



SEVIS 2015 Roadmap Webinar FAQ

February 20, 2015 – Webinar briefing on SEVIS enhancements in 2015

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“New” Form I-20

Q: Will all current students need to be given a new Form I-20 using the new format or will the one they previously received allow for travel? Do we just use the new format for new students?

A: Students can use the Form I-20 they were previously issued to travel. You will begin using the new forms when they become available. There will be a phase-in period for the new form.

Q: Will the instructions currently on page 2 of the Form I-20 be revised to reflect changes in terminology, department names, etc.?

A: Yes. The instructions on the form will be updated and moved to page 3. SEVIS is being modified to make it easier to update the instructions in the future. Combined with the permission of OMB to update the instructions, we will be able to make changes much more quickly.

Q: Can SEVP consider NOT pre-printing the DSO name in the travel signature portion of the I-20 for an initial I-20?



A: Due to strong DSO preferences, we will no longer pre-print the DSO name in the travel signature section of the Form I-20.

Q: Will CBP be kept abreast of the Form DS-2019/I-20 changes, so secondary screening does not spike for unprepared officers?

A: Yes. We are working closely with CBP to minimize any temporary confusion over the revised forms. The revised forms will make it easier for CBP officers to identify the SEVIS ID and the appropriate class of admission.

Q: Will consular affairs be kept abreast of the Form DS-2019/I-20 changes?

A: Yes. We are communicating with consular affairs. They know there will be old and new versions of the form. They understand that the new version and what is in SEVIS could be different.

Q: Will we need to print out new revised Forms I-20 or DS-2019 for all current nonimmigrants right after the forms have been revised? Alternatively, will we be able to print out revised forms only as needed (for example, when the SEVIS record is updated)?

A: There will be a phase-in period before the new forms are required. You will not have to print out revised forms simply because the form changed. School and sponsor officials can use their judgment to determine when to print a new form.

Q: How will the revised forms affect admissions season and visa applications over the summer?

A: We hope it will be a minimal impact. We will not require that people have the new forms for either admissions or visa applications. We are working closely with CBP and with consular affairs to make the transition as smooth as possible. We cannot say there will not be any problems, because many people are involved in the process; but there will be enough of an outreach, so that most people should know about the new form. If one or two students or exchange visitors run into a glitch, we will be able to take care of it. We do not anticipate massive issues.

Q: Will the new Form I-20 be two pages or still be three?

A: It will be three pages; however, we are re-ordering the pages so the instructions are on the third page, instead of the second page.

Q: Will the Form I-20 state that students 14 and older do not need parental signatures?

A: That is a policy issue as to whether or not a student needs the parent's signature. Currently, we have not changed the language and the age is 18 years old.

Q: Will the new Form I-20 include SEVIS I-901 fee payment, date of U.S. entry, and visa issuance information?

A: No. We are not changing any of the information that we put on the page, other than adding the new names.

Q: Will the third page of the Form I-20 be required for entry to the U.S.?



A: No. The instructions will be on the third page.

Q: Will students still need a travel signature?

A: Yes. We are looking at the possibility of putting in an electronic signature, but those plans are still in the talking phase. Until then, a travel signature will be required.

Q: What date will the Form I-20 changes happen? And when that happens are we required to reprint all Forms I-20, or is that optional?

A: There will be a phase-in period for schools and sponsors to transition students and exchange visitors to the new version of the form. The new Form I-20 will be available with the June 2015 release. There is no requirement to reprint Forms I-20 immediately. You can make decisions based on individual cases. However, all students and exchange visitors must be transitioned to the new form by the end of the phase-in period.

Q: Will SEVP provide a handout or something that DSOs can include to students to inform and update them about the new Forms I-20 and DS-2019? It would be nice for the students and EVs to have something official that comes from SEVP about these new forms.

A: Yes. We will develop an official handout to give to students. The handout will describe the changes, the phase-in period, and the deadlines for transition.

Q: Is the way of issuing the new Form I-20 the same or do we need training?

A: The process for issuing the Form I-20 will be the same.

We are developing a new reprint functionality, which will allow you to request a reprint of multiple Forms I-20. You will be able to select subsets of students and have all the forms print at one time. We will provide training on the multiple reprint function; but the process of creating a Form I-20 will be the same. You will still be able to print from the student's page.

Q: The June release and Form I-20 update will fall when the majority of our students are on summer vacation and potentially out of the country. What would be the impact on them coming back in August, if they have the old Form I-20?

A: There should be no impact. They should be able to enter the United States without an issue. That is assuming they would be able to come in without an issue anyway. If they had an issue before, they will still have an issue.

Q: It sounds like the Form I-20 and SEVIS may be unavailable for a period during June. Is that correct?

A: When we do a release, we take SEVIS down for a period of time; generally, 4-8 hours. It may be a little longer for the June 2015 release, because it is a larger release than normal. We deploy our releases on Friday evenings at 8:00 PM. It will be finished by Sunday at the very latest. We will let you know if it will be longer than 24 hours.

Q: Will data required for creating a Form I-20 also be revised?



A: For the most part, the data collected will not change. We will implement new name and U.S. address standards. Other than having information validated against different business rules, the actual information being collected is not different. The Form I-20 is going to look different; but the only difference is that the information is re-arranged visually, and we are adding names. We are also adding more names on the Form DS-2019. While it may look to you that many changes were made, there are no changes in the actual information. The Form I-20 creation process will not change.

Q: Can we email the Form I-20 to students?

A: No. Students will still need a hard copy of the Form I-20 with original signatures.

Q: How will we access the new form?

A: SEVIS will generate the forms in the same way it generates the current form.

Q: Will there be more signature spaces on the new form?

A: No. There will not be more signature spaces.

Department of State

Q: What is a T/IPP?

A: The T/IPP, or Training/Internship Placement Plan, is the Department of State Form DS-7002. It is used for exchange visitors in the category of Trainee, Intern, and Student Intern.

Q: What J functionalities will be included in the scheduled release in Alpha?

A: Users will be able to create, update, and print the T/IPP after the March alpha release is deployed. Address verification will be available for Physical Address, Mailing Address and Site of Activity Address fields.

Q: Will the T/IPP Webinar in early June take place before users must begin to enter all exchange visitors into SEVIS?

A: The T/IPP webinar will be on June 5, 2015. The release is scheduled for June 26. The T/IPP will need to be created in SEVIS only for exchange visitors created after the June release.

Q: When will the final version of the DS-7002 T/IPP be available to sponsors so that we can begin to plan for the transition to a SEVIS form?

A: Users will be able to print the Form DS-7002 in the March release to alpha. The Form printed from SEVIS will include the same information as the OMB approved Form DS-7002. It will be produced out of SEVIS and it will look a little bit different from the OMB form.

Q: You mentioned that Name, Address and Email standards would be updated in the June release. Will this include Telephone number fields to meet J-1 Subpart A requirements?



A: Yes, the June release will include the telephone number and e-mail addresses for J-1s. They will be required at validation.

Q: Is it possible to uncouple the create processes for the Form DS-7002 and Form DS-2019 from one another allowing batch schools to submit the Form DS-7002?

A: We understand the concerns expressed by the sponsor community. Unfortunately, SEVIS cannot accommodate this request at this time.

Q: We understand that the final T/IPP will not be required until the point of validation, is this correct?

A: That is not correct. If you are issuing a Form DS-2019 for a Trainee, Intern, or Student Intern, you will also need to create Form DS-7002 at the same time. However, the signature dates for the RO/ARO, Nonimmigrant, and Supervisors are not required until validation.

Q: Can you please confirm what exactly the revisions to the Form DS -2019 will be?

A: The only revisions on the Form DS-2019 are the name fields. Instead of the Family Name, there will be Surname/Primary Name. Instead of the First Name, there will be Given Name. There will no longer be a Middle Name. Some text on pages 1 and 2 will be revised, but no other substantial changes will be made.

Q: Will we be able to batch J-1 Academic Training and J-1 On Campus Employment?

A: No, this functionality has not been scheduled into a release.

Q: Will we be able to see employment history for J-1 On Campus Employment similar to that being worked on for the F-1s?

A: No, this functionality has not been scheduled into a release.

Optional Practical Training (OPT)

Q: Will schools be able to have information corrected on the Employment Information page, if it is not correct?

A: Yes. If the information is not accurate, the DSO can request a data fix.

Q: Why would USCIS-approved OPT dates differ from DSO-recommended OPT dates on Employment Authorization Document (EADs) and approval notices?

A: It is not unusual for the USCIS-approved OPT dates to differ from the DSO-recommended dates. Usually, this happens if USCIS approves the OPT after the DSO-recommended OPT start date. USCIS cannot issue an EAD with a start date earlier than the date they approve the application. There may be some difference in those dates on-going. Our intent is for SEVIS to display both the DSO-recommended dates and the USCIS-approved OPT dates that the student received. This allows DSOs to determine if there is an error. We do expect that, at times, those dates will be different from each other; but if it is erroneous, DSOs can call the SEVIS Help Desk for assistance.



Q: How will the Employment Information page affect batch and OPT reporting?

A: The Employment Information page will not affect batch. It will simply display information about student employment authorizations.

Q: Will DSOs be able to see employment authorizations at previous schools? This would be helpful, so we do not recommend OPT, if a student is not eligible.

A: Yes. DSOs will be able to see all employment authorizations associated with a particular SEVIS ID. This includes authorizations at other schools. The DSO will be able to make better assessments of a student's eligibility for employment. SEVIS does not currently display any authorizations that are in the past.

Note: It will not display authorizations under a different SEVIS ID.

Q: Does SEVP plan to build a page similar to the Employment Information page, but for information on reduced course loads? This would be helpful when working with transfer students.

A: No. There are no plans for that functionality at this time, but it is a good idea. We will take that down as a suggestion.

Q: Does SEVP plan to return functionality to allow DSOs to revise OPT recommendation dates in SEVIS, while the application is still pending with the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Service (USCIS)?

A: No. There are currently no plans to implement this functionality. Providing you with the ability to change or revise the OPT recommendation dates in SEVIS, while the application is still pending, is an issue we would need to discuss with USCIS. Once a petition is entered into their system, we do not know where it is in USCIS' pending process and what impact a change in recommended dates would have on their processes.

Q: You mentioned that in the Fall/Winter Release we would be able to see more detailed history within OPT employment. Does this mean we will be able to view employer history (instead of only being able to view the most recent)?

A: Yes. We do not have any employment history in SEVIS right now. Currently, old data is over-written. We will stop over-writing the data, and you will begin to see a "history" of employers.

Q: Will the new OPT functionality allow entry of simultaneous employers?

A: Yes. The 2015 Fall/Winter release will allow DSOs to add multiple employers to the student's record.

Q: How should we handle a student on OPT, who works freelance and has multiple employers that the student works for, either concurrently or consecutively?

A: Until the new functionality is released, follow the instructions provided in the 2010 SEVP OPT Policy Guidance. We will provide guidance on how to enter employment information when the functionality is released.



Q: Will SEVIS complete records for an OPT application still in pending status more than 14 months after the Program End Date?

A: Yes.

Q: What updates/functionalities will be available for P/DSOs on those cases where a student, due to long-pending OPT or Motion-to-Reopen OPT, has been placed on Terminated status; and USCIS is now requesting through RFE for the student to be placed back on ACTIVE and be issued new Form I-20 with retroactive dates.

A: SEVIS is not being modified to address this specific scenario. These will continue to require a call to the SEVIS Help Desk for a data fix.

Annual Verification

Q: Will only PDSOs see that Verification link?

A: Both PDSOs and DSOs can see the verification notice, but only PDSOs will have an active link that takes them directly to the Verification page.

Q: If you have not verified the DSOs, is there an alert in SEVIS?

A: There is not an alert, but many messages should be on your Message Board. If you have not verified the DSOs, you will see a link that asks you to verify your DSOs. Therefore, if you are not seeing the link, you should be okay. If you receive an email, which says you have not verified your DSOs and you cannot see the link, that could mean there is a technical problem. Contact the SEVIS Help Desk immediately.

Q: If our school was just certified in early December, do we need to verify now?

A: Schools certified after December 2 do not need to submit verification.

Q: How can you confirm the verification was submitted and accepted?

A: Go to the School Information page or the Program Information page. It will contain information on the next verification date. If that date is in 2016, you have already been verified.

Q: As a DSO, how can I tell if my PDSO has completed the Annual Verification?

A: You can look at the School Information page.

Q: If we are experiencing major changes in management and are in need of replacing the PDSO, can we not wait for the end of annual verification.

A: If possible, complete the verification and then replace the PDSO.

Name Standards

Q: Do you recommend schools to make name changes now or wait to update them after SEVIS automatically updates them according to the new naming conventions?

A: This is a decision that school and sponsor officials must make for themselves. SEVP recommends using the new name standards when issuing Forms I-20 for new students.



DSOs also need to look at the impact it will have on a student. If you currently have a student with a last name of FNU, LNU, UNK, or None, you should probably make those changes as soon as possible. Before you make any decision, look at the naming standards and look at the report that tells you what names are being impacted. Assess how your students are affected and whether your office can handle the work.

Q: Will you inform us of the name and email standards?

A: The following resources are on Study in the States:

- SEVIS Name Standards User Guide
- SEVIS Email Standards Job Aid

We recommend that you read them to help you make decisions on names; such as, do you want to begin making changes now, do you want to wait, etc.

Q: As we are no longer using the Middle Name field, our local DMV office has advised us that it causes an issue for them (though it can be worked around) – has this interface issue been addressed?

A: We are working with SAVE. SAVE will update their systems, as soon as we make any changes. SAVE is the primary communication channel with DMVs throughout the United States. They will explain the changes in SEVIS. If you have problems with the local DMV, email a description of the problem to DMVSSA@ice.dhs.gov.

Q: I have had problems with the Department of Motor Vehicles and Department of Public Safety regarding the name standardizations for Vietnamese students. If I write their "Given Name" as it is written in the Machine Readable Zones, I am actually writing their middle name as the first part of the given name. DMV/DPS has refused to issue a Driver's License because of how the name is written on the Form I-20. The U.S. Embassy in Vietnam writes their name of the visa as First Name, Middle Name. Are the name standardizations being given to other entities?

A: Yes. There are [FAQs](#) on Study in the States that discuss how to handle some of the country-specific standards, which do not conform to the MRZ standard. DSOs have discretion for entering names in SEVIS. We have shared our new name standardizations with other entities. While the MRZ is the most reliable source for a pattern of how to enter information into SEVIS, we recognize that other considerations must be taken into account.

Q: Will SEVIS let school and sponsor officials know which names were changed?

A: Yes. SEVIS will provide a report to let you know which names changed. The report will be available on a new SEVIS Downloads page. You will be able to download it into a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet.

Q: How will the name change affect the issuance of the passport?

A: The name in the passport should drive the way the name is entered into SEVIS.



Q: Since FNU is no longer acceptable, what do we use in its place? Do we leave it blank? Do we repeat the first name or last name? What is the recommendation?

A: Leave the first name blank. There are [FAQs](#) on Study in the States you can refer to for guidance.

Q: Will there be issues with the new name standards when current students have their names changed but their U.S. visa and passport are listed differently?

A: We are working with our government partners to minimize any issues.

Student Email Addresses

Q: If emails are going to be required, will it be required during creation of the Forms I-20 or during registration. This is really important because this affects what information we need to collect from school applicants.

A: We will let you know. Email is currently not a required field. SEVP has not decided when that will be implemented and what the rules will be.

Q: Are DSOs also required to capture F-2 dependent email addresses at this time?

A: There is currently no requirement to capture the email addresses of students or their dependents.

Q: Are student emails going to be required in SEVIS?

A: Capturing student email addresses will be required one day. It is deemed a national security issue that must be addressed, but it is not in any of the releases we currently have planned. There are policy decisions that need to be made before we can require this in SEVIS.

Q: We have F-1 elementary students who do not have email accounts. Will these students be allowed to use their guardian or parent's email address?

A: We cannot answer this question at this time. Once we have worked out the policy and system issues surrounding dependent emails, we will answer this question.

Search Page Functionality

Q: Where do we submit suggestions for improvements to search?

A: Email suggestions to SEVISTechnicalFeedback@ice.dhs.gov.

Q: Can SEVIS be modified to allow us to search by school code when transferring a student to another school?

A: The improvements to search functionality planned for this year are limited to the Search page. The transfer function will be changed to allow you to search for another school by the school name or the school code; but this change is not scheduled for 2015.

Q: Can users search by using only a SEVIS number?



A: SEVIS currently has functionality where users can search for a student using only the student's SEVIS number. The SEVIS ID is the first field listed under the Search Type section on the Student Search page.

Q: Last year, the option to sort Search results by Date of Last Status Change was removed. This made it more difficult to get the information DSOs need, especially since the Search results only display 20 records at a time. Can the option to sort by Date of Last Status Change be restored?

A: No. Currently, we are not changing the items that you can sort by. We would like to give you more search sort options, but the search function is a real resource hog. Email recommendations to SEVISTechnicalFeedback@ice.dhs.gov for improvements to the Search functionality. If there is a strong need, we will look to see if we can provide that capability.

Batch Processing

Q: We are currently not using batch processing, are we going to have to start using batch processing?'

A: Batch processing is not required. Each institution makes its own decision about the use of batch software.

Q: Will the new Forms I-20 and DS-2019 updates affect the batch process?

A: The form updates do not affect the batch process. The batch process is about collecting the information. Those changes are already in the batch testing and are being tested. The only difference is that when you get a form through batch, you will get a new version of the form, instead of the old version.

Q: If a school's student record system does not allow a blank field in last name or first name, how do we reconcile that with the batch system?

A: This issue should be discussed with the batch vendor. They can offer a solution.

Interfaces

Q: Will other government entities (SSA, DMVs, etc.) be told and have a preview of the new forms, so they know it is a legitimate form, which looks different from current forms?

A: Yes. We are working with the other agencies. We are reaching out to SAVE, SSA, and DMVs. There will be a federal register notice about the new form. We will also have information on Study in the States that will show what the acceptable forms look like. There will be a period of time when both forms will be acceptable.

Q: Do the DMVs have access to SAVE similar to SSA, and therefore have some level of interface with SEVIS?

A: They can access information from SAVE. SAVE is available to all DMVs. Some access it; some do not.



Form I-20 Travel Authorization Signatures

- Q: Do we have to have to sign the Form I-20 for a student to enter the country, if they leave for summer break?**
- A: DSOs should use their judgment to determine if a travel signature is needed. If the travel signature is old, a new one should be considered. Note that the travel authorization will now be on the SECOND page.
- Q: Since DSO names will not be pre-printed on the Form I-20, will SEVIS no longer pre-print a date there as well?**
- A: Correct. NO information will be pre-printed on the travel authorization section.

Reports

- Q: Will SEVIS be enhanced to allow school and sponsor users to obtain better reports, i.e., detailed reports on transfer students?**
- A: No. There are no plans to change existing reporting functionality for schools and sponsors in the near term. We do plan to make it possible for you to download your lists and alerts. Email SEVISTechnicalFeedback@ice.dhs.gov if you want a specific type of report. We will review the request to see if we can create it.

Help Hub

- Q: Will the help hub be robust enough to replace the NAFSA manual?**
- A: We are trying to make Help available to everybody and do it as robustly as we can. We have an obligation to provide you with the best Help content we can. However, you will not get opinions or best practices in Help. The NAFSA manual has a different scope and feedback from your peers.

Miscellaneous

- Q: Will DSOs be able to email students/groups of students directly from SEVIS, as was discussed in previous "SEVIS 2" discussions?**
- A: No.
- Q: Is there any possibility of adding a leave of absence function in SEVIS?**
- A: This is something that SEVP plans to do. We have not yet scheduled this functionality. There are many policy issues that must be taken into consideration before we can implement this functionality.
- Q: Until the temporary absence function is in place, how do we enter it in SEVIS?**
- A: Terminate the student for an Authorized Early Withdrawal. When the student is to return, submit a correction request to change the student's status to Active.



Q: Will SEVP have presentations regarding June 2015 and Fall 2015 changes at NAFSA Boston?

A: We will have presentations at the 2015 NAFSA conference in Boston. We do not know if we will be in person or virtually. The rules on whether we can go conferences have tightened. It will depend on whether we are given permission to travel.

We will continue to have webinars at least a few weeks before NAFSA. That way you can ask us even more questions if we get to NAFSA.

Q: Are there any plans to send alerts directly to students via the email from the SEVIS record, i.e., expiration dates?

A: No. At this time we do not have any plans to contact students directly.