



## SEVIS Registration Webinar FAQs (May 20, 2016)

June 15, 2016 – Initial release of FAQs

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### General Questions and Unresolved Issues

- Q: When will the new registration changes be effective?**  
A: The changes to registration will take effect after SEVIS Release 6.27 on July 8, 2016.
- Q: Will this Registration Webinar recording and PowerPoint slides be available as a reference tool?**  
A: Yes, the Registration Webinar recordings and slides are posted to the [SEVIS Help Hub](#) within seven days.
- Q: If a student is in his or her last semester with a college and plans to transfer to a university, should I use the Last Semester checkbox?**  
A: If a student is in the last session of any academic program, DSOs can check the Last Semester checkbox. However, it is not required.
- Q: Will all information in the current SEVIS system carry over to the new system?**  
A: There is no new SEVIS system. This release only changes the appearance and some of the functions in the current system. None of the information DSOs have already entered will change.



**Q: Will there be an Alert or Report available on SEVIS for all students with flags on their record?**

A: An extra column named “Eligible for Registration” will appear at the end of Initial Status Students and Active Status Students lists. This will have either a red X or a green check mark. The red X will indicate a registration block. The green check mark will indicate the student is eligible for registration.

The Initial Status Students and Active Status Students lists are exportable in various formats. If you export the lists to Excel, the final column states whether the student is eligible for registration or not. If the student is not eligible, it indicates why not, for example, Needs: E-mail address, Telephone number, I-901 fee payment.

**Q: If a school has a pending Form I-17 update requesting a change to their session dates to the Other option for registration on an Annual basis, will these updates be denied?**

A: The school will be sent a request for information (RFI) asking to confirm the program length being over 183 days in length.

**Q: With the new elementary, primary, and secondary/high school levels, what grades fall within elementary and primary?**

A: **SEVP Policy:** Primary school covers kindergarten through eighth grade. Secondary (high) school is ninth through twelfth grades.

**Q: If an elementary student will attend a high school in the same district, should I wait until the Program End Date to transfer the record and issue a new Form I-20?**

A: The elementary school DSO should work with the high school DSO to determine the SEVIS transfer release date. The transfer release date should not be before the student finishes the elementary school program.

**Q: Would a student going from elementary school to high school be considered a change in education level?**

A: Yes.

**Q: If a student requests a transfer before beginning an academic program, should the DSO look for the Program Start Date or for the Initial Session Start Date at the other school?**

A: The DSO should advise the student that the Initial Session Start Date at the transfer-in school should be within 30 days of the student’s most recent entry to the United States. It is not the DSO’s responsibility to ensure the next Program Start Date or Initial Session Start Date is within 30 days of the student’s entry.

**Q: Are Student Remarks captured in Event History?**

A: Yes.

**Q: Is it now possible to see all remarks made throughout the history of a student record?**



- A: This is not a new feature; it has just been moved to a new location. Any remarks DSOs enter in any Remarks field will appear there and in all other Remarks fields until the DSO erases them. However, there will not be a visible history of deleted remarks. Refer to the tool on the [Study in the States website](#) for detailed information on Remarks fields.

## Registration

**Q: Our school only registers once a year. Are we required to register students more often?**

A: School registration and SEVIS registration are similar but not identical. The primary reason for SEVIS registration is to ensure students are still at the school and attending full-time. At least two registrations/reporting actions per year are highly recommended. Timing continuing registration after a long school break/vacation is recommended.

**Q: Is a hotel address acceptable for the U.S. Physical Address during initial registration?**

A: Yes, DSOs may enter hotel addresses as U.S. Physical Addresses for students. However, the student must update the address with the DSO once he or she has a permanent address.

**Q: How do I register a student who does not have a U.S. address until after they arrive?**

A: Students must be in the United States and provide a physical U.S. address to the DSO before the DSO can register them in SEVIS.

This can be the address of the hotel. Once the student finds a place to live, the student must notify the DSO, so the DSO can update SEVIS to reflect the new address.

**Q: Do students have to be registered for each semester?**

A: Yes, DSOs should register all of their international students for every school session, term, or semester they are in the United States and attending a full course load. Failing to register students for each semester will lead to their record being terminated.

**Q: If a student arrives for orientation before classes begin, is it possible to register and activate them in SEVIS before the start of classes?**

A: Yes, students may enter the United States up to 30 days before the Program Start Date. DSOs may register those students, as long as the student's record in SEVIS has a U.S. Physical Address.

**Q: Is the deadline to complete registration going to be based on the Program Start Date or the Initial Session Start Date (ISSD)?**

A: The SEVIS Termination job is tied to the Program Start Date.



## Mass Registration

**Q: How would Mass Registration work for students in Initial status? Would I have to enter and validate addresses individually?**

A: Before Initial students are eligible for Mass Registration, they must all have paid the I-901 SEVIS Fee and have a validated U.S. address in their SEVIS records; therefore, Mass Registration is mainly intended for use with continuing students.

**Q: Is Mass Registration only available for schools using Batch process?**

A: No, Mass Registration is available in real-time interface (RTI) for all schools to make continuing registration of students easier.

**Q: Can I change a single student's record if the record has already been updated as part of a mass registration action?**

A: Yes, click on Registration on the *Student Information* page to make any changes.

**Q: Is Mass Registration possible for students of high schools?**

A: Yes.

**Q: Will Mass Registration work across multiple campuses?**

A: No, Mass Registration is only available for one campus at a time.

**Q: Will students not eligible for Mass Registration still show up on alert lists of those who need to be registered?**

A: Yes, a student will appear on the registration alert lists until the DSO registers the student for the next session.

## I-901 SEVIS Fee

(Refer to the SEVIS I-901 Webinar FAQ for general fee questions)

**Q: Will an unpaid I-901 SEVIS Fee generate a warning or will it block registration?**

A: Both. SEVIS will block registration and there will be a flag on the SEVIS record.

**Q: Will SEVP be creating an alert for missing I-901 SEVIS Fee payments?**

A: An extra column named "Eligible for Registration" will appear at the end of Initial Status Students and Active Status Students lists. This will have either a red X or a green check mark. The red X will indicate a registration block. The green check mark will indicate the student is eligible for registration.

The Initial Status Students and Active Status Students lists are also exportable in various formats. If you export the lists to Excel, the final column states whether the student is eligible for registration or not. If the student is not eligible, it indicates why not, for example; Needs: E-mail address, Telephone number, 901 fee payment.



**Q: If the student has paid the I-901 SEVIS Fee, but it is not showing in SEVIS, how do we fix it?**

A: If the student record indicates there has been a charge-back on the I-901 SEVIS Fee payment, the student will need to pay it again. If the student has paid the fee, they can call the telephone number available on the Study in the States website (212-620-3418) for assistance with the I-901 SEVIS Fee payment issue. They may also visit the SEVIS I-901 Fee website at [fmjfee.sevis.com](http://fmjfee.sevis.com) or email [Fmjfee.sevis@ice.dhs.gov](mailto:Fmjfee.sevis@ice.dhs.gov) for assistance.

## Batch

**Q: When submitting registrations via batch, the Remarks field is blank for all students. Is it okay if the remarks don't print on every Form I-20, or do we need to re-enter the remarks?**

A: The Remarks field is not required, so blanks in that field are acceptable. If the remarks are needed on some records, you can modify those student records, as needed.

**Q: For batch users, are errors reasons for rejected registration events in the Event Log?**

A: Yes.

**Q: Is there a minimum number of student records required in order to use the Batch Registration?**

A: There is no minimum number required for Batch Registration.

**Q: Will Batch Registration still be an option after Mass Registration is added?**

A: Yes, Mass Registration is just a new option.

## Form I-20

**Q: Does the DSO have to enter a Port of Entry date on the Form I-20?**

A: DSOs are not required to enter Port of Entry information.

**Q: Do students need to keep all versions of their Form I-20 when they travel, or just the most recent?**

A: Students are only required to carry their most recent version of the Form I-20.

**Q: How do we know which version of Form I-20 needs to be reprinted?**

A: Any Form I-20 with a barcode needs to be reprinted.

**Q: Will both the Program Start Date and Initial Session Start Date appear on the Form I-20?**

A: Yes, both dates will appear on the Form I-20. The Program Start Date will appear with the Program End Date, and the Initial Session Start Date will appear as the Start of Classes date.



**Q: Will it cause problems if my students are already registered for the year and I separate their registrations into semesters?**

A: To avoid possible issues, we recommend you write to [SEVIStechnicalfeedack@ice.dhs.gov](mailto:SEVIStechnicalfeedack@ice.dhs.gov) with specifics about the record(s), and we will help you determine the best approach.

**Q: Since the Current Session Start and End Dates will be captured on page 2 of the Form I-20, do we have to print out a Continuing Attendance Form I-20?**

A: No, DSOs are not required to print Continuing Attendance Forms I-20 for students.

**Q: If the student decides to come back for another year, and the Form I-20 end date is the last day of the current year, how do I update the student's Form I-20?**

A: If the Program End Date has not passed, the DSO would use the Extend Program action link on the left side of the *Student Information* page, and then print a new Form I-20.

## Program Start Date / Initial Session Start Date (ISSD)

**Q: Can you explain the difference between the Program Start Date and the Initial Session Start Date?**

A: The Initial Session Start Date (ISSD) is the day classes begin. If students have required Orientation or other activities they must attend, then the Program Start Date can be as much as 30 days before the ISSD.

**Q: Can the Program Start Date and the Initial Session Start Date be the same?**

A: Yes, schools can use these fields in whatever way makes the most sense for what happens on their campuses and how they manage their programs.

**Q: Students often have to attend an orientation prior to their Initial Session Start Date (ISSD). Is that what the Program Start Date is for?**

A: Yes, that is one of the reasons.

**Q: Students can enter the United States up to 30 days prior to the Program Start Date and that date can be as much as 30 days before the ISSD. Does this mean they can enter the United States 60 days before the start of their classes?**

A: Yes.

**Q: With the addition of an Initial Session Start Date (ISSD), will students have less trouble entering the country, if they enter after the Program Start Date but before their ISSD?**

A: We expect it will help. CBP will receive information on this.

**Q: Will we need to change information on our Form I-17 with the addition of the Program Start Date?**

A: No, changes to the Form I-17 are not required.



**Q: Our school has an Orientation Program of 3 1/2 weeks for incoming freshmen. Would it be the Initial Session Start Date (ISSD) or would it be the Program Start Date?**

A: The Initial Session Start Date is the first day of classes. The Program Start Date would be the beginning of Orientation, as long as it is not more than 30 days before the ISSD.

**Q: For SEVIS records created prior to the July 2016 Release, will the Initial Session Start Date automatically pre-populate with the Program Start Date?**

A: Yes.

## School Session and Break Validation

**Q: Does the word “session” refer to school year, semester, or term?**

A: The word “session” is used interchangeably for a school semester or term.

**Q: Do session and break lengths validations apply to Individualized Education Programs (IEPs)?**

A: Yes, DSOs must validate any session longer than 183 days and any break longer than 152 days at all schools and education levels.

**Q: PhD and grade school students are registered full-time 12 months a year. How are they supposed to be restricted to 183 days?**

A: You can override the limit and provide a reason. It is a good practice to affirm more than once a year that the student is still engaged in their course of study. Our suggestion is to divide annual programs by whatever breaks are built into the students’ schedules, in order to verify they had a break and have returned.

**Q: What will schools see if they attempt to register a student for a session that is longer than 183 days?**

A: If the length of the session is longer than 183 days, a prompt and checkbox will appear requiring confirmation of the session length. DSOs will have to click the checkbox to complete registration for that student.

**Q: What will schools see if they attempt to choose a Next Session Start Date that is more than 152 days from the Current Session Start Date?**

A: If the length of the break between sessions is longer than 152 days, a checkbox will appear under the **Length of the Break** display, requiring confirmation of the break length. DSOs will have to click the checkbox to complete registration for that student.

**Q: Our school has three 10-week terms with students attending six days a week for a total of 180 school days. Since this is over 183 calendar days, will we need to register them for each 10-week term?**

A: Yes. Each of the 60 day terms should be a registration event.



## Record Termination

**Q: Will Record Termination be based on the Initial Session Start Date (ISSD), as of the July 2016 Release?**

A: The auto-terminations will remain based on Program Start Date after the July 2016 Release. We will base auto-terminates on the Initial Session Start Date in a later release.

**Q: How long does SEVIS take to terminate a record, when a student graduates high school, but is waiting for his college acceptance letter?**

A: Students completing an academic program, including high school, have a 60-day grace period during which they may remain in the United States. Students must be accepted to and receive an initial student Form I-20 from their new program within these 60 days, or they must leave the United States.

## Travel, Visa, and Passport

**Q: Will the U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) and Department of State (DoS) still update travel information, passport, and visa fields? If we choose to update these fields, will data be overwritten if it's updated by another government office?**

A: Yes, DoS and CBP will still enter the information. DSOs will not be able to edit information SEVIS gets from another government agency. DSOs will be able to edit blank fields or fields completed by other DSOs. All changes will be stored and displayed in the student's history. Schools are not required to provide this information. The only time SEVP recommends using this function is when the student is issued a new passport and has not travelled with it.

## Email Addresses and Telephone Numbers

**Q: Which SEVIS release will require email addresses and telephone numbers?**

A: SEVIS will require students' email addresses and telephone number information for continuing registration following the July 2016 Release.

**Q: When email addresses and telephone numbers become mandatory for registration with the July 2016 Release, will these also be required for current, active students?**

A: Yes, this will apply to all students. Continuing students must have this information entered into their records for continuing registration.

**Q: Will email addresses and telephone numbers be optional for minors?**

A: Yes, these are optional for F-1, K-12 students and M-1 students under 14 years of age.

**Q: Does the email address for the student have to be their personal email?**

A: Yes, it must be an email address used only by the student. It cannot be a shared email address.



**Q: Must students have a U.S. telephone number, or is a foreign telephone number acceptable?**

A: There are three choices regarding telephone numbers. The student can have a U.S. telephone number, a foreign number, or you can indicate the student does not have a telephone.

**Q: I have updated my student's record to indicate that she does not have a telephone number, but she keeps showing up on my Download Report as not having an email address or telephone number. How do I fix this?**

A: Send all information on this record to [SEVIStechnicalfeedback@ice.dhs.gov](mailto:SEVIStechnicalfeedback@ice.dhs.gov) for assistance.

**Q: Can SEVIS require telephone numbers for Initial Transfer students?**

A: No, SEVIS will only require telephone numbers for active students.

## Research Abroad

**Q: Do the study/research abroad and thesis/dissertation boxes allow a student to be out of the United States more than five months?**

A: Yes. This can explain how the student is meeting the requirements that they be actively engaged in a field of study while outside the country for more than five months.

**Q: Is a U.S. address still required for study abroad students, as they are not in the United States? If so, what address should be used?**

A: Yes, if they do not have a U.S. mailing address, a DSO can use their office address and include a statement about this in the Remarks about the Student field.

**Q: Is it possible to create an Initial Registration for Research Abroad, even if a student has not yet entered the United States?**

A: No, the student's F-1/M-1 status does not begin until entering the United States. Students may begin their studies outside of the United States, but there isn't a valid reason to register them in SEVIS until they actually enter the United States using the Form I-20.

**Q: Can you add study/research abroad and thesis/dissertation to the Mass Registration process?**

A: These options do appear in the Mass Registration function.