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July 11, 2014	Initial Release – Name-related questions from 5/16/2014 Names and Addresses Webinar

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Timeline for Implementation of Name Standards

- Q: When do we have to start complying with these name standards?**
A: The name standards will be implemented in 2015.

SEVIS Name Fields

- Q: What is the purpose of the Preferred Name?**
A: The Preferred Name field allows schools and sponsors to record nonimmigrant names in the way the nonimmigrant or the institution may want them reflected. It accommodates longer names and allows the entry of some special characters.

- Q: Why do you need to capture the Passport Name?**
A: The main reason for adding the Passport Name came from recommendations within the school community. We anticipate that the Passport Name will help nonimmigrants with the DMV, as the Passport Name will match the name in the passport. SEVIS will pre-populate both the Passport Name and Preferred Name fields, but school/sponsor officials can edit them.

- Q: Is the Preferred Name a required field?**
A: Yes. It is a required field. SEVIS will pre-populate it. You do not have to enter it, but you can edit it.



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- Q: Is the Passport Name a required field?**
A: No. Passport names are not required, but SEVIS will pre-populate it. SEVP strongly suggests that school/sponsor officials keep the data in the field.
- Q: Will school/sponsor officials have to enter the name in the Preferred and Passport Name fields or will SEVIS auto fill these fields and give us the ability to edit them?**
A: SEVIS will pre-populate these fields. School/sponsor officials will be able to edit them.
- Q: Certain secondary identifiers may appear as a first and middle names, but are actually a two-word first name. Will such compound first names be accommodated?**
A: Yes. You can enter a two-word first name in the First Name field.
- Q: For some Muslim students and exchange visitors, their primary identifiers may be preceded by "bin" or "binti"; will these continue to be accommodated?**
A: Yes. SEVIS will accept those types of entries. If they appear in the Machine Readable Zone (MRZ) of the passport, they should be included.

General Questions about Names

- Q: What should we do if we don't have the passport to refer to when creating the Form I-20/DS-2019?**
A: Use the best information available to you at the time. You can update the name field once you are able to match it to a passport.
- Q: What happens if the names in our institutional databases do not meet the SEVIS standards?**
A: In August 2014 you will be able to download a report that shows how SEVIS Names standards will affect your nonimmigrants in the future. You can also assess how these changes will affect your institution. The batch testing period, which will begin in November 2014, will also give us better insights into how the standards will affect schools and sponsors.
- Q: Will a record of a nonimmigrant's pre-conversion name appear on their Form I-20 or Form DS-2019?**
A: Yes. The legacy name will print on the I-20.
- Q: Nonimmigrants have problems when their names do not match on all of their documents. This problem often occurs because student's name on the visa issued by a U.S. Consulate does not match the passport name. Why not just use the passport name?**
A: SEVP is stressing the need to match the names in SEVIS to the names in the machine readable zone of the passport.
- Q: I am never sure whether I should list the middle names – as an extended part of the first name or have it in the Middle Name field. There does not seem to be any consistency on how to treat middle names. Is this how we should continue to do**



things?

A: This is one of the reasons we are eliminating the Middle Name field. The two primary name fields are the Surname/Primary Name and the Given Name fields.

Q: How will the name conversion affect the I-901 Fee Payment System?

A: SEVP is working with the I-901 team to ensure that fee payments are associated with both the legacy and the converted versions of a nonimmigrant's name.

Q: How should school/sponsor officials list the family name of students and exchange visitors, if the passport has two different variations of the name: one with special characters in the biographical section and one without in the machine readable zone?

A: Once we transition to the new name standards, use the name as it appears in the machine readable zone.

Q: Will SEVIS standards match the standards in the State Department's Foreign Affairs Manual (FAM)?

A: P/DSOs should not rely on the FAM. The advantage of using the name in the machine readable zone of the passport is that the nonimmigrant's country has already made the decision on how to transliterate names. Do not try to do this.

Q: What should we do with names prefaced by "Al"? For example, we have students whose names appear as Al space, Al hyphen, and Al with no space?

A: Use either Al space or Al no space. Do not use the hyphen. Refer to the machine readable zone of the passport to see how the nonimmigrant's government entered the name.

Q: In Arabic countries, the family name is not considered the primary name, the first name is.

A: This is another benefit of the machine readable zone of the passport. The passport issuing country has already determined what part of the name is considered the primary identifier. Follow what is contained in the passport.

Q: Why would the name in the SEVIS record differ from what is on the passport?

A: The entry of names is often confusing. Some organizations do not have a passport to refer to while creating the I-20 or DS-2019. These organizations can use the name that appears on an application completed by the nonimmigrant or the name that is fed through batch software from their institutional database. SEVP would suggest that it is a best practice to base the SEVIS name on the passport name, whenever possible, when creating the record.

Q: Aren't school/sponsor officials required to see a copy of the passport before creating the I-20 or DS-2019?

A: No. There is no regulatory requirement to reference a passport before creating a record in SEVIS. It is a good practice to look at a copy of the passport prior to entering the name into SEVIS, so it is consistent with the passport.

Q: Primary usually indicates first. Why is SEVP using Primary for Family name?



A: Primary name is the name you use. The reason we are not using Family name and surname is that in many countries, the primary name is not the family name or the surname.

Q: Should we stop entering accents and special character in the name fields?

A: SEVP suggests not entering accents or special characters from this date moving forward. Once these standards are implemented, SEVIS will no longer accept them. Any names entered between now and then that have special characters and diacritical marks will be converted to the new standard.

Q: Will hyphens be replaced by a space?

A: Yes. Hyphens will be replaced by a space.

Q: Will apostrophes be replaced by a space? For example, will the name O'Brien be written as O Brien or as Obrien?

A: Apostrophes will be deleted and there will be no space between the two parts of the name. For your example, O'Brien would become OBrien.

Q: When you say the Latin alphabet, will that include accented characters, such as in Spanish?

A: No. Spanish special characters will not be included.

Q: Burmese passports list all names on a single line in the passport. How should we handle this in SEVIS?

A: Refer to the machine readable zone of the passport. It is possible that it is only one name with multiple parts.

Q: Can we enter a name that is only one character long?

A: Yes.

Q: Countries like Singapore put all names in one line and the family name is often someplace in the middle. How should we distinguish which parts of the name belong in which field in SEVIS?

A: Refer to the machine readable zone of the passport. The nonimmigrant's government has already made the decision for you.

Q: Normally the last name is separated from the other parts of the name by a two << filler characters. Sometimes, however, there are no double carets separating the different names, so there is no clear distinction between first and last name. Do we just list all names in the Family/Primary name field?

A: Refer to the machine readable zone. If there are no double filler characters, list the entire name in the Family/Primary name field.

Q: If the Visual Inspection Zone (VIZ) of the passport has all the names on one line, but the machine readable zone has part of the name separated from the other name components by a double caret filler characters, do we go by the VIZ or the MRZ?



A: Refer to the machine readable zone of the passport.

Q: Are there restrictions on the lengths of the name fields? Some students have names over 50 characters long

A: Yes. Name fields are restricted to the following character lengths:

Name Field	Character Limit
Surname/Primary Name	40
Given Name	80
Preferred Name	145
Passport Name	39

Q: If SEVIS will no longer accept FNU, will it be a problem if the visa still indicates FNU?

A: No. This will not be a problem in SEVIS. We are coordinating our efforts to standardize names with our other government partners, so they are aware of these changes.

Q: If a nonimmigrant's passport has no family/surname, but displays first and last names in the First Name field, how should the Form I-20 be completed?

A: Refer to the passport's machine readable zone. Enter the name components as they are displayed in this section of the passport.

Q: Will F-2 dependent names be affected by the naming standards?

A: Yes. Name standards will apply to dependents.

Q: In Brazilian passports, for example, the names entered under Family Name aren't often always used by the student as their family name. Do we still need to make sure that the I-20 or DS-2019 uses whatever the machine readable name is on the passport?

A: Yes. SEVIS should reflect the name as the government has chosen to list it in the machine readable zone.

Q: When the Visual Inspection Zone (VIZ) section shows two names (passport does not identify first or last names), the MRZ reads both names with only one special character between the two names. One of them we know is actually the first name and the other the last name. How should the name be entered?

A: Enter the name as is appears in the machine readable zone.

Q: I have a student with the first name "Shih-I" (as printed in passport and all other documents). When creating the I-20, what should I put in the First Name field?

A: Enter the name as Shih I.

Q: Can a DSO enter a period in the First Name field, if the student only has one name?

A: No. Once the names standards are implemented, periods will not be allowed in any name



field. There will be a new checkbox to indicate that the student has no name other than the Primary name.

Q: If student only has a first name, we should put it to Family name and repeat the first name?

A: Enter it into the Family/Primary name field. Do not repeat the name. Use the checkbox to indicate that the student has no other names.

Q: If a student's first and last name swapped on the passport, when entering the name into SEVIS should we match the passport, write the name in the correct order into SEVIS, or request a new passport?

A: Match the name to the machine readable zone section of the passport.

Q: The machine readable portion in the Malaysian passport does not separate names with < <; for instance, Kek<Qian<Yun. How would we put it on the I-20?

A: Enter the name in the Family/Primary Name field as Kek Qian Yun.

Q: Some countries mix up the order of a person's name. Please clarify that we should go with the name in the MRZ, and not worry about what the person's actual name is?

A: Yes. Use the name in the machine readable zone.

Q: Vietnamese passports have the name listed as last, middle, first and that is what the MRZ shows, but the visa shows the name in the correct order. Students will be confused if their name is "wrong" because we used the MRZ. Is this an example of when we would change the preferred name?

A: Yes. Edit the preferred name to reflect the way the nonimmigrant uses their name.

Q: The machine readable section uses all caps. Shall we use all caps when entering the names?

A: Do not use all caps when entering names.

Special Characters in a Name

Q: Please confirm that when the name has national-specific character, we should spell the name displayed in the machine readable zone of the passport. For example, Wahlstrøm would be spelled Wahlstroem, if that is how it is spelled in the MRZ.

A: Yes. Enter the name as reflected in the machine readable zone.

Printing I-20s or DS-2019 for Nonimmigrants Whose Names were Converted

Q: Will these changes in naming standards affect current student/exchange visitor



documents? Do we have to print I-20s and DS-2019s for all nonimmigrants whose names changed?

A: This is a decision each school/sponsor must make individually. This summer, when you download the report that shows how students/exchange visitor names will be changed next year, you can assess how this would affect your institution.

Q: If we have to print the I-20s for nonimmigrant's whose names have changed, will there be an easy way to print them *en masse* or would we have to do it record by record?

A: The ability to print updated I-20s all at one time is a good suggestion and one we will take back for consideration. Send any comments on this suggestion to SEVISTechnicalFeedback@ice.dhs.gov.

Notification to School/Sponsor Officials of Changed Nonimmigrant Names

Q: How will officials be notified if SEVIS changes a nonimmigrant's name?

A: SEVP is still exploring the most appropriate method of a name change notification. Since this will be a one-time conversion, a report would likely be the most effective method. We welcome feedback from the community on this matter and encourage you to submit your comments to SEVISTechnicalFeedback@ice.dhs.gov.

Q: Will school/sponsor officials get a list of nonimmigrant names that will change prior to the Name Conversion?

A: Yes. School/sponsor officials will be able to download a report that lists the student/exchange visitor name as it currently exists in SEVIS and as it will be after the conversion in 2015. This report should be available the summer of 2014.

Q: Will changes to F-2 dependent names be included in the pre-conversion report on names?

A: No. Dependent names will not be included in the report.

Coordination with Other Government Agencies

Q: Is SEVP working with USCIS?

A: Yes. We are working closely with USCIS. It is likely that some nonimmigrants will have applications pending with them when the conversion occurs. We do not want the conversion to affect the nonimmigrants negatively.

Q: Is SEVP coordinating the new name standards with other government agencies, such as, the state Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) or the Social Security Administration (SSA)?

A: Yes. While we are not working with each individual DMV, we are coordinating with the



Systematic Alien Verification for Entitlements (SAVE) system that coordinates with the DMVs. We are discussing this with the SSA, U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, Customs and Border Protection, and the Department of State. These standards should improve SEVIS interfaces with other government agencies.

Q: If the Department of State allows FNU and LNU, but SEVIS does not, what will happen when nonimmigrants go to the DMV and SSA and they try to validate the nonimmigrant?

A: DMVs validate nonimmigrants via SAVE. We are working closely with the people at SAVE, who welcome these new name standards. Since the names will be contained in SAVE, there should be no issue.

Q: Custom and Border Protection's on-line I-94 retrieval system requires first AND last names. What will the I-94 indicate if the nonimmigrant only has one name? Which field will be used – the First or the Last Name field?

A: SEVP cannot respond on behalf of CBP.

Q: Will any regulations change to reflect these validations?

A: No. These are validations, so they do not require any regulatory changes.

Q: You mention working with USCIS about the possibility of name changes during pending applications. What about the State Department? Some nonimmigrants could be caught with a name change while awaiting a visa renewal.

A: We are working with Consular Affairs in the Department of State to ensure no one is adversely affected.

Q: Will these new standards affect how Port of Entry (POE) officers enter data on the I-94?

A: No. POE officers follow the name standards that apply to their systems. We are working with them to ensure that the interfaces work properly.

Q: Are you also talking to CBP with regard to the name changes, as their name in SEVIS may no longer match the I-20 or DS-2019? It is possible this will cause border entry issues.

A: Yes. We are talking to CBP about the name changes. As a reminder, as a DSO you always have the option to reprint the I-20 for any student whose name was a converted name.

Names in the Batch Environment

Q: Will SEVP coordinate these requirements with batch vendors?

A: Yes. We will coordinate with batch vendors.

Q: Can the Preferred Name also be batched to SEVIS?

A: Yes. The Preferred Name can be entered into SEVIS via batch.



Names-Related Resources

The following resources are available on Study in the States:

- SEVIS Name Standards Handout
- SEVIS Name Fields Job Aid

Summary of Releases

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