can schools add a new instructional site on the Form I-17?

- A. Yes, schools may add new instructional sites to the Form I-17. Evidence requirements for adding new instructional sites and guidance about when schools should add an instructional site on the Form I-17 can be found on [ICE.gov/SEVIS/Schools](https://ice.dhs.gov/SEVIS/Schools) under the Policy tab on the main page. SEVP released final [SEVP Policy Guidance for Adjudicators 1003-03: Reporting Instructional Sites](#) in March 2013 that provides information about when and how schools should report a new instructional site to SEVP.

10. Can schools make changes to ownership on the Form I-17?

- A. Yes, schools may make changes to ownership on the Form I-17. SEVP released interim final [SEVP Policy Guidance S4.3: Change of Ownership](#) in January 2017 that interprets the change of ownership regulation for SEVP-certified schools; the guidance covers change of ownership thresholds, the types of changes requiring reporting and determining the date of change. School officials should note that changes to ownership fields on the Form I-17 may require a fee of \$1,700. School officials can find additional information about change of ownership and evidence requirements on [ICE.gov/SEVIS/Schools](https://ice.dhs.gov/SEVIS/Schools).