



## U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement

### Fall/Winter 2014-2015 Conference Presentation — Script

#### Slides 1 & 2: Title Slide/Introduction

- Welcome to the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), Student and Exchange Visitor Program (SEVP) Fall/Winter 2014-2015 Conference Presentation. This season, we are connecting both in-person and virtually with our stakeholders through a number of conferences, webinars, and teleconferences. If you are unable to attend an event this season, this presentation will provide you with an overview of SEVP's most critical updates and initiatives — most of which were requested by you, our stakeholders.
- SEVP strives to improve our overall performance and consistently meet stakeholder needs, while ensuring the program keeps up with evolving trends in international education. In this presentation, we will discuss how SEVP is committed to enhancing our performance through:
  - Improved customer service,
  - Integrated and consistent intergovernmental coordination,
  - Proactive stakeholder engagement and communication,
  - Transparent and effective policy,
  - Compliance best practices, and
  - Enhanced Student and Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS) functionality.
- Following the presentation, we encourage you to take a few minutes and fill out our newly updated Stakeholder Satisfaction Survey, which is available on the Study in the States Conferences and Outreach page.



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### Slides 3 & 4: Localized Customer Service — Field Representative Unit

#### Updates from the Field:

- We'll begin the presentation with a few updates from the field. The first class of SEVP field representatives finished an eight-week training course and deployed to their respective territories on April 21, 2014.
- Since deployment, field representatives have visited numerous schools and built relationships with designated school officials (DSOs) in their respective territories. In the coming months, field representatives will continue to provide customer service by meeting with school officials and attending local conferences when possible.
- SEVP is pleased to report that the first class of field representatives received positive feedback from the academic community. SEVP field representatives received the highest possible overall rating of "achieves excellence" for their professionalism, punctual arrival, and the courtesy they demonstrated throughout their school visits.

#### Field Representative Hiring and Deployment

- With the first class of field representatives deployed, SEVP posted hiring announcements for the second class and conducted interviews in July 2014. We are excited to announce that the second class began their training course on September 22, 2014 and will deploy to 14 territories across the United States in late November 2014.
- SEVP will continue to communicate with the academic community to provide the latest news and updates concerning the second class' training and deployment, as well as the hiring, training, and deployment schedule for the third and fourth classes.
- Stay tuned to Study in the States and SEVIS broadcast messages for additional information.

#### Field Representative Feedback Form

- We want to hear about your experience with an SEVP field representative.
- After each meeting, field representatives provide school officials with a link to the Field Representative Feedback Form available on Study in the States. This brief, electronic survey allows us to view stakeholder input so we can continuously improve customer service and field representative interactions with the academic community.
- We appreciate your candidate feedback and encourage you to continue to submit comments on your interactions with SEVP field representatives.
- Remember, the Field Representative Feedback Form is available at [StudyintheStates.dhs.gov/field-representative-feedback-form](http://StudyintheStates.dhs.gov/field-representative-feedback-form).



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### Field Representatives versus Project Campus Sentinel

- We've received several questions from school officials regarding the difference between SEVP field representatives and the Homeland Security Investigations (HSI) agents that represent the Counterterrorism and Criminal Exploitation Unit's (CTCEU) Project Campus Sentinel.
- The **SEVP Field Representative Unit (FRU)** enhances national security by fostering regulatory adherence and data integrity in SEVIS. Additionally, field representatives provide localized customer service to schools and the academic community. SEVP field representatives are official federal government employees that are trained and authorized by SEVP to:
  - Ensure SEVP-certified schools understand our laws, regulations, and guidance;
  - Answer general questions;
  - Provide training and assistance to DSOs; and
  - Help DSOs with SEVP certification and recertification processes.
- In comparison, the **CTCEU Project Campus Sentinel** facilitates communication and collaboration between DSOs and HSI special agents to help detect and prevent school fraud and visa exploitation. Agents working with Project Campus Sentinel are federal government employees that provide school officials with:
  - Tools to help identify possible threats to national security within their F and/or M student population, and
  - The proper outlets to report information concerning school fraud and visa exploitation.
- CTCEU encourages school officials to reach out to their local ICE or HSI field office to obtain additional information and learn how to coordinate with campus public safety officers. If you have any questions concerning Project Campus Sentinel, please email [CTCEU@ice.dhs.gov](mailto:CTCEU@ice.dhs.gov).



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### Slide 5: Modernized Customer Service — Help Desk Transition

#### SEVP Response Center (SRC)/SEVIS Help Desk Transition

- Keeping with the theme of customer service, we will now move on to the upcoming SEVP Response Center (SRC) and SEVIS Help Desk merge. SEVP is in the process of merging the SRC and SEVIS Help Desk support into a central location in the Washington, D.C. metro area.
- The transition will have little impact on stakeholders, as the dial-in numbers will remain the same. When calling the SRC or SEVIS Help Desk, you may notice an altered voice response recording with more choices — this feature will allow SEVP to better route your call to the most appropriate staff for resolution.
- We will keep stakeholders up to date with the latest news and information on this transition via Study in the States and upcoming SEVIS broadcast messages.

#### Customer Benefits

- We are committed to providing you with efficient and effective customer service. The upcoming SRC/SEVIS Help Desk merge provides stakeholders with numerous benefits, including:
  - Increased help desk responsiveness,
  - Decreased overlap,
  - Simplified communication, and
  - Streamlined customer service and support.

#### SEVIS Help Desk Email and Fax Number Consolidation

- As a reminder, please note that SEVP no longer accepts faxes and has discontinued the use of the [SEVIShelpdesk@hp.com](mailto:SEVIShelpdesk@hp.com) email address.
- Moving forward, please direct all documentation related to data fixes and correction requests to [SEVIShelpdesk@ice.dhs.gov](mailto:SEVIShelpdesk@ice.dhs.gov), with the exception of DSOs' update requests, which should be directed to [FormI17SupportingEvidence@ice.dhs.gov](mailto:FormI17SupportingEvidence@ice.dhs.gov).



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### Slide 6: Intergovernmental Coordination

- To further enhance our relationship with stakeholders, SEVP has a robust outreach program that includes strategic collaboration with a number of U.S. government agencies, including:
  - Various component agencies and offices within the **U.S. Department of Homeland Security**, such as the DHS Office of Academic Engagement, U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP), and U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS);
  - Various offices within the **U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement**, such as the Office of Public Affairs, Office of Congressional Relations, Homeland Security Investigations directorate, the National Security Investigations Division, and the Counterterrorism and Criminal Exploitation Unit;
  - Various offices within the **U.S. Department of State**, such as the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, Exchange Visitor Program and EducationUSA, as well as the Bureau of Consular Affairs, including consular officers and visa fraud and prevention units.
- SEVP regularly interacts with our government partners through working groups, as well as joint-conferences, webinars and videos.
  - For example, we host and participate in monthly working group meetings with a number of key government agencies. Collectively, working group members collaborate on regulations and policy guidance, discuss opportunities to integrate communication and outreach initiatives and analyze trends in international education.
  - Additionally, we regularly participate in joint-agency webinars, conferences and videos. Recently, SEVP and CBP, in partnership with EducationUSA, filmed a one-hour live webinar addressing pre-departure expectations and requirements for nonimmigrant students planning to study in the United States. The video received more than 500 live views from prospective students in 57 countries, including students who attended via viewing parties held at the U.S. Embassy in Mexico City and U.S. Consulate in Monterrey, Mexico.



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### Slide 7: Stakeholder Engagement — Government Resources

#### Enhanced Study in the States

- SEVP has a number of government resources available to our stakeholders through Study in the States and other channels.
- Since launching in 2011, Study in the States has established itself as a leading global source of official government information for school officials and nonimmigrant students. As of September 2014, Study in the States has reached more than 715,797 users from 229 countries and territories, and received more than 2.3 million page views.
- Recently, SEVP launched an enhanced Study in the States website to improve functionality and create a better experience for users. Some of our new features include:
  - An **interactive glossary** of key terms that provides definitions of the most commonly used words in the international student process;
  - A robust **school search page**, where prospective nonimmigrant students can search for SEVP-certified schools via an interactive map;
  - An **Ask a Question** feature where site visitors can find answers to the most commonly asked questions by students and schools; and
  - **Mobile accessibility** for smartphones and tablets.
- Additionally, we offer numerous free resources for school officials, which are available through our **Schools Portal** at [StudyintheStates.dhs.gov/schools](http://StudyintheStates.dhs.gov/schools). Here, school officials can find content ranging from opportunities to comment on draft guidance, to pages detailing the SEVP certification and recertification processes, to interactive videos and tutorials.
- We also encourage school officials to refer their international students to the **Students Portal**, available at [StudyintheStates.dhs.gov/students](http://StudyintheStates.dhs.gov/students), which contains information about the entire F and M student process. International students can translate Study in the States content into 64 different languages.
- For information about the latest trends in international education, best practices, current events, answers to frequently asked questions, and other topics related to international education, be sure to read our blog at [StudyintheStates.dhs.gov/blog](http://StudyintheStates.dhs.gov/blog).
  - Additionally, SEVP is continually expanding our media and web presence. We are now a contributor to the **U.S. News and World Report's, "International Student Counsel"** blog. Each month, SEVP leadership pens a blog post focusing on international student issues, such as transferring schools and financial obligations.



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- School officials and students can stay up to date with the latest SEVP news and updates by joining the more than 6,500 users following us on Twitter (@StudyinStates) and more than 15,778 accounts that “like” us on Facebook at [Facebook.com/StudyintheStates](https://www.facebook.com/StudyintheStates).

### SEVP Publications

- To further our engagement with stakeholders, we publish the quarterly SEVP Spotlight newsletter and the monthly SEVP Conference Bulletin.
- We distribute the **SEVP Spotlight** newsletter to more than 35,000 DSOs, as well as top academic associations and SEVP government partners. Each newsletter provides updates on the latest news affecting our stakeholders and the program.
- Additionally, we distribute the **SEVP Conference Bulletin** to DSOs and conference attendees to keep our audiences informed on the latest SEVP outreach news and events. This one-page bulletin contains helpful updates, tips, and information for school officials.
- If you are interested in subscribing to either the SEVP Spotlight or Conference Bulletin, please email [SEVPCommunications@ice.dhs.gov](mailto:SEVPCommunications@ice.dhs.gov) and we will add you to our distribution list.



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### Slide 8: Stakeholder Engagement — Draft Guidance for Comment

#### We Want Your Feedback

- Next, we will discuss how SEVP engages with stakeholders through draft and interim final guidance for comment opportunities. We request your feedback on draft guidance and interim final guidance before we finalize it to ensure a consistent interpretation among adjudicators.
- Draft guidance is available on Study in the States for a 45-calendar day comment period, which allows you the opportunity to read proposed guidance and provide questions, comments, and feedback. SEVP policy officials read and review all stakeholder comments before presenting feedback to a government working group. We make adjustments, where appropriate, before releasing final guidance to SEVP's section on [ICE.gov/SEVIS](https://ice.gov/SEVIS).
- If you have ideas on possible guidance topics or the commenting process, please contact us at [SEVP@ice.dhs.gov](mailto:SEVP@ice.dhs.gov).

#### Draft Guidance Resources

- To assist stakeholders with the draft guidance process, we have information available on the SEVP Guidance for Comment page on Study in the States. This page contains information on the different types of guidance — draft, interim final, and final — as well as how SEVP adjudicators use and interpret each type of guidance. You can also view current guidance for comment opportunities, as well as statistics about the number of public comments received.
- Please register to receive notices of upcoming draft guidance feedback opportunities on the SEVP Guidance for Comment page on Study in the States ([StudyintheStates.dhs.gov/sevp-guidance-for-comment](https://StudyintheStates.dhs.gov/sevp-guidance-for-comment))

#### Feedback Statistics

- We want to thank all stakeholders who take the time to provide comments on draft guidance. To date, SEVP has received over 400 stakeholder comments on draft guidance documents posted to Study in the States.
- In summer 2014, SEVP posted Conditional Admission and English Proficiency Field Guidance for comment. Conditional Admission Guidance received 41 stakeholder comments and English Proficiency Field Guidance received 21 stakeholder comments.
- In the coming months, we will use your comments to develop additional guidance on conditional admission and pathway programs, as well as to create two fact sheets for school





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officials.

### Slide 9: Transparent and Effective Policy — Guidance and Regulatory Updates

#### Guidance: A Look Ahead

- In response to a Government Accountability Office (GAO) audit, upcoming SEVP draft guidance will focus on all aspects of student employment, including on and off-campus employment, internships with international organizations, general employment, and optional practical training (OPT).
- Additionally, SEVP expects to release interim final guidance on the following topics previously available for comment and revised to incorporate stakeholder feedback. Please note, interim final guidance is official SEVP policy used by adjudicators, but remains open for comment.
- Upcoming topics include:
  - **Student Absence for F-1 and M-1 Students**, which clarifies regulation 8 CFR 214.2 and explains how F-1 and M-1 students leaving the United States during a school session can apply for a temporary absence as well as the re-admittance process.
  - **Annual Vacation**, which clarifies regulation 8 CFR 214, defines annual vacation and explains when and under what circumstances an F-1 student may take an annual vacation.
  - **Timely Filing**, which adjusts the time allowed for school officials to respond to SEVP notices, reflecting increased efficiency from SEVP's implementation of electronic reporting.
- As a reminder, unless issued in final form, draft guidance does not constitute agency policy in any way or for any purpose.

#### Regulatory Updates

- Regulation concerning DSO Limitations and F-2/M-2 Part Time Study is currently with DHS for legal review. SEVP anticipates DHS will finalize the regulation in early 2015 and will continue to communicate with stakeholders as additional information becomes available.



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### Slide 10: Compliance and the Community — Best Practices

#### Form I-515A Best Practices

- Moving onto compliance-related topics, SEVP would like to remind DSOs of best practices for when a CBP officer issues a Form I-515A to a student at a U.S. port of entry. DSOs should ensure the student files within 30 days of receipt and submits all relevant information in one package to SEVP. As a reminder, the package must contain the following items:
  - Form I-515A, “Notice to Student or Exchange Visitor;”
  - Form I-20, “Certificate of Eligibility for Nonimmigrant Status” with original signature;
  - Form I-94, “Arrival/Departure Record,” number;
  - Copy of admission stamp from the port of entry; and
  - The student’s I-901 SEVIS fee receipt.
- Please note, if a SEVIS correction request is pending, a DSO must submit the ticket number along with other paperwork; and if a change of status is pending, a DSO must submit a cover letter attesting the student is attending a full-time program along with a USCIS receipt number and any additional paperwork.
- If a student goes to a CBP-deferred inspection site, please email [SEVP@ice.dhs.gov](mailto:SEVP@ice.dhs.gov) with the student’s I-94 number and include whether or not the student received information concerning their duration of status.

#### School Issues

- We will now take the time to briefly discuss the difference between a remedial action plan and out-of-cycle review.
- SEVP issues a **remedial action plan** when we discover deficiencies with a school, primarily through analysis of SEVIS data. The plan outlines actions the school needs to take to resolve these problems. SEVP can issue a remedial action plan, in lieu of, or after out-of-cycle reviews, or upon a school receiving recertification.
  - Failure to resolve deficiencies outlined in the remedial action plan and to respond to SEVP to confirm the actions taken, may result in SEVP taking further action, up to, and including withdrawal. If a school believes a remedial action plan was issued in error, it is important to still respond and provide information as to why the school believes the remedial action plan was in error.
- An **out-of-cycle review** is a full review, prior to a school’s certification expiration date, to ensure the school is complying with reporting and recordkeeping requirements to ensure continued eligibility in the SEVP program. A school may be subject to an out-of-cycle review at any time, for any reason, to monitor compliance.



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- An out-of-cycle review may include a student record review, a site visit and/or the submission of documentation to ensure the school meets accreditation, state licensure, or other required documentation to ensure eligibility requirements.
- Failure to respond to an out-of-cycle review could negatively impact the school's SEVP-certification status, up to and including SEVP withdrawal.
- School officials should note that an out-of-cycle review does not extend the school's certification expiration date.



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### Slide 11: Enhanced SEVIS Functionality — Upcoming Releases

#### Upcoming Enhancements

- In addition to the two enhancements already released in 2014, SEVP is working diligently to develop and release future SEVIS enhancements over the next two years.
- SEVP is scheduled to deploy **SEVIS Release 6.18** in late October 2014. This release will introduce **School and Sponsor Official Verification** functionality, which requires periodic verification of all school and sponsor officials and their affiliation with the institution.
  - Please note that all schools are required to verify school and sponsor officials by **March 2, 2015** or they will lose access to the system. We will continue to communicate with stakeholders regarding this requirement.
  - If you have any questions regarding this release or any other SEVIS enhancements, please direct your questions to [SEVISTechnicalFeedback@ice.dhs.gov](mailto:SEVISTechnicalFeedback@ice.dhs.gov).
- Additionally, SEVP will issue another SEVIS release in **spring 2015**, which will introduce additional functionality, including:
  - **U.S. Address and Email Validation** to ensure all U.S. street and email addresses are complete and real; and
  - The **DS-7002 Training Plan** for SEVIS program sponsor users to ensure compliance with Department of State reporting requirements.
  - Please note that the spring 2015 release will affect institutions that use batch processing. SEVP will release draft batch schemas and begin testing for batch users in fall 2014.

#### SEVIS Webinar Series

- SEVP is committed to providing you with the information on SEVIS enhancements before, during, and after each release. To help you understand new features, SEVP hosts a free webinar series that explains and demonstrates SEVIS enhancements.
- You can learn more about past and upcoming webinars on our Stakeholder Webinars page. Here, you can register for upcoming webinars, view past webinars, and access resources, such as **job aids** and **question and answer documents**.
- These webinars provide a detailed explanation of past and upcoming enhancements, as well as allow the opportunity for viewers to voice questions regarding system changes through a moderated question and answer session.



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- For SEVIS releases affecting batch users, SEVP hosts batch-specific webinars. To receive invitations to SEVIS batch webinars, please email [SEVISTechnicalfeedback@ice.dhs.gov](mailto:SEVISTechnicalfeedback@ice.dhs.gov).
- Remember, SEVP promotes its webinars ahead of time via Study in the States, social media, and SEVP broadcast messages, so be sure to read our blog and follow us on Twitter to receive the latest news on upcoming webinars.
- Finally, SEVP would like to thank all school officials that made the I-17 Accreditation Conversion Project a success, as well as the 800 plus viewers that consistently tune into the SEVIS webinars.



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### Slide 12: SEVP Values Your Feedback

- We hope you found this presentation useful. We encourage you to take our online **Stakeholder Satisfaction Survey** and provide us with your thoughts and opinions, so we can continue to serve you and improve our communications and outreach materials. We recently updated the survey to better gauge your opinion of SEVP-hosted and attended events, as well as the features available on Study in the States.
- We review your comments each quarter and compile a feedback report. Your comments provide SEVP leadership with valuable insight into the topics you want to hear more about, and directly influence conference presentation topics and content posted to Study in the States.
- The survey is available on the Study in the States Conferences and Outreach page ([Studyinthestates.dhs.gov/conferences-outreach](https://Studyinthestates.dhs.gov/conferences-outreach)).

### Slide 13: Contact Information

- If you have case-specific questions, please contact the SEVP Response Center by email at [SEVP@ice.dhs.gov](mailto:SEVP@ice.dhs.gov), or by phone at 703-603-3400.
- For technical issues, please contact the SEVIS Help Desk by email at [SEVIShelpdesk@ice.dhs.gov](mailto:SEVIShelpdesk@ice.dhs.gov), or by phone at 800-892-4829.
- For additional contact information, please visit our Contact Page on Study in the States.