SEVIS Name Changes and Social Security Information Fact Sheet

The Student and Exchange Visitor Program (SEVP) will modify the name standards in the Student and Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS), effective June 26, 2015. At this time, the format of the Forms I-20 and DS-2019 will also change. The new name standards will:

- Improve the ability to search for records in SEVIS.
- Improve data matching between government databases.
- Apply to all students, exchange visitors, and spouses/dependents.

Nonimmigrants will be allowed to use the old Forms I-20 and DS-2019 until July 1, 2016.

SEVIS Name Fields

The changes to the SEVIS name fields include:

Current Field Name	Field Name Effective June 26, 2015	Description
Last Name	Surname/Primary Name	• This relabeled field is required. • If a person only has one name, that name is entered in this field.
First Name	Given Name	• This relabeled field includes first and middle names, if applicable. • If a person only has one name, this field is blank. • If a person has more than one name, any names not entered in the Surname/Primary Name field are entered here.
Middle Name		• This field will no longer exist in SEVIS. • Middle names will be moved into the Given Name field following the first name.
Suffix	Suffix	No change.
	Preferred Name	• This optional new field allows for the entry of the name as the nonimmigrant prefers it. • Some special characters are allowed in this field: ¨, ^, `, ´, °. • If the name is not purposely altered by a DSO, the name will automatically reflect a full combination of the Given and Surnames.
	Passport Name	• This optional new field is for the entry of the nonimmigrant's name exactly as it appears in the

Current Field Name	Field Name Effective June 26, 2015	Description
		machine-readable zone of the passport.
	SEVIS Legacy Name	• This field will only be populated for students with SEVIS records before the July 26th name conversion. • The students' names will appear as they were originally entered in SEVIS, before the names conversion may have altered them. • This field will only appear on the student SEVIS information screen and on the Form I-20. There will be no way to manually populate this field.

Allowable Character Sets

SEVIS will limit the characters entered into the name fields. Only the characters A through Z, without any special accents, are allowed in any name field; other than the newly created Preferred Name field. SEVIS will convert existing names to the new standards by:

- Replacing letters that have special characters with the appropriate A through Z letter. [Example: Hélène Garçon becomes Helene Garcon.]
- Deleting any periods or spaces that appear to be placeholders in a required name field.
- Replacing hyphens with a space. [Example: Thompson-Craswell becomes Thompson Craswell.]
- Deleting apostrophes and their space. [Example: D'Amico becomes Damico.]
- Deleting anything between quotes or parentheses. [Examples: Wei Lin "Helen" Chen becomes Wei Lin Chen. Sook Eun (w/o Kim) Lee becomes Sook Eun Lee.]
- Moving middle names after the first name in the Given Name field, separated by a space.
- Deleting FNU, LNU, Unknown, and N/A.

Role of the Machine Readable Zone of the Passport (MRZ)

When possible, school and sponsor officials are encouraged to use the Name section of the passport's machine readable zone as a guide for deciding:

- How to enter names into SEVIS that contain special characters.
- Which parts of a name are considered the primary identifier; therefore, to be entered into the Surname/Primary field. The parts of the name before the double carets (<<) are seen as the primary identifier.

The home country has already made these determinations. In cases where the MRZ appears to be wrong or is not available, school and sponsor officials can rely on the U.S. visa or their own judgment.

Understanding the MRZ

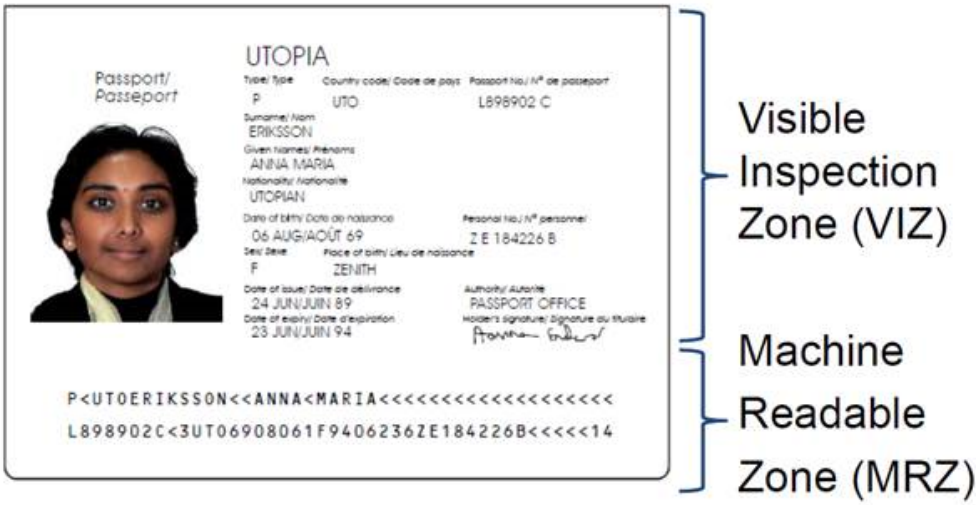

Figure 1: Image taken from Appendix 5 to Section IV Document 9303 Machine Readable Travel Documents Volume I (ICAO), page IV-38

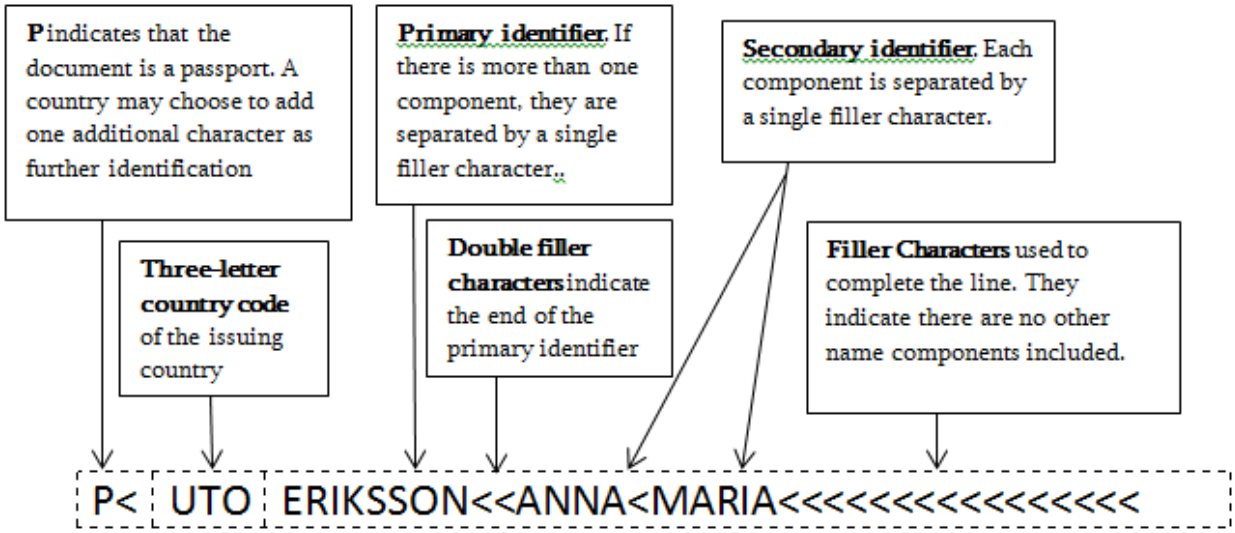

Figure 2: Construction of the name portion of the MRZ recreated from Appendix 6 to Section IV in Document 9303 Machine Readable Travel Documents Volume I (ICAO), page IV-42

Form I-20 and Form DS-2019

The Form I-20 and the Form DS-2019 will be modified to display the new name fields. (See below.)

New Form I-20

Department of Homeland Security
U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement

I-20, Certificate of Eligibility for Nonimmigrant Student Status
OMB NO. 1653-0038

SEVIS ID: N0004705832

SURNAME/PRIMARY NAME Eriksson	**GIVEN NAME** Anna Maria	**CLASS** **F-1** **ACADEMIC AND LANGUAGE**
PREFERRED NAME Anna Maria Eriksson	**PASSPORT NAME** Anna Maria Eriksson	
COUNTRY OF BIRTH ICELAND	**COUNTRY OF CITIZENSHIP** ICELAND	
DATE OF BIRTH 16 AUGUST 1969	**ADMISSION NUMBER**	
FORM ISSUE REASON INITIAL ATTENDANCE	**LEGACY NAME** Anna Maria Eriksson	

This student has one surname, Eriksson, and two given (or one given and one middle) names, Anna Maria.

New Form DS-2019

U.S. Department of State

CERTIFICATE OF ELIGIBILITY FOR EXCHANGE VISITOR STATUS (J-NONIMMIGRANT)

1. Surname/Primary Name: TestFormOne		Given Name:		Gender: MALE
Date of Birth *(mm-dd-yyyy)*: 01-01-1989	City of Birth: z	Country of Birth: AFGHANISTAN	Citizenship Country Code: AF	Citizenship Country: AFGHANISTAN

This exchange visitor has only one name, TestFormOne. This name must appear in the Surname/Primary Name field only.

Applications for Social Security Numbers (SSN)

The Social Security Administration (SSA) knows about the changes to the names and forms. SSA compares the names shown on:

- SSN application (for example, the Form SS-5)
- Form I-20/DS-2019
- Foreign passport
- SAVE

If the student has two or more names in the Given Name field, the student can decide if any parts of the Given Name should be entered and displayed in the Middle Name field on the SSN card.

SEVP recommends that students and exchange visitors use the new version of the Form I-20 or DS-2019 when applying for an SSN. A new form is **required** for successful verification if there is any difference between the current names and the legacy names.

SSA's Verification Process

SSA uses the Systematic Alien Verification for Entitlements (SAVE) program to verify an applicant's current immigration status before issuing the SSN card. SAVE has a three-tiered process to verify a nonimmigrant. They are as follows:

Step	Description	Response	Time
Initial Verification	• SSA submits information given by the applicant to SAVE. • SAVE verifies the immigration status or prompts SSA to Step 2.	Electronic	3-5 seconds
2nd Step / Additional Verification	• SSA submits more information to SAVE. • SAVE verifies the immigration status or prompts SSA to Step 3.	Electronic	3-5 federal working days
3rd Step / Paper-based Verification	• SSA submits Form G-845 and copies of immigration documents to the status verification office.	Electronic / Mail	10-20 federal working days

SSN Applicants with Only One Name

- For the purposes of SAVE verification, SSA will use a standard substitute first name for all nonimmigrants with only one name.
- SSN applications with only one name will automatically go to SAVE's secondary inspections. This will take three to five days longer than applications that are immediately approved.
- Once the social security card is issued, only the one name will appear on it. The First Name field substitute will not be listed on the card.

Communication with Other Government Agencies

SEVP is working with the following government partners regarding these changes:

- Customs and Border Protection (CBP)
- E-Verify
- Local Law Enforcement

- Systematic Alien Verification for Entitlements (SAVE) (SAVE works very closely with Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV).)
- U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS)

Additional Resources

- SEVIS Name Standards User Guide
- SEVIS Name Standards FAQ
- Document 9303 Machine Readable Travel Documents, published by the International Civil Aviation Organization

Document Revision History

Date	Summary of Release
May 8, 2015	Initial Release