



Summer 2018 SEVP InFocus Webinar

Aug. 16, 2018

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: Title Slide

LAUREN:

- Hello everybody! I'm Lauren Caricato, and I'd like to welcome you to today's Summer 2018 SEVP InFocus Webinar.
- As we get started, if you haven't already, please take a moment to complete the polls on your screen. We're going to hold several polls during today's webinar to get your opinion on some hot topics. Your responses will help inform our communication efforts and resources, so, as always, we really appreciate your input.
- We've also recently added an option to our polls that allows you to provide additional insight if you select the "other" or "not applicable" option. We know that not everything neatly fits into a multiple-choice answer, and heard that you'd like the opportunity to provide additional insight, so we added this option to our webinar polls. I encourage folks to provide information through this pod if you have other thoughts or insight.

Slide 3: Housekeeping Notes

LAUREN:

- Let's get a few brief housekeeping notes out of the way.
- First, please download and take a look at our hyperlink appendix, which contains links to the webpages and resources mentioned during today's presentation. We'll be referring to this throughout the webinar. You can access it at the bottom of your screen in the Webinar Resources pod.
 - While you're looking at that pod, you'll also notice that you can download a PDF of today's PowerPoint presentation and a glossary that defines key terms and acronyms mentioned during the webinar.



- Additionally, if you experience technical difficulties at any point during our presentation, please explain your problem through the Technical Difficulties pod on your screen, and we'll do our best to address your issue. As a reminder, we are not taking questions during today's webinar, so please don't submit questions.
- Finally, if any of your colleagues couldn't join us today—we know that it's the back to school season—please make sure you direct them to our webinar recording. That recording, along with all the resources just mentioned in the Webinar Resources pod, will be available on the Study in the States Summer 2018 SEVP InFocus Webinar page, which is where you may have gone to access today's webinar.

Slide 4: Today's Presenters

LAUREN:

- As I mentioned, I'm Lauren Caricato and I'll be your moderator today. I'm joined by Marissa Tinsley, our regular SEVP InFocus Webinar presenter, and a special guest presenter for today's webinar: Sam Lockhart, the SEVP field representative for territory 33, which covers the state of Indiana.
- Sam, since you're new to the SEVP InFocus Webinars, let's have you introduce yourself first. Would you mind giving a bit of background about yourself and what you do as an SEVP field representative?

SAM:

- Thanks, Lauren. I'm Sam Lockhart, the SEVP field representative for Territory 33, which is the entire state of Indiana. As a field representative, I provide outreach to SEVP-certified schools and DSOs in my territory. I deliver training and facilitate access to SEVP resources, answer questions, and represent SEVP at conferences and other stakeholder engagements. I'm currently at headquarters on a detail with SEVP's Strategic Communications Team, which means that today I'm expanding my repertoire to webinars.

LAUREN:

- Thanks so much, Sam. We're glad to have you with us!
- I'm sure many of our regular viewers are already familiar with you, Marissa, but would you mind introducing yourself?



MARISSA:

- Hi everyone—my name is Marissa Tinsley and I started working at SEVP in 2010 in the School Certification Unit doing Initial certifications. I later transferred to my current position on the SEVP Strategic Communications Team.

Slide 5: Presentation Overview

LAUREN:

- Thanks for those introductions, Sam and Marissa.
- I'll let you all read through the items on today's webinar agenda, but before we move on, I want to stress to please stick around until the end of today's webinar so you can provide your feedback about the presentation. We'll have some polls similar to the ones you answered at the start of today's webinar, and will give you the opportunity for you to write in your own feedback—what you thought of our presentation, ideas for future webinars, and such.

Slide 6: Ask the Audience—Today's Audience

LAUREN:

- Speaking of getting your feedback, I want to pause for a moment for a couple of poll questions right off the bat to get a sense of who is in our audience. Please select the option that best describes your current position using the choices on your screen. And, like I mentioned earlier, if your role doesn't fit nicely into one of the categories available, please describe it through the "other" pod by typing in your response.
- I'll give you all a few moments to complete the poll.
- It looks like we have some PDSOs, DSOs, admissions officers, school administrators, legal counsel and stakeholder associations with us today. Again, if you click the "other" option, please type in your response so we know who you are.
- As we wrap up, it looks like there's an overwhelming number of PDSOs and DSOs.
- Thanks for everyone who responded!

Slide 7: Ask the Audience—Today's Audience

LAUREN:

- Now for this second poll question—we want to get a sense of what type of school you represent. So, please let us know by selecting one of the options on your screen. And, like



before, you can use that comment box to provide additional information about your school if it doesn't neatly fit into one of those choices. And if you're not associated with a school, feel free to type in your organization name or whoever you are representing during today's webinar. If you are a government partner or a trade association, answering the "other" option will give us a little more feedback about your role.

- Looks like we have a lot of postsecondary schools joining us today, but also a few K-12 schools tuning in. As always, welcome to everyone watching.
- Once again, thank you so much for that great feedback. With that, I'll hand it over to Marissa to launch into today's webinar.

Slide 8: The Latest News

MARISSA:

- Thanks, Lauren. I want to start by covering a few hot topics that I am sure most of you have heard about, whether through Study in the States, one of our publications, or through your own international student office.

Slide 9: Adjusting SEVP Program Fees

MARISSA:

- The first topic I want to touch on is DHS' proposed changes to fees for international students, exchange visitors and SEVP-certified schools. As you may be aware, SEVP is funded entirely by fees charged to international students and certified schools. We're proposing these changes to ensure that the program can continue performing its current operations long term, and to provide funding for three key priorities: SEVIS modernization efforts, increased SEVP adjudication personnel and additional investigatory support.
- I want to stress that folks should take a look at the proposed rule, which goes into detail about the new fees, what they will fund and how SEVP forecasted these amounts to determine an appropriate adjustment to each fee.
- I also want to direct folks to the official comment process—this is your opportunity to provide your thoughts to us about the proposed regulation. So, if you have feedback on this rule, please provide your comments through the official process by the deadline of September 17, 2018.

LAUREN:

- And, where should folks go to read this proposed rule?



MARISSA:

- You can read the proposed rule and provide comments on the Federal Register; we've put the link on the slide. We've also provided a direct link to the proposed rule in the hyperlink appendix.

LAUREN:

- Thanks for that information, Marissa. And just to remind folks: we can only accept comments that are submitted via the Federal Register, so anything sent to us through the comment function here during today's webinar, via email to SEVP, or to your field representative will not be reviewed and incorporated into the overall feedback received. Anything else folks should be aware of?

Slide 10: Government Partner Notification—Accrual of Unlawful Presence by F and M Nonimmigrants

MARISSA:

- I want to bring to everyone's attention the revised policy memorandum issued by USCIS on August 9, 2018, regarding the accrual of unlawful presence by F and M students, including their dependents.
- SEVP released a Broadcast Message on August 10, 2018, outlining when the accrual of unlawful presence begins for students. There are two situations for students:
 - Those students who failed to maintain their status before August 9, and
 - Those students who fail to maintain their status after August 9.
- I want to note that the change in USCIS policy means that, starting on August 9, certain actions by students may cause them to accrue unlawful presence, where previously such actions did not. Accrual of unlawful presence can, under certain circumstances, make the student ineligible for certain benefits and inadmissible to the United States.
- This is all a very detailed situation, and I want to direct folks with questions to read the policy memorandum released by USCIS, and direct any questions to USCIS for resolution. We've included a link to both the Broadcast Message and USCIS policy in the hyperlink appendix.

Slide 11: Notifications and Follow-up

LAUREN:

- Thanks for that information, Marissa.



- Sam, I want to bring you into the conversation as we transition into our next section, which provides an update on SEVP initiatives and topics that we touched on in past webinars. We covered the SEVP Portal—a new tool for F-1 students on post-completion OPT and M-1 students engaged in practical training to use to update their biographic and, in some cases, employment information—during our InFocus Webinar earlier this year, but would you be able to provide some updates and reminders for folks?

Slide 12: SEVP Portal—Tips and Reminders for DSOs

SAM:

- Of course. The next few slides are going to touch on hot topics related to the SEVP Portal. Our first slide, which you can see on your screen, includes some helpful tips and reminders for DSOs to pass on to their students about the portal account creation process. As a DSO, we encourage you to remind your students that:
 - The portal account creation link can only be used once; and
 - Students must enter their current SEVIS ID number, which is located on the left-hand corner of the Form I-20, to create an account.
- Even though your students may already have a portal account, we want to provide these reminders since more students will create accounts moving forward.
- Most importantly, I want to direct your attention to the side bar on the screen that contains information about new resources related to the SEVP Portal. We recently developed two documents about the portal—one that addresses top questions from students and one that addresses top questions from DSOs—covering things from the account creation process to Batch timing.
- We used stakeholder questions from our Special Report Webinar on the SEVP Portal and the field to develop these two resources and address many of the questions that field representatives, like myself, and the SRC receive on a daily basis. I strongly encourage those watching to take a look at these documents after the webinar, if you haven't already.

LAUREN:

- And, just to jump in here, Sam, with a quick question, where can folks access these resources?

SAM:

- We've included direct links to both resources in your hyperlink appendix, but you can also access them from Study in the States.



LAUREN:

- And, for those watching, that page is accessible from the Study in the States Stakeholder Webinars page, which is where you might've gone to access today's webinar. But, as always, I want to quickly plug our hyperlink appendix, since this provides links to all the webpages mentioned during the webinar. If you haven't had the opportunity to download it yet, I strongly encourage you to do so—it's located in the Webinar Resources pod on your screen.

SLIDE 13: Frequently Asked Question—Account Creation Email Timing

LAUREN:

- Keeping on the subject of frequently asked questions about the SEVP Portal, I want to quickly pause to address one of those top questions that we've received from stakeholders. This question looks at the timing of when students can expect to receive an email to set up their portal account.
- So, Sam, when exactly can students expect to receive this email?

SAM:

- Let's start with taking a step back and briefly covering the process for how the portal receives a student's information from SEVIS.
- SEVIS sends a student's OPT or practical training information to the portal, if all the following conditions are true:
 - The student's OPT or practical training request is approved.
 - The student's OPT or practical training start date is not in the future.
 - The student's email address is in SEVIS.
- If a student meets these conditions, SEVIS will send their information to the portal, which results in the account creation email being sent to the student. Students will receive an email from Do-Not-Reply.SEVIS@ice.dhs.gov, which is on the previous slide. We recommend that they add this email address to their safe sender list.

LAUREN:

- Thanks, Sam. And, if you want to read the answer to that question or refer to it in the future, you can find it in our question and answer documents on the portal. And, as I just mentioned, you can access these documents in your hyperlink appendix.



SLIDE 14: Troubleshooting the SEVP Portal

LAUREN:

- Alright, let's move on to our next slide, which looks at how students and DSOs can troubleshoot issues they may encounter with maintaining their portal account. Sam, you've covered the portal thus far, would you like to explain how folks can resolve issues they encounter?

SAM:

- Sure thing, Lauren. The graphic on this slide illustrates how students can troubleshoot common issues they may encounter with their SEVP Portal account. To quickly summarize: students can resolve certain issues themselves, such as resetting their own password. However, students need to contact their DSO if they:
 - Lock their account;
 - Check their inbox and junk mail folder, and haven't received an SEVP Portal email; or
 - Cannot enter or save data in the portal.
- As always, I want to emphasize that it's important for students and DSOs to remember the reporting time limits outlined in our federal regulation. Failure to keep a student's record up to date may have negative consequences on the student's nonimmigrant status in the future, but we'll get more into this topic later in the webinar.
- Finally, if a student has a problem entering or saving data in the portal, or encounters any other sort of technical problem, they may need to contact SRC, who can assist.

LAUREN:

- And, for those of you who may be first-time viewers or unfamiliar with our webinars, SRC's contact information is located both at the end of today's presentation and in your hyperlink appendix.

SLIDE 15: Frequently Asked Question—Troubleshooting the SEVP Portal

LAUREN:

- Okay, before we move on, I want to pose another frequently asked question that builds on the information you just mentioned, Sam. We've received questions from DSOs about what exactly they need to do to reset a student's portal account. Would you be able to explain this process?



SAM:

- Let's first start by covering situations where a student may become locked out of their SEVP Portal account. The portal will automatically lock a student's account if:
 - The student does not log in to the portal for 90 days, or
 - After three failed login attempts.
- If a student is locked out of their account, the portal will email the student and advise them to contact their DSO. Once a student contacts you about unlocking their account, you, as the DSO, will need to:
 - 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 then appear; and, finally,
 - Click "Submit" to send the request to unlock the student's account.

LAUREN:

- Thanks, Sam. And DSOs can view a step-by-step overview of how to unlock a student's portal account in the SEVIS Help Hub, which is a great resource for DSOs to learn about portal functions in SEVIS, as well as a variety of other SEVIS functions to assist with managing student and school records. In the SEVIS Help Hub, we provide detailed instructions and screenshots to walk stakeholders through unlocking a student's portal account or performing other SEVIS functions, like submitting a Form I-17 update.

SLIDE 16: Frequently Asked Question—Troubleshooting the SEVP Portal

LAUREN:

- But, I don't want to get too far off topic since we'll cover the school certification processes later in this presentation. Sticking on the subject of unlocking a student's portal account: Sam, some DSOs are wondering why they can no longer see the "Reset Portal Account" link that you just mentioned on the Student Information page in SEVIS—where is it?

SAM:

- That's a good question! The "Reset Portal Account" link will not show in SEVIS unless a student's account is actually locked. So, consider it a good thing if you don't see that link—it means that all of your students have an active portal account.



LAUREN:

- Thanks for that information, Sam. And I just want to stress again that by “all of your students,” we mean those students that are eligible to have an SEVP Portal account. This includes students currently engaged in post-completion OPT, STEM OPT, or M-1 students engaged in practical training.

Slide 17: Frequently Asked Question—Troubleshooting the SEVP Portal

LAUREN:

- I know we’ve covered a lot of frequently asked questions related to troubleshooting the portal, but I want to round us out with one final question about the timing of data exchange between the portal and SEVIS. Sam, would you be able to explain this to those watching?

SAM:

- Sure, Lauren. I get this exact question from a lot of DSOs, so I’m happy to explain. 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.
 - Conversely, SEVIS only sends information to the SEVP Portal once per day, shortly after 1 p.m. Eastern Time. So, any updates made by DSOs to a student’s SEVIS record will take about 24 hours to show up in the portal.

LAUREN:

- And, let me interject with a second question to add another level to this discussion. How does this timing affect Batch users?

SAM:

- SEVIS processes Batch overnight, starting around midnight. SEVP is considering sending SEVIS data to the portal immediately after Batch runs, in addition to sending data mid-afternoon. I want to stress that SEVP will communicate any changes to the current process through Broadcast Messages and Study in the States.

LAUREN:

- Thanks, Sam. With those questions out of the way, I want to give another plug for DSOs to take a look at our two resources—Top Questions from Students and Top Questions from



DSOs about the SEVP Portal—on Study in the States. These two documents are great to have on-hand if you have any questions about the portal.

SLIDE 18: SEVP Portal Functions in SEVIS

LAUREN:

- But, before we wrap up with the portal, let's briefly cover tools for DSOs in SEVIS to assist those students with a portal account, since we started to discuss this as part of our last frequently asked question. Sam, I'll let you close us out on this topic.

SAM:

- I'm sure many folks are familiar with the graphic on this slide, which depicts the various tools in SEVIS for DSOs to assist students with their portal accounts. As I explained, DSOs can use the Student Information page to reset a student's portal account, and the Event History page to view before and after values for data changed by students in the portal.
- I want to quickly focus on the downloadable report, since we receive a lot of questions about where DSOs can view a list of information changed by students. In fact, we included this question in the top questions document that's been mentioned throughout this section. The downloadable report allows DSOs to view information changed by students, and it is accessible in .csv or Excel format. We've provided additional tips to assist with navigating the downloadable report in the SEVIS Help Hub.

SLIDE 19: Reminders for School Officials—Volunteer Opportunities and OPT

LAUREN:

- Thanks for covering that information, Sam. We'll give you a brief break and let Marissa speak to a few other reminders and hot topics for stakeholders. Speaking of hot topics, Marissa, we received some questions related to a Broadcast Message distributed earlier this year to international students that provided reminders about volunteer positions and OPT. Would you be able to cover this?

MARISSA:

- Of course. As you mentioned, earlier this year SEVP sent a Broadcast Message to students about reporting volunteering positions while on OPT. We've provided some key points noted in this Broadcast Message on the slide.
- Most importantly: students and DSOs should be aware that volunteer positions that are not directly related to a student's course of study cannot qualify as OPT, and students should



not list these volunteer positions as employment in the SEVP Portal. Doing so will be deemed a violation of the student’s reporting requirements, so DSOs: it’s important to communicate this information to your students so they don’t unintentionally jeopardize their nonimmigrant student status.

LAUREN:

- Thanks, Marissa. And, this is a good opportunity to remind DSOs that SEVP maintains an archive of Broadcast Messages on our webpage at [ICE.gov/SEVP](https://ice.gov/SEVP)—we post each Broadcast Message distributed to DSOs or students on tab on the “What’s New” page. However, if you want to quickly reference the Broadcast Message we just mentioned, you can find a direct link in your hyperlink appendix.

SLIDE 20: Reminders for School Officials—Updating a Locked Form I-17

LAUREN:

- Alright, let’s change gears and focus on a few items related to another hot topic: school certification processes. This next slide explains how DSOs can submit changes to a locked Form I-17, which we know is of interest to many stakeholders. If you tuned into our recent SEVP Ask the Experts Webinar, which took a look at record keeping and reporting requirements for students and schools, you’ll know that DSOs are still expected to submit changes to their school’s information within 21 days, even if their Form I-17 is locked for updates or recertification.
- Marissa, since you’re well versed in school certification processes, can you go into detail about how DSOs can submit these changes to SEVP?

MARISSA:

- Sure. I’ll start by echoing what you just said, and what’s mentioned on this slide: schools with a locked Form I-17 must continue to report changes to SEVP within those 21 days as required by federal regulation. And, for those watching who may not be familiar with the concept of a locked Form I-17, this means that your school is currently pending adjudication of an update or recertification, and the PDSO cannot submit updates through SEVIS.
- Depending on whether you’re submitting a PDSO or DSO update versus another material change, there are different email addresses that you should use. Schools should **only** use the Form I-17 Supporting Evidence email address for PDSO or DSO changes. All other material changes must be sent to SEVP@ice.dhs.gov.



LAUREN:

- And, DSOs are required to provide all required evidence for the change they're submitting when they email SEVP, correct?

MARISSA:

- Correct. DSOs must provide all required evidence when they submit a change to us. If you're emailing an update because your Form I-17 is locked, you need to attach all required evidence with that email. It's the same requirement as when you're submitting an update or filing for recertification regularly through SEVIS: you need to upload all evidence with that change before you submit it for adjudication.

LAUREN:

- Thanks, Marissa. And, before we move on, I want to ask one question that came up during our SEVP Ask the Experts Webinar. Emailing that change to SEVP fulfills a school's legal reporting requirement, correct?

MARISSA:

- Yes, as one of our school certification adjudicators mentioned during that webinar, emailing a change to SEVP when your Form I-17 is locked does fulfill your legal reporting requirement. And I want to reiterate that DSOs need to report changes to their school's Form I-17 to us even if it is locked to ensure that your school stays in compliance with federal reporting requirements.

LAUREN:

- That's all great information. And, I want to quickly give another plug for our recent SEVP Ask the Experts Webinar. If you have any questions related to school and student records or reporting, this webinar is a great resource. I strongly encourage you to review the webinar recording and share it with your colleagues that may have missed the live webinar, especially those that may be new to the field.

MARISSA:

- And, I want to chime in here, Lauren. We actually extended that webinar to an hour and a half to include more time for your questions, and we received a lot of great questions about record keeping and reporting during that question and answer session.
- So, for folks that may be new to the field: if you have any questions about record keeping or reporting, I strongly suggest checking out this webinar recording, script and other



resources first to see if we addressed your question. We addressed a lot of great questions during the 45-minute Q&A session, covering a wide variety of topics, such as, “Is my school required to keep records of students that we admit, but do not attend the school?”

LAUREN:

- Thanks, Marissa. And, if you haven’t guessed it already, there’s a link to that webinar in your hyperlink appendix!

Slide 21: Ask the Audience—Updating a Locked Form I-17

LAUREN:

- Alright, so I want to pause for a quick poll question. We want to know if you were previously aware of how to submit changes to a locked Form I-17 prior to today’s webinar.
- I’ll give you all a moment to respond. As always, if you want to provide additional information, please do so through that comment box at the bottom of your screen.

MARISSA:

- And, while folks are responding, I want to briefly highlight that you can visit Study in the States for additional information about managing the Form I-17, and how to submit updates to SEVP. We recently published a blog post, “Questions from DSOs: How do I submit a Form I-17 Update on a Locked Petition,” that addresses the information that I just covered.
- I want to encourage everyone watching to visit Study in the States—it has a lot of great information to assist with not only just managing the Form I-17, but the entire international student process. We’ve been using your questions to beef up our content on the site so that it addresses many of your frequently asked questions.

LAUREN:

- Thanks, Marissa. That was a great plug for Study in the States. We’ll speak more about some of the newer resources on Study in the States later in today’s webinar.
- Looking at the responses, we are about 50/50 with folks knowing about how to submit updates to a locked petition before today’s webinar. But, for those folks who didn’t know, it reinforces the importance of covering this material even though some folks may be familiar with it.



Slide 22: Enhanced Resource—Evidence Guides and Checklists

LAUREN:

- So, speaking of submitting updates to SEVP, we just mentioned that DSOs are expected to submit evidence at the time of submission—whether through SEVIS or by emailing SEVP, if your Form I-17 is locked. But, we didn't touch on how DSOs can find that required evidence they need to submit. Marissa, would you be able to explain where DSOs can go to figure out what supporting evidence they need to submit to SEVP?

MARISSA:

- Of course. As we mentioned during our last InFocus Webinar, SEVP recently changed the organization of our evidence guides on [ICE.gov/SEVP](https://ice.gov/SEVP). Instead of evidence guides, we now provide evidence checklists, which are organized depending on the action your school wants to take on the Form I-17 and your school type.
- These evidence checklists are located under the different tabs at [ICE.gov/SEVIS/Schools](https://ice.gov/SEVIS/Schools). If you're filing a Form I-17 update, click on the Petition Updates tab, and dependent on your school's accreditation status, look for the evidence checklist that corresponds with the section you're updating on the Form I-17. Once again, I want to stress here that schools should be providing all evidence for Form I-17 updates upfront at the time of filing.
- I also want to point all DSOs to our Definition of Evidence Guide—this document contains an overview of the common evidence required for SEVP adjudications, so it's an important reference document to have open when you're preparing to file a Form I-17 update.

SAM:

- And, if I can jump in here, I want to emphasize how important this Definition of Evidence Guide is to school officials. I encourage all of my DSOs to bookmark this page on their web browser, and recommend that they have both the evidence checklist and Definitions of Evidence Guide open on their computer when preparing to send an update to SEVP.

LAUREN:

- That's a great point, Sam. Before we move on, do you have any other recommendations for DSOs about these evidence checklists and the Definition of Evidence Guide?

SAM:

- I have one more tip that I like to share with school officials: providing the correct evidence at the time of filing will help with the adjudication process, so I strongly encourage DSOs to



reference both [ICE.gov](https://ice.dhs.gov) and our Definition of Evidence Guide to make sure that you provide the correct evidence the first time.

LAUREN:

- Thanks, Sam and Marissa. As Sam mentioned, if you haven't already bookmarked the schools page on [ICE.gov/SEVIS/Schools](https://ice.dhs.gov/SEVIS/Schools), I really suggest you take a moment after this webinar and bookmark the page on your web browser for easy access. Like Study in the States, [ICE.gov/SEVP](https://ice.dhs.gov/SEVP) contains a lot of great information to assist DSOs with managing their international student programs.

Slide 23: Clarifying Processes—Form I-17, Section 2.3

LAUREN:

- Keeping with the theme of school certification, our next slide takes an in-depth look at Section 2.3 on the Form I-17. Sam, I imagine that this field comes up during your school visits, so would you be able to provide information and reminders about this field to those watching?

SAM:

- For those that aren't aware, SEVP made updates to Section 2.3 on the Form I-17 to allow for more precise degree classification. Degrees are broken down by levels and degree program in SEVIS, and we'll take a look at how these are displayed on the next slide.

Slide 24: Clarifying Processes—Form I-17, Section 2.3

SAM:

- Here we have a screenshot that shows the view of this field in SEVIS:
 - The Status column shows if the degree is selected or not for the Form I-17—if the Status is "Selected," then the degree is on or has been added to the Form I-17. If the field is blank, then the degree is not on the Form I-17.
 - The Previous Status column indicates if the degree is approved for the Form I-17—if the Previous Status is "Adjudicated," then the degree has been approved by SEVP.
- As always, DSOs should not issue Forms I-20 for degrees that have not been adjudicated and approved by SEVP.



LAUREN:

- Thanks for that reminder and clarifying the information on that field, Sam. Given that this process can be complicated in SEVIS, I want to provide another plug for the SEVIS Help Hub that we mentioned earlier. DSOs can view additional information about this field—including a full list of degrees, degree levels and programs in the SEVIS Help Hub.

Slide 25: Field Representative Unit Updates—Current Vacancies

LAUREN:

- Sam, I'll let you cover our next slide, which touches on field representative updates.

SAM:

- I'm happy to say that we're getting pretty close to having all 60 field representative territories staffed. However, at this time we have three remaining vacancies in:
 - Raleigh, North Carolina;
 - St. Louis, Missouri; and
 - El Paso, Texas.
- The good news is SEVP hired field representatives for the North Carolina and Missouri territories, and plans to deploy field representatives to these areas in the fall.

LAUREN:

- That's great news, Sam! And, I want to remind those DSOs in territories without a field representative—please contact SRC for assistance until someone is deployed in your area. As I mentioned earlier, SRC's contact information is located at the end of this presentation and in the hyperlink appendix.

Slide 26: Avoid Phone Wait Times—SRC Callback Assist

LAUREN:

- Speaking of SRC, Marissa, would you be able to tell folks about their new Callback Assist feature?

MARISSA:

- Sure thing. SRC recently deployed a Callback Assist feature to help stakeholders spend less time waiting on the phone to speak to an SRC customer service representative. We



understand how important your time is, and don't want to keep you waiting on the phone for an extended period.

LAUREN:

- That's a great feature. Would you be able to explain how it works?

MARISSA:

- If stakeholders contact SRC and the expected wait time is more than two minutes, the phone system will ask if you want to schedule a call back. What this means is that you will be asked to provide your name, phone number, and preferred time during SRC's hours of operation for a customer service representative to call you back. I also want to note that you do not lose your place in line by accepting the Callback Assist feature, and you don't have to choose this option—you can continue to hold for the next available customer service representative.
- However, as I mentioned, we hope that this new feature will save stakeholders time by allowing them to choose a specific time to speak with a representative during busy periods.

LAUREN:

- Thanks, Marissa, that's some really great information. We hope that stakeholders will chose to use this new feature during those busy periods.

Slide 27: Don't Forget

LAUREN:

- Okay, let's move to our next section, which provides some timely reminders to help DSOs prepare for the start of the school year. I'm sure many folks watching have students preparing to travel or even already in route to the United States, while others are gearing up for registration. With these seasonal items in mind, we want to provide a few reminders to ensure that your students maintain their status, and that your school remains in compliance with federal regulations.

Slide 28: Student Travel—Form I-515A

LAUREN:

- We'll start with some common travel reminders that we like to share at this time of the year: how students and DSOs should respond to a Form I-515A, which is a document that grants temporary admission for students into the United States. Sam, I know you've



advised DSOs on how to handle this form in the past, so would you like to cover these reminders?

SAM:

- Of course. As a DSO, it's important to help your students comply with the terms of admission on the Form I-515A, and to assist students with responding to SEVP with all necessary paperwork within 30 days. We've listed that necessary paperwork on the slide for reference.
- However, I really want to stress the implications of failing to respond to a Form I-515A within this 30-day period. Failure to respond may result in termination of a student's SEVIS record, which can jeopardize their nonimmigrant status in the United States. It's certainly not good for a student to have their record terminated for a deficiency that's easy to overcome, especially if a student is just beginning their program of study. So, DSOs, please make sure that both your office and students are aware of these implications. And, to that end, make sure that your students are aware of the documents they need to have on hand at a U.S. port of entry.

MARISSA:

- And, Sam, I want to jump in quickly to highlight two resources on Study in the States to assist DSOs and students with avoiding and responding to the Form I-515A.

Slide 29: Form I-515A—Resources for Students and DSOs

MARISSA:

- On this slide, you can see two of our many handouts available in the Study in the States Resource Library. These graphics are great tools to print out and keep on your desk or to provide to students. I strongly encourage DSOs to check out the Resource Library to view not only these handouts, but other one-pagers that provide information to assist with back to school processes, such as registration, which we'll get to shortly.

LAUREN:

- Excellent point, Marissa. If you're unfamiliar with our Resource Library, you can access it through the link on the bottom of this slide, which is also in your hyperlink appendix. We have numerous handouts on a variety of topics that you can download in both grayscale and color, or save to your computer.



SAM:

- And, to echo everyone’s comments, it may be helpful to peruse the handouts in the Resource Library and include relevant ones in your student’s orientation package.

LAUREN:

- That’s another great point, Sam.
- Before we move on, I want to plug one final resource that might be beneficial to share with your students as they prepare to travel to the United States. Our recent Government Voices Webinar, titled *What to Expect at a U.S. Port of Entry* took a detailed look at travel and the port of entry process. We invited our colleagues at CBP to join us for this webinar. You can find that recording and associated resources on our Study in the States Stakeholder Webinars page.

Slide 30: Student Registration—Deadlines

LAUREN:

- I know there are a lot of other reminders we could provide about student travel, but I want to move on to another hot topic at this time of the year: registration. Marissa, since you just mentioned this subject, would you like to provide some reminders for DSOs?

MARISSA:

- As I’m sure those DSOs watching are aware, you must register students at the start of each academic session; in this case, many of you are probably registering students for the start of the school year. We’ve listed key registration deadlines that DSOs should be aware of on this slide.
- However, I want to point everyone’s attention to the final bullet, which notes that SEVIS will automatically update student records if DSOs do not complete certain required actions within the legal time limit. As Sam mentioned, failure to maintain student records may have negative consequences down the road for both the school and student. In certain situations, not taking action on a student’s record may result in SEVIS automatically terminating that record, which can lead to complications if a student wants to apply for nonimmigrant benefits or even travel out of the country during the course of their program.

LAUREN:

- Very good to know, Marissa. DSOs, please make sure that you register students by the deadlines on the slide. It may be helpful to set a calendar reminder that reminds you to



register students at the start of the school year, or leave a note on your computer about these reporting deadlines. Taking these actions now will certainly make things easier down the road.

Slide 31: Student Registration—Failure to Report

LAUREN:

- So, what happens if a student doesn't show up to school at the start of the year?

MARISSA:

- That's a great question, Lauren. If a student does not report to your school within 30 days, DSOs must either:
 - Cancel the student's record—you should use this option if you can't verify that the student entered the United States; or
 - Terminate the student's record for Reason of No Show.
- We've hit on the SEVIS Help Hub as a great resource for DSOs throughout this presentation, but I just want to point folks to this page for an overview of the registration process. As with our other resources, we've provided step-by-step guidance to walk you through the process for registering a student's record.

LAUREN:

- Sounds like we have a couple of themes here: one, the SEVIS Help Hub is a great resource to assist with the management of school and student records, and two, it's important that DSOs are proactive with regards to student records to ensure students do not fall out of status. So, what else can DSOs and students do to ensure they maintain their status while in the United States?

Slide 32: Maintaining Status—Lines of Communication

SAM:

- I'll take this one, Lauren. Establishing open lines of communication between DSOs and students is key to ensuring that a student's record remains up to date and accurate. As a DSO, you can use the registration period as an opportunity to check-in with your students and reiterate the importance of communicating information, such as changes to their course of study, personal information or planned international travel throughout the school year. You can also use this opportunity to remind students of reporting timelines, including information that must be reported to their DSO within 10 days.



LAUREN:

- And, eligible F-1 students on post-completion OPT and M-1 students engaged in practical training can update their information through the SEVP Portal as we discussed earlier, correct?

SAM:

- Correct. I encourage eligible students—F-1 students on post-completion OPT and M-1 students engaged in practical training—and DSOs to review the SEVP Portal Help section on Study in the States to view a list of information that can and cannot be updated through the portal. Also, even if a student is on post-completion OPT and living away from your campus, it's still important to remain in communication with them. In the case of STEM OPT students, they must check in with you every six months to verify their information in SEVIS.

LAUREN:

- All great information, Sam. And, I know that we have a lot of resources and blog posts on Study in the States dedicated to making sure that students know how to maintain their status. We've included a few of them in your hyperlink appendix. We've written many of these resources from a student's perspective, so as you start the school year, it may be beneficial to share these pages with your students.
- Alright, let's close out this section by looking at full course of study requirements and how that ties into maintaining status. Marissa, would you be able to explain?

Slide 33: Maintaining Status—Full Course of Study

MARISSA:

- Of course. Remember, students must enroll in a full course of study each term to maintain their status. The definition of a full course of study is outlined in our regulations, and is based on a student's education level. You can find more information about what constitutes a full course of study for your school on Study in the States.
- However, there are certain circumstances where DSOs can authorize a reduced course load, which are outlined on the slide. I want to stress that students need to talk with their DSO prior to dropping below a full course of study because, once again, failing to maintain a full course of study may jeopardize a student's status. There are different reasons to authorize a reduced course load for both F-1 and M-1 students, which you can read about on Study in the States.



SAM:

- Just to interject, this is where it's key to maintain those open lines of communication with your students.

MARISSA:

- Correct. Keeping lines of communication open is important, especially if a student needs to drop below a full course of study or, to address the last bullet on the slide, wants to enroll in an online course. Remember, F-1 students can only enroll in one online or distance learning course—or the equivalent of three credit hours—per credit term. M-1 students cannot count online courses towards their full course of study requirement.

SAM:

- And, to jump in again, there are a lot of different circumstances surrounding when an online course can and cannot count towards that full course of study, so I want to direct folks to Study in the States to learn more. Also, I want to note that students can take as many online courses as they want that go above and beyond their full course load.

LAUREN:

- Great information, Marissa and Sam!

Slide 34: Facts + Figures

LAUREN:

- With those reminders out of the way, let's move into our next section that focuses on some interesting figures and helpful reminders related to campus emergency planning. If you stay up to date with SEVP communications, this is a topic that we've focused on a lot over the last year to ensure that SEVP-certified schools have plans in place to manage their international student population in the event of a natural disaster or other emergency.
- Marissa, would you be able to walk us through a few interesting statistics related to campus emergency planning and SEVP's response over the last year?

Slide 35: Campus Emergency Planning—SEVP Response to Natural Disasters

MARISSA:

- Certainly. Over the past year, SEVP responded to 10 natural disasters and other emergencies—ranging from hurricanes to tornados to volcanic eruptions. Our team constantly monitors a variety of news sources to keep informed of any event that may



impact the international student community. We also developed and implemented an internal SOP that ensures the program can quickly and efficiently respond to an emergency, such as identifying and reaching out to affected areas to communicate key reminders.

Slide 36: Campus Emergency Planning—Nationwide Impact

MARISSA:

- This next slide looks at the wide-reaching impact of natural disasters over the last year. I think this slide does an excellent job of showcasing how important it is to ensure that your school has a plan in place—if you look at this map, a good portion of the country has felt an impact due to some sort of natural disaster over the past year.

Slide 37: Campus Emergency Planning—SEVP Support for Campus Emergencies

MARISSA:

- Finally, I want to look at SEVP’s evergreen resources to assist schools with emergency planning and preparedness. I strongly recommend bookmarking these pages so you can reference them during discussions with your international student office or other campus emergency managers.
- And, I also want to note that this slide only shows SEVP’s resources. However, there are numerous other resources from OAE, FEMA and other government agencies to help ensure your school is prepared. We’ve listed some of them in your hyperlink appendix and will touch on them in a few slides.

Slide 38: Ask the Audience—Campus Emergency Planning

LAUREN:

- Thanks for that information, Marissa. It’s amazing to see just how many areas across the United States may have been impacted over the past year by a natural disaster.
- With that in mind, I want to pause for a brief poll question to get a sense of how many folks watching have an emergency plan in place at their school. I’ll pause for a moment and let you respond to that question.
- Awesome—it looks like a lot of people already have a plan in place! We are glad to see that schools are actively preparing in case of an emergency.
- That’s great information, thanks everyone. And, if your school hasn’t developed a plan, I strongly encourage you to view some of those resources that Marissa just mentioned.



Slide 39: Ask the Audience—Campus Emergency Planning

LAUREN:

- For those that answered yes, your school currently has an emergency plan, we're curious if this plan takes into consideration international students and their needs. Please select an option on the screen.
- It's good to see the majority of your plans do include international students. For those of you that have a plan that doesn't currently include international students, we encourage you to speak with the emergency managers at your school.
- Thanks everyone for responding, this is some great insight into how many schools out there have plans and if those plans incorporate international students.
- With those questions over, let's transition a bit and talk about tips and best practices for school officials and students so you can be prepared in the event of an emergency. Sam, would you mind talking us through these best practices?

Slide 40: Campus Emergency Planning—Understand DSO Responsibilities

SAM:

- Of course. Let's start by looking at some considerations for DSOs and how you can assist your school with planning for emergencies. As a DSO, you're a subject matter expert about the needs and requirements for international students on your campus. In this respect, we encourage you to:
 - Be familiar with your school or university's emergency plan. This is both for advising students about how to handle an emergency, but also how the school as a whole should handle international students. For example, you may want to ask yourself, "Does my school's emergency plan consider the needs of our international student population?"
 - Next, if your school's plan doesn't include a response or fully address the diverse needs of international students on your campus, you can educate and collaborate with those emergency managers to make sure that the plan takes into account these needs. This ties back to our earlier theme of ensuring that students maintain their status: your school leaders should be aware of the potential negative impacts if international students fall out of status due to a natural disaster or emergency.
 - Finally, be aware of the numerous resources out there to assist with emergency planning and developing an emergency plan. The DHS Campus Resilience Program



Resource Library is a great place to start or to share with the emergency managers at your school.

Side 41: Campus Emergency Planning—Emphasize Safety First

SAM:

- Our next slide contains some great reminders that you may want to share with your students during orientation or an advising meeting at the start of the year to ensure that your students have their own plan in place in the event of an emergency. This includes:
 - Advising your students about the emergency resources available at your school and any evacuation plans;
 - Encouraging students to sign up for emergency alerts from local law enforcement; and
 - Providing emergency contact information to students. After an emergency, certain services, such as power and cell service, may not be readily available, so we strongly encourage providing multiple means of communication where you can be reached.
- Consider including dependents and family in preparedness briefings. For example, DSOs at K-12 schools: you might want to consider providing information to your student’s parents or guardians about how your school will respond in the event of an emergency.

Slide 42: Campus Emergency Planning—Ensure Students Maintain Status

SAM:

- Finally, if disaster does strike, you want to be sure that you and your students understand how to maintain their status. We’ve provided some best practices on this slide, including:
 - First, keep in contact with students during an emergency event. This helps ensure students are aware of the actions they need to take to maintain their nonimmigrant student status.
 - Second, remind students to keep important documents safe. We’ve listed examples of these documents on the slide.
 - Third, make sure your students are aware of the resources available to them. This includes the two resources that I mentioned on the previous slide, in addition to resources available from our government partners, like FEMA.



Slide 43: Helpful Resources

LAUREN:

- Keeping with the theme of resources, let's now move into our final section, which highlights some of those resources on Study in the States, in addition to a few of our recent and upcoming webinars.
- As we go through this section, you'll notice that we have a few feedback questions on the screen about today's webinar. Please take a second to respond to these questions and provide your thoughts. As we mentioned at the beginning, we take your feedback into consideration when planning future webinars, so please take a minute to provide your thoughts through that comment box.
- Marissa, while folks are taking these polls, can you talk through our upcoming webinars and new resources?

Slide 44: Save the Date—Government Voices Webinar: Campus Partnerships with DHS

MARISSA:

- I want to direct folks to our next Government Voices Webinar, titled Campus Partnerships with DHS, which is taking place on Thursday, September 27, from 2 to 3:30 p.m. EDT. During this webinar, we're bringing together SEVP representatives and our government partners at Project Campus Sentinel and Project Shield America. They'll provide an overview of their programs and roles in the international student community, and how they work with the academic community.
- In that light, this webinar is designed for DSOs, campus safety and law enforcement officials, and will feature a variety of topics and helpful information.

LAUREN:

- So, to those DSOs watching, I encourage you to share information about this webinar with your campus safety and law enforcement officials so they can learn more about what our partners offer to the academic community.
- Marissa, can you highlight the pre-submitted question deadline?

MARISSA:

- The deadline for pre-submitted questions is noted on the slide: August 24, 2018. I encourage folks to send your questions about Project Campus Sentinel, Project Shield



America and SEVP to the email address on your slide by this date. We'll do our best to address your questions during the live webinar on September 27.

LAUREN:

- Thanks, Marissa. For everyone listening: make sure you mark your calendar now for September 27. I'll note now that this webinar is an hour and 30 minutes to provide adequate time to address your questions, so please make sure you mark your schedules accordingly.
- You can also visit this webinar's specific page on Study in the States to download a save-the-date calendar invitation—we've also included this link in the hyperlink appendix. If you're unable to make the live webinar, as always, a recording will be available on Study in the States shortly after the event.

Slide 45: Miss a Webinar?

LAUREN:

- Keeping on the subject of webinars, we've mentioned these two webinars during this presentation, but Marissa would you be able to recap for our viewers?

MARISSA:

- Sure thing. As we've mentioned during this presentation, SEVP recently hosted two webinars of interest to DSOs. Our Government Voices Webinar, titled What to Expect at a U.S. Port of Entry is an excellent resource to review this time of the year as students travel to the United States. During this webinar, SEVP and CBP representatives addressed live questions and covered a variety of topics about border processes, traveling and preparing to enter the United States.
- Our other webinar, the SEVP Ask the Experts Webinar, titled What DSOs Need to Know about Record Keeping, is another great resource to review since our presenters touched on timely topics, like student registration and school reporting. I really want to promote these resources to both experienced and new DSOs: it never hurts to brush up on SEVP's record keeping and reporting requirements.

LAUREN:

- Thanks, Marissa. And, as with all webinars, you can access the recordings and additional resources for each webinar from the Study in the States Stakeholder Webinars page.



Slide 46: SEVP Portal Help

LAUREN:

- Sam, since you covered the portal earlier on in this presentation, would you mind talking about the SEVP Portal Help section? I know we've mentioned it, but a little rehash never hurts.

SAM:

- Of course—the SEVP Portal Help section is a great resource, so I want to make sure that we promote it as much as possible. Here, you can find those video tutorials that students can use to create a portal account, as well as the SEVP Portal User Guide and more. You can access this section from the link on the bottom of your screen and from the link in your hyperlink appendix.

Slide 47: Engage with SEVP—Stay Connected

LAUREN:

- Great to know! With that, let's move on to our closing slides. If you haven't already, please make sure that you take a moment to complete the polls on your screen.
- Marissa, would you mind telling folks about how they can stay connected with SEVP?

MARISSA:

- Sure thing, Lauren. As this presentation has demonstrated, we have many great resources and ways for stakeholders to stay informed about the latest news from SEVP.
- Some specific things that we want to highlight are the SEVP Spotlight and SEVP Outreach Bulletin. You can learn more about these publications on the Study in the States Conferences page, which is listed in your hyperlink appendix.
- And speaking of the Conferences page, you can also submit event requests to SEVP and other government partners on that page if your school, or any association you are a member of, has an upcoming event where you would like us to present.

LAUREN:

- Also, remember that we frequently post on Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn, so be sure to connect with us on those platforms as well! And be sure to share these resources with your international students. We do a lot of engagement with students via Study in the States and over social media.



Slide 48: SEVP Contact Information

LAUREN:

- Finally, don't forget that there are numerous ways to get in touch with SEVP.
- SRC is open Monday to Friday from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. Eastern Time, except on federal holidays like Labor Day, which is happening in just a few weeks on September 3. And you can always reach out to us via the email addresses you see on the screen.
- Before we sign off, I want to encourage everyone to please take a moment to complete the polls listed on your screen if you haven't already. Thanks to Sam and Marissa, and all of those who joined us today!

Slide 49: Webinar Closing Slide

[Slide 49 displays until the Adobe Connect room closes after the webinar.]