

SEVP Conference Overview: FALL/WINTER 2014-2015



Introduction

The Student and Exchange Visitor Program (SEVP) will present both in-person and virtually at numerous conferences and events across the country during the Fall/Winter 2014-2015 Conference Season. This season's presentation focuses on key themes of interest to our stakeholders, including improved customer service, stakeholder engagement and intergovernmental coordination, as well as critical program information and updates. This brief executive summary highlights the key points and central themes provided in the Fall/Winter 2014-2015 Conference Season presentation.

Policy Unit

SEVP wants your feedback on draft guidance! SEVP requests feedback on draft and interim final guidance before we finalize it to ensure a consistent interpretation among SEVP adjudicators. 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 at ICE.gov/SEVP.

We would like to thank everyone who recently provided feedback on SEVP guidance. We received 41 comments on conditional admission guidance and 21 comments on English proficiency field guidance. We appreciate your feedback. Moving forward, we will use your comments to develop additional guidance and create fact sheets for school officials.

In the coming months, SEVP expects to release the following guidance for comment on Study in the States:

- Student employment (on/off campus employment, optional practical training (OPT), emergent circumstances and internships),
- Student absence for F-1 and M-1 students,
- Annual vacation, and
- Timely filing.

SEVP posts guidance to Study in the States for a 45-day comment period. For more information on the types of guidance, the draft guidance commenting process and to register to receive alerts about upcoming guidance for comment, please visit our Study in the States [draft guidance Web page](#).

Field Representative Unit

The Field Representative Unit is pleased to report the successful deployment of the first class of field representatives. Since deploying to their respective territories on April 21, 2014, field representatives have conducted numerous school visits and enhanced relationships with designated school officials (DSOs) within their assigned territories. An initial survey of stakeholders resulted in the first class receiving the highest overall rating of achieves excellence for their professionalism, punctuality and courtesy demonstrated throughout the school visit.

Hiring announcements for the second field representative class were posted to USAJOBS in May 2014 and SEVP conducted hiring interviews in July 2014. The second class began its training course on Sept. 22 and deployed to 14 territories across the United States on Nov. 17. 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 our publications 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](#) on Study in the States. This form allows us to view real-time stakeholder input so we can continuously improve customer service and field representative interactions with the academic community. We appreciate your candid feedback and encourage you to submit comments on your interactions with SEVP field representatives.

Compliance

FORM I-515A BEST PRACTICES

SEVP would like to remind DSOs of best practices when a U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) officer issues a Form I-515A, "Notice to Student or Exchange Visitor," 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" or DS-2019, "Certificate of Eligibility for Exchange Visitors" with original signatures;
- Form I-94, "Arrival/Departure Record," number;
- Copy of admission stamp from CBP; and
- 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. If a change of status is pending, a DSO must submit a cover letter attesting that the student is attending a full-time program, along with a United States Citizenship and Immigration Services receipt number and any additional required paperwork. If a student goes to a CBP-deferred inspection site, please email 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.

SEVIS Enhancements

SEVP works diligently to develop and release future SEVIS enhancements. In the next two years, SEVP plans to deploy multiple new enhancements within the current system in addition to the two enhancements already released in 2014. Additionally, we would like to thank all school officials that made the I-17 Conversion Project a resounding success.

Users can look forward to SEVIS Release 6.18, which is set to deploy Oct. 26. This release will introduce functionality that will require periodic verification of all school/sponsor officials and their affiliation with the institution. All schools are required to verify school and sponsor officials by March 2, 2015, or they will lose access to the system. Please direct any questions regarding past or upcoming SEVIS releases to SEVISTechnicalfeedback@ice.dhs.gov.

Additionally, SEVP plans another SEVIS release in spring 2015, which will introduce additional functionality, including:

- U.S. Address and Email Validation, and
- DS-7002 Training Plan

Please note the spring 2015 release will affect institutions that use batch processing. SEVP released draft batch schemas and began testing for batch users in fall 2014. Be on the lookout for additional communication from SEVP regarding batch user testing and webinars.

SEVP Response Center/ SEVIS Help Desk Merge

The SEVP Response Center (SRC) and SEVIS Help Desk will merge into a central location in the Washington, D.C. metro area. This transition will enhance customer service with minimal impact on stakeholders, as the dial-in numbers will remain the same. This consolidation will simplify communication, decrease overlap and streamline customer service and support. We will keep stakeholders up to date with the latest news and information on this transition via Study in the States and upcoming broadcast messages.

For policy and regulation-related questions, please contact the SEVP Response Center by phone at 703-603-3400 or by email at SEVP@ice.dhs.gov. If you need assistance with SEVIS passwords or technical assistance, call the SEVIS Help Desk at 800-892-4892 between 8 a.m. and 8 p.m. ET or email SEVISHelpdesk@ice.dhs.gov.



SEVIS ENHANCEMENTS WEBINAR SERIES

In addition to these enhancements, SEVP has developed a robust communication program to keep stakeholders informed on SEVIS enhancements before, during and after each release. To communicate upcoming features, SEVP hosts a free webinar series to explain and demonstrate new features, as well as to allow SEVIS users to ask questions regarding upcoming system changes through a moderated question and answer session.

SEVP Publications

To further our engagement with stakeholders, SEVP publishes the quarterly SEVP Spotlight and the monthly SEVP Conference Bulletin. If you are interested in subscribing to either publication, please email SEVPCommunications@ice.dhs.gov and we will add you to our distribution list.

SEVP SPOTLIGHT

A quarterly newsletter distributed 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.

SEVP CONFERENCE BULLETIN

A monthly one-page bulletin distributed to DSOs and conference attendees to provide our stakeholders with the latest SEVP outreach news and events. This bulletin contains helpful updates, tips and information for school officials.



STUDY in the STATES

Since its launch in 2011, [Study in the States](#) has established itself as a leading global source of official government information for school officials and nonimmigrant students. In the past two years, Study in the States has reached more than 717,797 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 the overall user experience. New features include an interactive glossary, robust school search page, an Ask a Question feature and mobile accessibility for smartphones and tablets. If you have not already checked out these features, be sure to visit [Study in the States](#) today!

Study in the States contains numerous free resources for school officials and international students. School officials can use the [Schools Portal](#) to view content ranging from draft guidance for comment, to pages detailing SEVP certification and recertification, to interactive videos and tutorials. We encourage DSOs to direct their current students to the [Students Portal](#) for information on the entire F and M student process. The website can be translated into 64 different languages and contains helpful videos and tutorials.

Our Study in the States blog regularly adds new posts with helpful tips, current events, answers to frequently asked questions and other topics related to international education.



Be sure to follow Study in the States on [Twitter](#) (@StudyinStates) and “like” us on [Facebook](#) for the latest information!