



SEVIS Enhancements Frequently Asked Questions

The Student and Exchange Visitor Program (SEVP) is committed to improving the Student and Exchange Visitor System (SEVIS). Listed below are the most frequently asked questions about upcoming enhancements to SEVIS.

Q: What happened to SEVIS II?

A: SEVP's original focus was building SEVIS II. New technologies have become available since work first began on SEVIS II which now allow SEVP to apply many of the functionalities planned for SEVIS II to the current system. SEVIS underwent several changes last year to provide better capabilities for end users and to continue to serve SEVP's mission. This approach will have a significantly reduced cost. Therefore, the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) has given SEVP approval to enhance SEVIS to address end user issues and close many of the identified system vulnerabilities.

Q: When is SEVIS II, or a new system, expected to be released?

A: SEVP's focus is enhancing the current system. Beginning February 2014, SEVP will deliver new or improved SEVIS functionality on a regular basis.

Q: What is SEVP doing now to address SEVIS user issues?

A: SEVP recognizes the frustration users experienced with SEVIS performance and is committed to providing an effective and efficient system for school users. SEVP has dedicated development teams working to improve SEVIS functionality and performance for end users. We have identified 35 functionalities that are now possible to deploy within the current system as a part of our normal operations and maintenance upgrades. These functionalities will close most of the national security vulnerabilities identified in the system and provide many of the additional capabilities we had slated for SEVIS II.

Q: How do the planned enhancements directly affect SEVIS users?

A: SEVIS enhancements provide significant changes for school and sponsor users. SEVP will have a series of [webinars](#) to provide additional details on the changes. Throughout the next 12 months, SEVIS users will see the following:

- Improved system performance including increase system responsiveness during peak times;
- Improved searching capabilities;
- Improved alert lists where users can click on a nonimmigrant student name, take action on a record (e.g., registration, etc.), then go back to the alert list directly without having to retrace their navigation to the student record;
- Flexible, responsive reports that allow users to refine the data and export the results to Excel or a comma-delimited file;
- Changes in how schools provide accreditation information; and
- Improvements to many Department of State (DoS) functionalities for J-1 exchange visitors.

Q: Will the SEVIS user experience change as a result of these enhancements?

A: SEVIS users will see changes in functionality, as well as improvements in the system interface and workflow. Most of these changes will be incremental. For example, SEVP will change a section of the Form I-17, “Petition for Approval of School for Attendance by Nonimmigrant Student,” to give schools the ability to select from a list to add accrediting agencies. While this section of the Form I-17 will see improvements, the rest of the form will remain the same. SEVP will have a series of webinars to provide additional details on the changes.

Q: How did SEVP select these enhancements?

A: SEVP identified the functionalities based on the expanded list of requirements we developed, subsequent revised cost estimates, and technological advances. These functionalities and enhancements were also chosen from those planned for SEVIS II. Functionalities were chosen based on the vulnerabilities they address, the priority ranking from stakeholder surveys, and what is possible to do within the current system’s framework.

Q: When can SEVIS users expect these functionalities?

A: Work on these enhancements is currently underway. The first release with new functionality will be in February 2014. It will provide functionality for programs with summer work travelers. A second release is planned for April 2014. This release will provide most of the functions outlined above. In general, users can expect three to four releases per year with each release having significant improvements and changes. SEVP will keep you updated on our progress, plans, and release dates through *Study in the States*. Additionally, we will have a series of webinars to provide additional detail on the changes.

Q: What type of training will SEVP provide for these new functionalities?

A: SEVP will offer multiple ways for SEVIS users to learn how to use new system functionality. This includes:

- Improved on-screen text to provide guidance when working in a specific section of a screen
- Changes in system help pages that make it easier to find answers to your questions
- Improved user guides
- A series of webinars to provide additional details on functionality changes in SEVIS

Q: How is SEVP going to update and communicate with stakeholders about SEVIS progress?

A: SEVP will keep you updated on our progress, plans, and release dates through *Study in the States* and a series of webinars.

Q: What previously-planned functionalities will no longer be addressed?

A: SEVP plans to apply many of the functionalities planned for SEVIS II to the current system. However, SEVP cannot currently address functionalities that require an entirely new user interface, completely paperless process, or user accounts for nonimmigrant students, exchange visitors, and their dependents.

Q: Will the current system run faster?

A: In October 2013, SEVP made changes to SEVIS to make it more responsive. We will continue to make improvements to increase system performance and improve overall usability.

Q: What happened to the SEVIS II planning from the past three years?

A: To implement these enhancements, SEVP is incorporating the work done to date for SEVIS II, including the visualization meetings and the feedback gathered from the academic community.

The planning, meetings, webinars, and user input from SEVIS II, have not gone to waste. SEVP will be improving the interface and incorporating many of the key functionalities planned for SEVIS II into the current system.

Q: How does SEVP expect school users to continue to do reporting with current SEVIS limitations?

A: SEVP recognizes the frustrations users experienced with SEVIS performance and is committed to providing an effective and efficient system to school users. One issue with reporting has been the slow response time during peak usage periods—the system times out before users can complete an action. That issue has been mitigated and more improvements are planned. SEVP plans to implement functionality within the next 12 months that will give users the ability to save templates and to update multiple records with one action. SEVP is also working on better pre-release testing to prevent creating a process that negatively affects performance.

SEVP will continue to provide additional information on SEVIS enhancements. If you have questions or comments, e-mail SEVP@ice.dhs.gov.