Top Questions from Designated School Officials (DSOs) about the Student Exchange Visitor Program (SEVP) Portal

Note: This document provides answers that interpret U.S. government regulation, but does not serve as a replacement for federal regulation or official SEVP policy guidance. Questions have been edited for grammar and style. Questions were either received by SEVP or taken from the [SEVP Special Report Webinar: SEVP Portal](#) on March 20, 2018.

SEVP Portal and policy

1. **Does SEVP have plans to deploy additional functionality through the SEVP Portal?**

   A. Yes, SEVP has plans to deploy additional functionality through the portal. The first release, deployed in March 2018, was a basic release to provide initial functionality to F-1 students engaged in post-completion optional practical training (OPT) and M-1 students engaged in practical training. The portal will continue to evolve through a series of future releases and improvements, with the goal of creating a more robust nonimmigrant portal where both F and M nonimmigrants and J exchange visitors can update their biographic and demographic data.

2. **Can schools require that students use the SEVP Portal? Does student use of the SEVP Portal fulfill DSO regulatory reporting requirements?**

   A. At this time, student use of the SEVP Portal is voluntary and not required by federal regulation; however, schools may institute their own policies regarding or requiring SEVP Portal use.

   SEVP recommends that schools make available and publish information regarding SEVP Portal use and reporting requirements; for example, the school may distribute a memo to international students or provide information about portal requirements on their website. If a school implements a policy for students requiring use of the SEVP Portal, DSOs could terminate student records for failure to comply with this policy. In the absence of such a requirement, there is no basis for terminating a student's record for their failure to use the SEVP Portal.

   SEVP-certified schools and international students must continue to fulfill their regulatory reporting requirements. DSOs cannot delegate their reporting requirements to students. Refusal on the DSO's part to upload information reported by a student into

the Student and Exchange Visitor System (SEVIS) is grounds for removal of the DSO or even withdrawal of the school's SEVP certification.

3. **Can DSOs be held accountable for fraudulent information entered by a student into the SEVP Portal?**

    A. DSOs cannot be held accountable for fraudulent information entered by a student into the SEVP Portal. When logging into the portal, students are directed to an Attestation page that requires students to agree that they will not provide false, fictitious or fraudulent information in the SEVP Portal. By clicking "Continue" and accessing the portal, the student signifies that they agree to the terms and conditions outlined on the page.

4. **Are DSOs required to reprint Forms I-20, "Certificate of Eligibility for Nonimmigrant Student Status," when students update their employer information in the SEVP Portal?**

    A. DSOs are not required to reprint Forms I-20 when students update their employer information via the SEVP Portal. However, SEVP encourages DSOs to ensure their students have a copy of the most up-to-date Form I-20, when possible.

5. **When do students engaged in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) OPT require a new Form I-983, "Training Plan for STEM OPT Students," for information updated in the portal?**

    A. As noted on the Study in the States STEM OPT Hub, STEM OPT students and employers are required to report material changes to, or material deviations from, the student's formal training plan to the DSO. Material changes or deviations may include:

    -   Any change to the employer's Employer Identification Number resulting from a change in the employer's ownership or structure.
    -   Any reduction in student compensation that is not tied to a reduction in hours worked.
    -   Any significant decrease in hours per week that a student engages in a STEM training opportunity.
    -   Changes to the employer's commitments or student's learning objectives as documented on the Form I-983.

    Additional information about material changes is available at 8 CFR 214.2 (f)(10)(ii)(C)(ii) and in the 2016 STEM OPT rule.

SEVIS interface with the SEVP Portal

6. How do DSOs know when a student updates information through the SEVP Portal?

A. To view information changed by students in the SEVP Portal, DSOs must download the "SEVIS Updates Submitted by Students" report in SEVIS. DSOs can download this report in .csv or Excel format, and indicate a specific date range to view data. DSOs can view a step-by-step overview of how to download this report on the SEVIS and the SEVP Portal page in the SEVIS Help Hub.

Additionally, SEVIS offers DSOs two tools to identify students with SEVP Portal accounts: the "Alert List: Students with Post-completion or STEM OPT who have an SEVP Portal Account," and an indicator on the Student Information page. However, please note that these tools only indicate students with SEVP Portal accounts and not information changed by students in the portal.

7. When will SEVP turn on the auto termination for the unemployment feature in SEVIS?

A. Currently, the auto termination for the accrued unemployment feature in SEVIS remains off. SEVP continues to work on this feature and will provide communication to the academic community through SEVIS Broadcast Messages and Study in the States to notify stakeholders when this functionality will be enabled.

8. What is the timing for data exchange between SEVIS and the SEVP Portal? How does this timing affect Batch users?

A. The SEVP Portal and SEVIS regularly share data. Data entered into the portal is immediately sent to SEVIS to update the student's record, allowing DSOs to view real-time information in the student's record.

SEVIS processes Batch overnight—starting around midnight.

SEVIS sends information to the SEVP Portal once per day, shortly after 1 p.m. ET. SEVP is considering sending SEVIS data to the portal immediately after Batch runs, in addition to sending data mid-afternoon. SEVP will communicate any changes through SEVIS Broadcast Messages and Study in the States.

9. **Is Batch functionality available for the SEVP Portal? Is there a workaround for schools that use Batch processing?**

A. SEVP understands that DSOs at schools using third-party Batch processing systems may be concerned about out-of-sync data between SEVIS and the school's Batch system for situations where students on post-completion or STEM OPT change data in the portal. At this time, SEVIS is not programmed to feed data changes to any third-party Batch software.

DSOs can download a report in either .csv or Excel format from SEVIS to feed updated data into the school's Batch software, if the software has the functionality. DSOs can access the "SEVIS Updates Submitted by Students" report from the SEVIS Downloads page and can query by data range. The SEVIS and the SEVP Portal article on the SEVIS Help Hub provides detailed instructions about how DSOs can generate this report.

10. **Why can DSOs no longer see the "Reset Portal Account" link on a student's SEVIS Student Information page?**

A. The "Reset Portal Account" link will display in SEVIS if:

- A student's OPT start date has passed, but the student has not yet created a portal account.
- A student is locked out of their portal account.

The link will not appear when a student's SEVP Portal account is active. If a student believes they are locked out of the account and you do not see a "Reset Portal Account" link, call the SEVP Response Center to open a ticket.

11. **Can students change the email address associated with their portal account?**

A. Students cannot change the email address associated with their portal account. DSOs must update the student's email address in SEVIS. When the SEVP Portal receives the updated email address, the portal:

- Locks the student's account.
- Sends the student an email with a temporary password. The student must use the new email address and the temporary password to log in to the portal.
- Prompts the student to change the account password.

DSOs can update the student's information using the following processes in SEVIS:

- Update Personal Information.
- Add, Edit, Delete OPT Employer.

SEVIS sends updated data to the portal once a day. The student will be able to see the updated data the next day. Download the [SEVP Portal User Guide](#) on Study in the States for more information.

Troubleshooting the SEVP Portal

12. How can DSOs reset a student's locked SEVP Portal account?

A. The SEVP Portal will lock a users' account if the user does not log in to the portal for 90 days or after three failed attempts to log in to the system. If a student is locked out, the portal will email the student and direct them to contact their DSO. To unlock a student's portal account, DSOs should:

- Navigate to the Student Information page in SEVIS.
- Click the "Reset Portal Account" link under the Actions menu on the left side of the page. A "Reset Portal Account" modal will appear.
- Click "Submit" to send the request.

DSOs can also follow these steps to request that the portal re-send the Initial Account Creation email to the student. For additional information, DSOs can visit the [SEVIS and the SEVP Portal](#) page in the [SEVIS Help Hub](#) to view a step-by-step overview and screenshots of how to reset a student's portal account.