



SEVIS: The Way Forward

Date of Webinar: March 28, 2014

Date of Publication: April 29, 2014

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General SEVIS Way Ahead

Q: What are the plans for SEVIS II?

A: SEVP intends to provide a system that satisfies all the requirements that were identified during the SEVIS II planning activities. These changes are necessary to close national security vulnerabilities. However, a larger question remains: How and when can we implement these changes? SEVP is currently conducting an Analysis of Alternatives (AoA) to answer those questions.

Q: So, should we stop saying “SEVIS II”?

A: The direction that SEVP has received is to discontinue use of the term “SEVIS II”. The project at hand is termed “SEVIS Enhancements”.

Q: What are the plans for SEVIS?

A: SEVP is working diligently to modernize SEVIS in order to close as many national security vulnerabilities as possible, and to make compliance with regulatory reporting requirements in SEVIS easier for our stakeholders. SEVP has recently acquired additional development contracts in support of that goal, in addition to the routine Operations and Maintenance (O &M) work. The current work is being developed using the Agile development methodology.

SEVP pledges to keep stakeholders and users informed of upcoming changes to SEVIS. There will be webinars before each release that will provide, among other things, a demonstration of functionality to be included in the release. After each release, there will be a follow-up webinar session to answer any questions or address any issues resulting from the release. There will also be content-specific webinars, for example, a webinar devoted to discussing SEVIS Name Standards. All webinars are recorded and posted



online along with supplementary materials, such as FAQs. Visit the Webinars page on [Study in the States](#) for more information.

Q: What specific national security vulnerabilities identified in SEVIS will be addressed by these planned enhancements?

A: In 2006, the Homeland Security Council identified several vulnerabilities. One of the biggest vulnerabilities is the quality of data in SEVIS. There are many reasons that data quality suffers in SEVIS, and most planned enhancements are designed to address those data quality issues.

Another identified vulnerability is the capability for fraud. In current SEVIS, it can be challenging to distinguish between actions that may have been performed in error, or actions taken with fraudulent intent. Many of our planned enhancements will make it more difficult to make mistakes.

Q: What is “Dirty Data”?

A: Dirty Data is a slang term that the SEVIS team at SEVP has coined to describe and classify several problems that exist with anomalous SEVIS data. For example, there is a record in SEVIS that belongs to a student who, according to the record, is -8 years old. There are other cases where there are 7-8 year olds in SEVIS who are identified as being in Master’s degree programs. These records could belong to child prodigies, or (more likely) mistakes could’ve been made. There are instances where OPT was recommended for a student whose level of study was at the Primary School level. These are just some examples of anomalies that exist in the data. SEVP will analyze and flag records with potentially anomalous data. If that data relates to nonimmigrants with Initial and Active records, SEVP may notify those institutions to log into SEVIS and validate or correct the anomalous information.

Q: Will the electronic or paperless Certificate of Eligibility (COE) be possible in current SEVIS?

A: Having a paperless Certificate of Eligibility is of high priority to SEVP. However, that functionality most likely will not be available in current SEVIS. SEVP is currently conducting an Analysis of Alternatives (AoA), to determine the best way possible to close any vulnerabilities that cannot be closed in the current system.

Q: What is the status on plans for nonimmigrant access to SEVIS?

A: There are no immediate plans to grant nonimmigrants access to current SEVIS. The system cannot handle the addition of over a million additional users.

Q: What are the plans for implementing “One Person, One Record”? Will that be possible in current SEVIS?



A: Unifying nonimmigrant records remains a key priority for SEVP. Currently, there are plans for improving how SEVIS matches records, and how SEVIS interacts with other government systems. However, SEVIS infrastructure presents significant challenges that will likely prevent us from realizing the goal of “One Person, One Record” in the current system.

Q: What is the status on plans for “Out of Country” or “Leave of Absence” functionality? The current process is cumbersome, and can present problems for nonimmigrants that are travelling.

A: SEVP wholeheartedly agrees that the current process could be improved, and facilitating “temporary absences” or an “Out of Country” process in SEVIS remains a high priority. We plan to address it in current SEVIS, but do not have a timeframe for this enhancement as other enhancements and corrections have been identified as having higher priority.

Q: What are the plans for electronic travel signatures/endorsements? Will that be possible in current SEVIS?

A: No. Electronic travel signatures will not be possible in current SEVIS. There is no way to communicate an electronic endorsement to the parties who need that information. These requirements are of very high priority for SEVP; we realize the ability to electronically sign for travel would not only relieve business resources, it will also help to streamline a process that can be difficult to navigate for some nonimmigrants.

Q: Will SEVIS show consistent Point of Entry/Exit (POE) information?

A: The ADIS interface is one of our most important interfaces, and SEVP has scheduled sessions with our partners who manage ADIS to determine what is possible to improve interface performance. That may include providing more data elements to improve how we match records to improve the matching algorithms.

Q: Will SEVIS validate all addresses, including international addresses, or just US addresses?

A: SEVIS will only validate US addresses. Currently, SEVP is conducting analysis on various address validation tools, and their features. We expect that SEVIS will check against the US Postal Service for deliverable addresses. Also, we know that in SEVIS, there are dormitory addresses that are not included in the USPS database. Therefore, we need a tool that will allow us to add addresses. We are also looking for a tool that will be able to employ business rules in order to provide an indication of how well a particular address meets the our standard. We also expect that users will be able to override an invalid indication and confirm an address is correct. More details on how exactly SEVIS will validate addresses, and the standards we will employ are forthcoming, once SEVP has more information on what tool and features we can use.



Q: Are there current plans to publish a pre-release report of how addresses will look after validation, similar to the way SEVP will release a report on Names before the release?

A: No, there are no plans to do that, because we are taking different actions on names and addresses. With Names, we are going to apply a standard to all names, so we'll have that information prior to the release. For addresses, after the functionality is released, we will be providing an indication of the quality of that address. We are also discussing the possibility of creating an alert list for addresses of low "quality". However, we are not requiring schools to edit existing addresses to conform to new standards. Detailed information about names and addresses will be discussed during an upcoming webinar.

Q: What are the plans surrounding student program dates? Will school officials have to enter the actual program completion dates?

A: The new data elements surrounding program dates will be populated by the system. Currently, in SEVIS it can be challenging to determine if a nonimmigrant is still participating in a program by looking at the Program End Date. That date remains unchanged, regardless of program termination or completion, transfer, or change of level. SEVP plans to add new data elements to capture when a program actually ends by collecting the date when one of these events takes place. Therefore, the original Program End Date remains, but we can also determine the actual duration of the program, which can differ than what was originally planned on the I-20.

Q: Can you explain the updates regarding CIP Code Groups and Geographical Designations?

A: These updates will primarily be used by SEVP, mainly to assist in reporting. We will be able to designate geographical areas by zip code. For example, the Field Representative Unit (FRU) has essentially divided the country into territories for their representatives. We can facilitate their job by designating those territories in SEVIS.

The same principle applies to CIP code Groups. SEVP will be able to define groups of similar or related CIP codes, and use that information for several reporting and communication-based uses.

Q: Will there be an update to reporting functionality in SEVIS, for example, the ability to run ad hoc reports?

A: SEVP plans to improve SEVIS reporting functionality. The ability for our users to extract useful data from the system easily is not only of high priority, but is also essential to closing gaps in national security. SEVP is currently testing certain tools to see if they will meet our reporting requirements. This will take time, as our staff learns more about these reporting tools and their capabilities, so we can select the right one to use with SEVIS.



Q: Will the event history be enhanced to show events to transferred records, for example, OPT at a previous institution, Reduced Course Load information, etc.?

A: SEVP will take this suggestion under advisement. There are limits to what we can share with other institutions because of privacy concerns. If there is information you feel you need to comply with your regulatory obligations, let us know using the sevistechfeedback@ice.dhs.gov email address.

Q: Are the DS-7002 updates slated for the fall?

A: Currently, SEVP and DoS are exploring the potential for batch testing in the fall; however final decisions have not been made on what functionalities will be included in the fall release. When the DS-7002 is released, it will include the entire form, and able to be updated via RTI or Batch. The Department of State and the SEVIS team will communicate with the Exchange Visitor community about DS-7002 updates.

Q: Will program sponsors who enroll students be required to register or validate continuing J-1 students, similar to the way DSOs have to report registration for F-1s each term?

A: No. The Department of State (DoS) only requires one validation at the beginning of the exchange visitor's program. The EV record only needs to be updated if there are substantial changes. The Department of State has no plans to deviate from this single-validation approach.

Q: Is it possible for alerts to be sent to Responsible Officers (RO) and Alternate Responsible Officers (ARO) via email, rather than through SEVIS?

A: This is a good suggestion to move toward email messaging at some point in the future. However, there may be privacy concerns surrounding sending nonimmigrant information via email without ensuring that it is going to the intended recipient. Therefore, it is encouraged by SEVP and the Department of State to ensure that your email addresses are accurate in SEVIS.

Q: What are SEVP's plans for the use of "Initial" or "Deactivated" Status for students who transfer from one school to another or who change educational level?

A: SEVP will phase out use of the terminology "Deactivated" and "Initial" status when referring to nonimmigrants that are transferring or changing their program level because it causes considerable confusion. The term deactivated does not really clarify what happened to the student. Likewise, the use of "Initial" does not help differentiate incoming transfer student or change of level students from students are truly entering on a new SEVIS record. We will provide more details closer to the time of the development of this functionality.

Q: Would SEVP consider allowing schools to process batch uploads several times a day, instead of just one?



A: SEVP is considering that. However, implementation of that depends on how it would affect SEVIS performance and responsiveness. SEVP will explore these possibilities, but for now schools can only process batches once a day.

Q: Since you are working in 30-day sprints using agile methodology, will new functionality be released to the Beta (sbtsevis) environment at the end of each sprint?

A: No. Even though a piece of functionality is developed, it may not necessarily be ready to be released to the production or beta environments. Instead, we package development work done during the sprints into releases. For example, the April 18, 2014 release includes work from four separate sprints.

Form I-17 Conversion of Accreditation and Recognition Information

Q: When will schools be able to convert their I-17 information on Accreditations and Recognitions? What is the deadline for completing the conversion?

A: On April 18, the SEVIS update was released. Upon login, P/DSOs will be prompted to convert their I-17 information for all schools they are associated with. Visit Study in the States for a detailed Conversion Job Aid, or to view the February 21, 2014 webinar on the Form I-17 Conversion. The deadline for completing the conversion is July 17, 2014.

Q: For the conversion, do schools need to provide accreditations for all their programs, or only National, Regional, and State licensing information?

A: Currently our practice is that if your regional or national licensing information covers all programs of study listed on the Form I-17, you do not need to list any additional accreditations or recognitions. However, if you have a program that is not listed under a regional or national accreditation, then you would need to list both. It depends on what your regional or national accreditation covers. If it covers all your programs of study, we will not require the additional information. If it does not cover the individual programs, you must list the additional accreditations if you want them to be considered as accredited programs by SEVP.

Q: Which date should schools provide as the “Effective Date of Accreditation”: the initial accreditation date or the start of the current accreditation cycle?

A: The effective date of accreditation should be the start of the current cycle of review. The expiration date is the date of the next periodic review.

Q: How will the I-17 Accreditation/Recognition Conversion be adjudicated? How long will it take to be approved and updated?

A: These updates do not require formal adjudication. For the I-17 Conversion, we are asking you to convert your current accreditation/recognitions information to a more standardized format. The changes that institutions will make will commit immediately upon submittal.

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However, the changes may be reviewed by the School Certification Unit. More information is available on [Study in the States](#).

Q: If my school has just updated my I-17, or if we are under recertification, do we still have to convert our Accreditation and Recognition information?

A: Yes. All current approved institutions must convert their accreditation information. The I-17 Petition Update process and the Recertification process will be unaffected by the conversion.

Q: How will the I-17 conversion affect the initial I-17 certification process? Should institutions wait until after the release to apply for certification?

A: There are no adverse effects to the initial I-17 certification process, and there is no need to wait to apply until after the release. During the conversion period, new certification petitions will include the new fields for Accreditation and Recognitions. Schools with pending initial petitions during the conversion period will receive a Request for Evidence (RFE), for the additional accreditation information.

Q: Will the Conversion be duplicated in the batch or Beta (sbtsevis) environment?

A: Batch implications are minimal, since schools do not batch I-17 information. If you do not convert your accreditations in your beta schools, then the accreditation information will be removed from them, but they will still be functional schools in the beta environment. The conversion process is simple, so you may want to convert your information in any schools you have in the beta environment.

SEVIS Name Standards

Q: When will the naming standards be released to the public? Will SEVP release new policy guidance on names?

A: A [handout](#) is available online on the Study in the States website that outlines the proposed name standards. SEVP has plans to update the current guidance to conform to the new way SEVIS will handle names.

Q: What will be the procedure for when nonimmigrants who only have one name, since we will not be able to use FNU or LNU?

A: For nonimmigrant with only one name, officials will use the Family/Primary Name field to capture their sole name. Then, the official may indicate that the nonimmigrant has no first name on the page. More guidance on what the screen will look like and how such indications will be made will be released at an upcoming webinar.

Q: Will the new name standards allow the Middle Name to be displayed on the Student Information Page?

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A: Yes, middle names will appear on the Student Information page. We are in the process of determining the best way to display the new name fields. Users will be able to see all the names entered, edit any names, and view a history of names that includes any changes.

Q: Why is Middle Name necessary? Most passports only include primary and given names, and in some cases, it can be challenging to determine where first and middle names begin and end.

A: There has been discussion surrounding the necessity of the Middle Name field, and the decision has been made that since it is a U.S. convention, we will keep the middle name. It is not a required field, so users can choose to put all given names in the First/Given Name field.

Q: Is SEVP working with the Social Security Administration (SSA) on the proposed name changes? Social Security cards will need to be updated, if SEVP changes nonimmigrant names in SEVIS.

A: We have reached out to SSA to discuss some technical details and implications of what we are doing with names. Our initial priority has been to plan internally and with Department of State. We are reaching out to all our government partners, SSA included, to discuss more low-level business implications. We will have to meet with USCIS, for example, for detailed discussions on how to handle name changes on records with pending USCIS applications.

Q: What sorts of communication have been developed for batch vendors, in regards to the name standards?

A: SEVP is developing a list of institutions and vendors that have expressed interest in joining a Batch Working Group to discuss questions/issues related to SEVIS enhancements and the implications they pose to batch interfacing. If you are not sure if your institution or vendor is represented on the list, feel free to email sevistechicalfeedback@ice.dhs.gov with your information, and we will reach out to you. SEVP plans to kick off the working group in the coming weeks.

Q: What is the current expectation for name spelling at the embassies/consulates? Should the name match the passport name? Many students request that I-20s be edited to include characters that are not allowed by Department of State or SEVIS.

A: The State Department's preference is that the passport name be used, so if that is your institutional practice right now, then it is a safe one.

Q: Is the Passport Name required if the name on the passport matches the name in SEVIS? If the intention is to get the name from the passport, why not have officers at the POE scan the machine-readable name from the passport, and have it updated then?



A: The passport name is never a required field, but there may be benefits in adding the passport name because it may help us match those records better. Even when passports are scanned, we can still have a difficult time matching to the correct record. SEVP is not requiring the passport name field to be populated; however, There are countries who only issue passports to those with a reason to travel i.e., a Certificate of Eligibility, so it would not be prudent to require that field, but it will be a useful field for many nonimmigrants.

Q: Is Preferred Name a Required Field?

A: Yes, the Preferred Name is a required field. The field will be prepopulated (by the First, Middle and Primary/Last name), and can be edited, but there must be an entry in the field.

Q: Will Preferred Name be interpreted as “Nickname”?

A: SEVP would prefer the field not be used for nicknames. It really is designed for people with long names, names that can differ in their “order of appearance”, or names with special characters. However, there are people who put nicknames into SEVIS today, and if one was to put a nickname in, this would be the field to do so. How the Preferred Name field is used will depend on your institutional policies.

Q: Would the Preferred Name be used if a nonimmigrant has chosen, and wants to be known by, an “Americanized” name, or should it only be used to reflect legal names?

A: Users will be able to use that field for an “Americanized” name. How the field is used can depend on the institution’s business practices.

Q: Can names still have accent marks in SEVIS?

A: Special characters will only be allowed in the Preferred Name field.

Q: When will Passport and Preferred Name need to be entered?

A: The functionality must first be released. SEVP expects this functionality to be available in early to mid-2015. The Preferred Name will be prepopulated by SEVIS by combining the names in the First, Middle, Last, and Suffix fields. Then, if necessary, the field can be edited to include any other names or changes (like special characters). While the passport Name is not a required field, it may be beneficial depending on the nonimmigrant.

Q: Are these new name fields going to appear on the printed forms I-20/DS-2019?

A: SEVP and Department of State are still determining whether or not to display these other names on the printed forms. There are plans to include SEVIS legacy names on a continuation page of the form I-20. SEVP is open to feedback from the community about what information they would like to see. We want to redesign the form I-20 in the near future so perhaps that may be the time to make some updates.



As for Department of State, there are no current plans to update the DS-2019 to include the new name fields. The new names will appear in SEVIS, but not on the Exchange Visitor's form DS-2019.

Periodic Verification of School and Program Sponsor Officials

Q: What should I do if my Responsible Officers (RO) or Alternate Responsible Officers (ARO) are not in SEVIS often?

A: Ultimately, we cannot direct your organization on how the program designates officials, but we suggest that when decisions are made, that your organizations take into consideration the necessity for the officials to have active user accounts, which requires a login every 45 days.

Q: Will the periodic verification of officials put an end to the 30-day inactivity alerts and password validity requirements?

A: No. Because SEVIS is a government system, public users are subject to the same system security requirements that government users are. In fact, government users do not receive reminder alerts when their password expires, we just get locked out. The inactivity alerts will remain as they are required by ICE Security.

Q: Will the Responsible Officer (RO) be the only users able to validate the Alternate Responsible Officers (ARO) as active users of SEVIS?

A: Yes, ROs will be the only Program Sponsor users able to validate an ARO as an active user.

Q: How will Responsible Officers (RO) be notified that they need to validate that the Alternate Responsible Officers are active users of SEVIS?

A: SEVIS will notify officials via email in advance of the deadline. Additionally, users will receive a notice upon login, until they validate. If users are not validated in a timely manner, additional emails will be sent to every official at the program so everyone knows that the validation is not yet complete.

Q: Is the president of the institution required to be a PDSO or DSO on the I-17 petition?

A: No, absolutely not.

Q: Currently, e-mail address is not a required field. Will it become one?

A: E-mail addresses are required for school and sponsor officials. It is not currently required for students or exchange visitors. There are no current plans to require email addresses for nonimmigrants. An update like that would probably require a regulatory update or input from the ICE legal advisors.



- Q: Will the DSO verification process require schools to furnish additional proof of DSO identity or citizenship, for example, birth certificates, passport, etc.?**
- A: No, the periodic verification will not require additional evidence. An attestation that the official still is employed by your institution, and still requires access to SEVIS is sufficient to complete the periodic verification.
- Q: Will the periodic verification process affect a travel signature endorsement that a former official may have signed? Travel signatures are valid for a year, so there may be overlap between an official leaving the organization, and a student returning to the country from a trip.**
- A: No. Individuals who serve as DSOs legally represent their institution when carrying out their responsibilities. The travel signature is not invalidated simply because someone ceases to function as a DSO. The endorsement was valid at the time it was made and remains valid unless the student's underlying status with the school has changed.

OPT and CPT

- Q: Please explain how the new USCIS-approved OPT dates relate to the dates DSOs recommend? How do they relate to the Actual OPT dates mentioned in the webinar? What are the plans for the new OPT data elements? Will officials not be able to recommend an OPT start date anymore? Will it be limited to what USCIS approved?**
- A: DSOs will still recommend OPT start dates. Currently, in SEVIS there is only one set of OPT date fields. The DSO uses them to recommend OPT. When USCIS approves OPT, the USCIS-approved OPT dates overwrite the DSO-recommended dates.

SEVIS will be modified to create additional OPT date fields so that the DSO-recommended dates are not overwritten by the USCIS-approved dates. We will also capture the Actual OPT dates which are the USCIS-approved OPT dates adjusted to account for any school transfer, change of level of change of status which would terminate the employment authorization.

The approved OPT start date and the recommended OPT start date are often the same. However, there are instances where that is not the case.

SEVIS will record the date USCIS approved and included on the EAD card, as the Actual OPT Start Date. The recommended and the actual dates will both remain. . The Actual OPT End Date will be populated by the system, depending on the circumstances of individual students.

- Q: What will the new OPT Employer information in SEVIS look like? We already have the ability to add employer information, so what exactly will be different?**



A: The main problems we have with OPT employer information in SEVIS today is that once it is submitted, users cannot go in and update it. For instance, if a nonimmigrant has more than one employer, which many do, users cannot go in and provide that information currently. Also, there is no way for users to provide dates of employment, so there is no way to tell how long the employment lasts. We will be able to provide more information and details on how exactly the screens will look closer to implementation. This is currently slated for the fall 2014 release.

Q: Can you explain what the full time CPT counter is?

A: The rationale behind the Full Time CPT Counter is to prevent nonimmigrants that have exhausted their year of full time curricular practical training from being recommended for Optional Practical Training (OPT). According to the regulations, a nonimmigrant who has received a year of such full time training would be ineligible to receive OPT at that program level. Even in cases of transfer, the transfer-in school will be able to see how much CPT a student has used at a different school.

Q: Will the Full Time CPT Counter count by business days or calendar days?

A: The counter will increment using calendar days.

Q: Are there plans for a counter for days of OPT unemployment?

A: Yes, SEVP has plans to implement a counter for OPT unemployment days. That functionality has not yet been scheduled for a release.

Q: Will there be a webinar on OPT and CPT?

A: Yes, SEVP will schedule a webinar to discuss OPT and CPT.