

# SEVP Conference Overview: Fall/Winter 2015-2016



## Introduction

The Student and Exchange Visitor Program (SEVP) will present both in-person and virtually at conferences and events from Connecticut to Hawaii this autumn. This Executive Summary highlights program updates and hot topics for our stakeholders. Additionally, for those stakeholders unable to attend a conference or event, SEVP is excited to announce the SEVP Webinar Series, where SEVP will provide live updates on program news, hot topics and trends in international education to designated school officials (DSO). For additional information on the SEVP Webinar Series and the upcoming InFocus webinar, continue reading or visit the [SEVP Conferences page](#).

## What's New in School Certification

### Processing Updates

SEVP remains committed to ensuring timely processing for Form I-17, "Petition for Approval of School for Attendance by Nonimmigrant Student," updates and recertification. One of our top priorities is to reduce processing times and the current backlog for Form I-17 updates. We recognize stakeholder concerns with extended processing times and will aim to implement solutions to build the foundation of a sustainable and efficient update processing system.

The SEVP School Certification Unit is currently processing updates to the Form I-17 from March and April 2015. Due to the high number of petition updates submitted daily, the average time frame for adjudication is at least 60 days and may take longer depending on the nature of the requested update.

The current recertification processing time is at least six months and may take longer depending on a school's specific circumstances.

### Best Practices

To assist school officials with the Form I-17 updates and recertification processes, we want to remind you of the following tips and best practices:

- 1. Keep your Form I-17 up-to-date**  
DSOs should review their school's Form I-17 on a regular basis and submit updates as needed. Remember, the Form I-17 is a living document and must reflect the school's current operations. Regular updates ensure accurate and timely processing, and make the recertification process quicker and easier for you and your school.
- 2. Keep important dates in mind**  
School officials should keep important dates in mind — such as the school's certification expiration date — when submitting a Form I-17 update or filing for recertification. Remember, SEVP must adjudicate all changes to the Form I-17 before the principal designated school official (PDSO) files for recertification.
- 3. Check your email address in SEVIS**  
DSOs should ensure that the PDSO email address listed in the Student and Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS) is accurate so the school can continue to receive notifications and requests for evidence from SEVP.
- 4. Know who to contact**  
For questions concerning updates or recertification, contact the SEVP Response Center (SRC) by phone at 703-603-3400 or 800-892-4829, or by email at [SEVP@ice.dhs.gov](mailto:SEVP@ice.dhs.gov). DSOs can also reach out to their field representative with questions concerning the Form I-17 and recertification.

# Adjustments on Limitations to Designated School Official Assignment and Part-time Study by F-2 and M-2 Nonimmigrants

As many of our stakeholders are aware, the U.S. Department of Homeland Security amended its regulations under SEVP to improve management of international student programs and increase opportunities for study by spouses and children of F-1 and M-1 students. The rule took effect on May 29, 2015.

The amended regulation removes the cap on DSOs and permits SEVP-certified schools to nominate an appropriate number of DSOs based on their school's specific needs. To reflect this change, SEVP developed and deployed SEVIS functionality that allows the PDSO to enter the names and information, and print the Form I-17 for more than 10 DSOs in SEVIS.

Additionally, the new rule permits F-2 and M-2 dependents of international students to engage in part-time post-secondary study at SEVP-certified schools. Rules differ for minor dependents. Remember, DSOs are not responsible for overseeing or tracking dependent study, since dependents do not need to enroll in or attend classes at the post-secondary level to maintain their status. DSO record keeping and reporting responsibilities for F and M students and dependents remain the same.

For answers to frequently asked questions concerning this regulatory change, view the Adjustments to Designated School Official Limits and Dependent Study Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) Guide in the "Helpful Documents" header on the Certification page at [ICE.gov/SEVIS/Schools](http://ICE.gov/SEVIS/Schools).

## Form I-515A, "Notice to Student or Exchange Visitor" Reminders

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 the required documentation 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:

- The Form I-515A;
- The student's Form I-20 or DS-2019, "Certificate of Eligibility for Exchange Visitor (J-1) Status," with original signatures;
- The number on the student's Form I-94, "Arrival/Departure Record," or a printed copy;
- A copy of the admissions stamp from CBP; and
- The student's I-901 SEVIS Fee receipt.

### SEVIS NEWS

## Plan Now – Upcoming PDSO/DSO Annual Verification

The second PDSO/DSO Annual Verification is quickly approaching — beginning on Dec. 2, 2015, PDSOs will be able to access the annual verification tools in SEVIS. The deadline for verification is March 2, 2016.

Remember, PDSOs are required to annually verify that DSOs with SEVIS access at their school remain employed by the organization, continue in their current role and require continued access to SEVIS. We hope to surpass the success of the first PDSO/DSO Annual Verification, where 94 percent of SEVP certified schools verified school officials by the March 2 deadline.

We strongly encourage schools to complete the verification process as soon as possible after Dec. 2. Failure to complete the verification process by March 2, 2016 will result in loss of SEVIS access and batch capability for all DSOs at the school.

For additional information on the Annual Verification process and detailed instructions for how to verify employees in SEVIS, access the PDSO/DSO Annual Verification User Guide in the [SEVIS Help Hub](#).





## SEVP Field Representatives

We are pleased to announce that the third class of field representatives successfully completed their training at SEVP headquarters and deployed to their respective territories in August 2015. Since deployment, SEVP field representatives have visited more than 9,400 schools and campuses, and enhanced relationships with DSOs within their respective territories.

To-date, SEVP has trained and deployed 42 field representatives. Additionally, we hired and plan to deploy the fourth class of field representatives by December 2015. SEVP will continue to communicate with the academic community to provide information about the fourth class through Broadcast Messages and social media.

## Study in the States — A Resource for Everyone

SEVP is committed to providing resources to our stakeholders, DSOs and international students, through Study in the States. Study in the States recently deployed new resource pages to increase stakeholder awareness of rules and regulations for kindergarten through grade 12 (K-12) schools and student benefits. These new pages include:

### [Kindergarten to Grade 12 Schools Resource Pages](#)

K-12 schools are the fastest growing user group in SEVIS. To assist this growing community, Study in the States deployed three new resource pages designed for DSOs at these schools, including a page for private K-12 schools, public K-12 schools and a general overview of hot topics for K-12 schools.

### [Checking your SAVE Case Status](#)

Working closely with our partners at U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, Study in the States deployed a new page that provides information about the Systematic Alien Verification for Entitlements (SAVE) program. DSOs can direct their F and M students to the new page, which enables students to access their SAVE Case Check, provides access to information about the SAVE program, and lists guidelines for students applying for benefits while in the United States.

Throughout 2015, new enhancements and features on Study in the States were added to provide additional resources for our stakeholders. Examples of enhancements include:

### [Updated Schools, Students, Blog and Tools Pages](#)

These pages were updated to make it easier for users to access popular content. We encourage you to visit these pages today to check out the new designs and features.

### [SEVP School Certification Life Cycle](#)

The [School Certification Life Cycle](#) tool walks users through the SEVP certification process, from filing for certification to the ongoing recertification process.

### [Study in the States Widget](#)

You can now share Study in the States on your website and blog with the new [Study in the States widget](#). Whether you are a school, association, embassy or other government agency, you can easily embed the widget on your Web page to enable your visitors direct access to Study in the States.

### [Get Social with Study in the States](#)

Keep up with the latest Study in the States social media on the new Get Social with Study in the States page. On this page, you can view Study in the States' latest social media updates, photos and videos. Use "#StudyintheStates" for a chance to have your posts featured on the Study in the States [Social Media](#) page.





# Engage with SEVP

We encourage you to connect virtually with SEVP and stay up-to-date with the latest program news and updates, as well as engage with us through social media. The [Study in the States](#) blog posts daily information about best practices and current events, answers to FAQs and other topics related to international education.

Study in the States recently launched the “Community Voices” blog series, where members of the international student and academic community share their insights with readers. If you have interest in contributing to the blog, send us an email at [SEVPCommunications@ice.dhs.gov](mailto:SEVPCommunications@ice.dhs.gov).

We also distribute the SEVP Spotlight Newsletter, which provides updates on the latest information affecting our stakeholders and the program. You can read the latest edition of the SEVP Spotlight on the Study in the States [Publications page](#).

## ENGAGE THROUGH CONFERENCES AND OUTREACH

SEVP is constantly expanding our stakeholder outreach, and welcomes the opportunity to participate in your conference or event.

- **SEVP Conference Bulletin**

The SEVP Conference Bulletin is a monthly one-page bulletin that informs our conference stakeholders of the latest SEVP news and events. Past Conference Bulletin topics included seasonal tips and reminders for DSOs, news on the latest SEVP publications, as well as updates on SEVP’s participation at stakeholder conferences and events.

To inquire about SEVP attending your upcoming conference or event, or to subscribe to the SEVP Conference Bulletin, submit a request to [SEVPOutreach@ice.dhs.gov](mailto:SEVPOutreach@ice.dhs.gov).

We want to hear your feedback about any SEVP presentations you attend in-person or virtually! Provide your feedback through the brief [Stakeholder Satisfaction Survey](#). We review your comments throughout the year and incorporate your thoughts into future presentations. Your opinion is vital to SEVP continuing to meet your needs.



Be sure to follow SEVP on [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#) and [LinkedIn](#) for the latest news impacting the international education community!