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SEVP will implement a set of standards for all nonimmigrant names entered into SEVIS. This user guide describes the new standards and their relationship to names written in passports.

SEVIS Name Standards

Name standards help SEVIS users:

- Comply with the standards governing machine-readable passports.
- Convert foreign names into standardized formats.
- Get better results when searching for names in government systems.
- Improve the accuracy of name matching with other government systems.
- Prevent the unacceptable entry of characters found in some names.



SEVIS Name Fields

SEVIS name fields will be long enough to capture the full name. Use the information entered in the Machine-Readable Zone (MRZ) of a passport as a guide when entering names in SEVIS.

Field Names	Standards
Surname/Primary Name (40-character limit)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Surname or the primary identifier as shown in the MRZ of the passport • Invalid entries: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ LNU ○ Unknown ○ Not Applicable ○ None • UNK and NA entries will require confirmation that this is actually the nonimmigrant's name • Required
Given Name (80-character limit)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Names not in the Surname/Primary name • Secondary identifier in the MRZ • Invalid entries: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ FNU ○ Unknown ○ Not Applicable ○ None • UNK and NA entries will require confirmation that this is actually the nonimmigrant's name
Suffix	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drop-down list in SEVIS (no changes) • Not in the MRZ
Preferred Name (145-character limit)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pre-populated in SEVIS, if left blank • Editable • Allows entry in SEVIS of the name used by the school/sponsor, if different from the fields above. Examples: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Susan Zhang, instead of, Yibin Zhang ○ Helene Muller-Garcon, instead of, Hélène Müller-Garçon • Comma and one space allowed before a suffix • Period is allowed in suffix • Allows alphabetical characters with the following diacritical marks: “, ^, ` , ‘, °, ,
Passport Name (39-character limit)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not pre-populated • Surname/Primary Name written first followed by the Given Name without a comma • May be truncated • Should reflect the primary and secondary identifiers as written in the MRZ



SEVIS Name Standards Tied to Standards for Machine-readable Passport

Standards for machine-readable passports were put together by an international organization. Read about them here: [Document 9303 Machine-readable Travel Documents Volume 1: Machine-readable Passports](#). These standards have been adapted worldwide.

Here are the SEVIS name standards:

- Upper or lower case Roman alphabet only
- No special characters
- No hyphens, apostrophes, or commas; except in the Preferred Name field
- One space between names

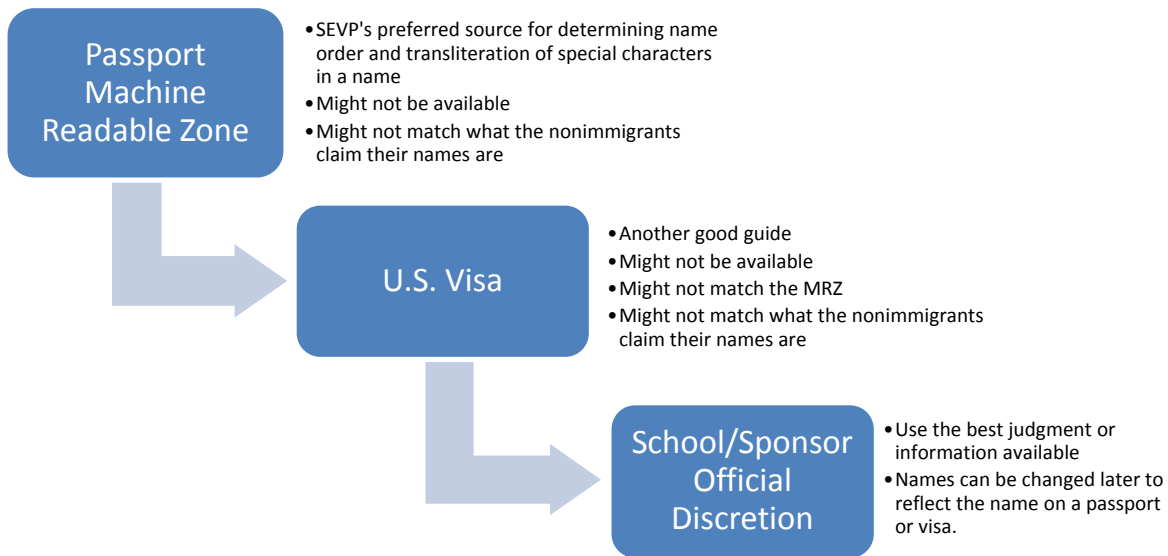
SEVIS names will be consistent with the standards in a passport's MRZ, with a few exceptions.

Applying the New Name Standards

Nonimmigrant names entered in SEVIS should match the name in the passport's MRZ. The MRZ reflects the names entered in the Visual Inspection Zone (VIZ) of the biographic page. However, this is not always true.

1. Replace any letters with special characters with its SEVIS equivalent. The nonimmigrant's country has determined how to transliterate any special characters. That transliteration is shown in the MRZ, if available. Refer to the [Transliteration of Names](#) in the Appendix 1, if it is not.
2. Determine which parts of a nonimmigrant's name belongs in which SEVIS name field. Use the MRZ as a guide to use to determine the order of the names. The nonimmigrant's country has determined which parts of the name it considers to be the primary name.

Note: The MRZ is not always reliable. School and sponsor officials must use their discretion.



Preparing for the New Name Standards

Name standards will be put into effect in 2105. To prepare, schools/sponsors can:

- Become familiar with SEVIS name standards
- Understand the components of the [machine-readable passport](#)
- Discuss the standards with other school personnel. This will help determine how name changes may affect other department work processes
- Decide when they want to apply the new standards for new SEVIS records

A report is available that shows the names of nonimmigrants whose names will be affected by the name standardization. It can be downloaded and evaluated. This report is only for information and planning. No action is required.

Note: Only the names of nonimmigrants who are in Active or Initial status are listed on the report.

Send an email to SEVISTechnicalFeedback@ice.dhs.gov with feedback on the name standardizations in the report.



- Photograph
- Signature
- Information about the passport itself

National characters are allowed in the VIZ. Transliterations into Roman-based characters should be provided for any names not written in Roman-based characters.

Name Standards in the Machine-readable Zone (MRZ)

The MRZ follows strict rules that determine how passport information is shown. The country that issues the passport converts non-Roman characters into Roman characters. These changes are based on two items:

1. List of acceptable characters
2. Rules for the conversion of names

Doc 9303 describes this information. It was copied into the [Transliteration of Names](#) section of this appendix.

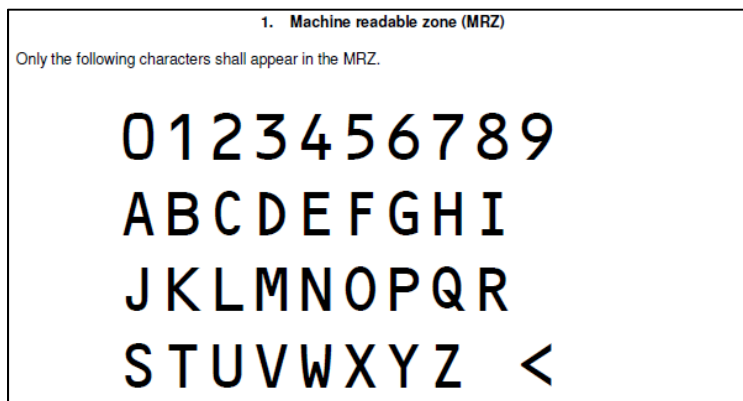


Figure 2: MRZ-Allowable Characters (International Civil Aviation Organization, 2006)²

The following rules apply to the Name field in the MRZ:

- Prefixes and suffixes are omitted
- Numeric characters cannot be used
- Punctuation cannot be used:
 - Apostrophes are omitted; O’CONNOR becomes OCONNOR
 - Hyphens are replaced by a filler character; MARIE-THERESE becomes MARIE<THERESE

Names in the MRZ are shown on the first line and limited to 39 characters. As a result, a name might be truncated to fit.

² Appendix 8 to Section IV (International Civil Aviation Organization, 2006)



SEQUENCE NUMBER	NATIONAL CHARACTER	DESCRIPTION	MRZ RECOMMENDED TRANSLITERATION
14	Ç	C cedilla	C
15	Ð	Eth	D
16	Ď	D caron	D
17	É	E acute	E
18	È	E grave	E
19	Ê	E circumflex	E
20	Ë	E diaeresis	E
21	Ě	E caron	E
22	Ĕ	E dot accent	E
23	Ē	E macron	E
24	Ę	E ogonek	E
25	Ė	E breve	E
26	Ĝ	G circumflex	G
27	Ġ	G breve	G
28	Ģ	G dot accent	G
29	Ģ	G cedilla	G
30	Ĥ	H bar	H
31	Ħ	H circumflex	H
32	ı	I without dot (Turkey)	I
33	Í	I acute	I
34	ì	I grave	I
35	î	I circumflex	I
36	ï	I diaeresis	I
37	İ	I tilde	I
38	Ī	I dot accent	I
39	Ī	I macron	I
40	Į	I ogonek	I
41	Ĳ	I breve	I
42	Ĵ	J circumflex	J
43	Ƙ	K cedilla	K
44	Ł	L slash	L
45	Ł	L acute	L
46	Ľ	L caron	L
47	Ļ	L cedilla	L
48	Ĺ	L dot	L
49	Ñ	N acute	N
50	Ñ	N tilde	N
51	Ñ	N caron	N
52	Ɔ	N cedilla	N
53	Ɔ	Eng	N
54	Ø	O slash	O



SEQUENCE NUMBER	NATIONAL CHARACTER	DESCRIPTION	MRZ RECOMMENDED TRANSLITERATION
55	Ó	O acute	O
56	Ò	O grave	O
57	Ô	O circumflex	O
58	Ö	O diaeresis	OE
59	Õ	O tilde	O
60	Ő	O double acute	O
61	Ō	O macron	O
62	Ȫ	O breve	O
63	Ŕ	R acute	R
64	Ř	R caron	R
65	Ŗ	R cedilla	R
66	Ŝ	S acute	S
67	Š	S circumflex	S
68	Ṣ̌	S caron	S
69	Ș	S cedilla	S
70	Ț	T bar	T
71	Ț̣	T caron	T
72	Ț̣̣	T cedilla	T
73	Ú	U acute	U
74	Ù	U grave	U
75	Û	U circumflex	U
76	Ü	U diaeresis	UE
77	Ụ̂	U tilde	U
78	Ȫ	U breve	U
79	Ụ̣̂	U double acute	U
80	Ů	U ring	U
81	Ū	U macron	U
82	Ȫ	U ogonek	U
83	Ŵ	W circumflex	W
84	Ý	Y acute	Y
85	ÿ	Y circumflex	Y
86	ỵ̈	Y diaeresis	Y
87	Ẑ	Z acute	Z
88	Ž	Z caron	Z
89	Ẓ	Z dot	Z
90	Þ	Thorn (Iceland)	TH
91	Æ	Ligature A E	AE
92	Ĳ	Ligature IJ	IJ
93	Œ	Ligature OE	OE
94	ß	Double s (Germany)	SS



Appendix 3: Exceptional Situations

Not all passports comply with MRZ standards. Some are missing an MRZ altogether. The following examples offer guidance on how to handle those types of passports.

Note: School/sponsor officials always have the ability to make the final decision when entering names.

Missing Passport MRZ

Name: Fatima Haidari (Name as written on school application)

VIZ: FATIMA HAIDARI D/O MIR AHMAD (Note: d/o = daughter of)

MRZ: No MRZ available

SEVIS: ***Surname/Primary Name:** Haidari

Given Name: Fatima

Preferred Name: Fatima Haidari

Passport Name:

Name: Fardeen Osmany (Name as written on school application)

VIZ: FARDIN S/O ABDULLAH (Note: s/o = son of)

MRZ: No MRZ available

SEVIS: ***Surname/Primary Name:** Abdullah

Given Name: Fardin

Preferred Name: Fardin Osmany

Passport Name:

In this case, the nonimmigrant explained that his given name is spelled either “Fardeen” or “Fardin.” Osmany is his surname. Abdullah is his father. There is no U.S. visa or passport MRZ to follow as a guide. In this case, use what is in the passport VIZ until you see a government document that shows something different. The name can be changed in SEVIS later.

SEVIS Name Order

Burma (Myanmar), India and Kuwait

Passports from Burma, India, and Kuwait list names in given to surname order in both the VIZ and MRZ. Follow the student’s request if:

- You have information from the student on the correct order of his/her name.
- The student’s information is backed up by a U.S. visa.

Note: Even if a U.S. visa is not available, but the name follows the pattern above, it is probably safe to use that format. If you need to change the name in SEVIS later, you can do that.



Names-Related Resources

The following resources are available on Study in the States:

- [SEVIS Name Standards FAQ](#)
- [SEVIS Name Fields Job Aid](#)
- [SEVP Fact Sheet – SEVIS Names Standards](#)

Bibliography

International Civil Aviation Organization. (2006). *Machine-readable Travel Documents Part 1: Machine-readable Passports*. Montreal: International Civil Aviation Organization.

Document Revision History

Date	Summary of Release
April 17, 2015	Edited to conform to defined readability standard.
October 30, 2014	Updated to reflect revised name standards.
June 26, 2014	Updated to reflect Surname/Primary Name and Given Name fields; deleted transliteration of Cyrillic characters; changed order of names in Passport Name fields; and added paragraph on Names Report availability on July 25.
June 22, 2014	Changed the fields to reflect elimination of Middle Name and change of name fields.
May 16, 2014	Initial Release – Published during SEVIS Names and Addresses Webinar