



## U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement

February 5, 2004

### INFORMATION

#### MEMORANDUM FOR ALL SEVIS CERTIFIED ACADEMIC INSTITUTIONS

FROM: Jill Drury, /s/  
Director  
Student and Exchange Visitor Program (SEVP)

SUBJECT: Record Creation Following Release 4.8 of SEVIS, January 2, 2004

#### **BACKGROUND:**

As of January 2, the Student and Exchange Visitor Program (SEVP) implemented a new release of the Student and Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS), which removed several temporary functions of the system. The functions that were removed relate to the six "issue reasons" available for creating **new** SEVIS Forms I-20, Certificate of Eligibility of Nonimmigrant Status.

#### **DISCUSSION:**

Previously, SEVIS allowed new I-20s to be created for a variety of issue reasons. The issue reason was chosen by the Principal/Designated School Official (P/DSO) who created the SEVIS record, and was meant to reflect the reason that the form was first being created for a particular student. In most cases, it was only at the point of I-20 generation that an issue reason could be selected by a school official. Once the I-20 was generated, the system automatically changed the issue reason in keeping with the student's status and with the updates that were being made by the user.

The issue reasons previously available to schools upon record creation in SEVIS were:

- **Initial Attendance**
  - Student generally outside of the United States and will be entering to attend school as an F or M for the first time.
- **Initial Attendance – Change of Status Requested**
  - Nonimmigrant generally inside the United States in a nonimmigrant status other than F or M, that will be applying for a change of status to attend the I-20 issuing school.
- **Continuing Student**
  - In status F or M student currently pursuing course of study.
- **Reinstatement**
  - Student that has fallen out of F or M status and that is applying for reinstatement of status in the United States.

- **Transfer**
  - Student has attended one school in F or M status and is making a transfer, in status, to another F or M approved school.
- **Other**
  - Issue reason reserved for “unforeseen” circumstances; generally not used.

Only the “Initial Attendance” and “Initial Attendance—Change of Status Requested” issue reasons are appropriate for a school generating a Form I-20 for a **new** F or M student (i.e., a student that was not already in the United States on an F or M visa). The other issue reasons were designed to be temporary functions of the system, made available so that schools could populate SEVIS with records for all students.

As of August 1, 2003, all students, regardless of the stage in their program, were required to be entered into SEVIS.

**SUMMARY and IMPLICATIONS OF CHANGE:**

As of January 2, SEVP implemented a new release of SEVIS, which removes all other issue reasons, except two: “Initial Attendance” and “Initial Attendance – Change of Status Requested.” *The implication of this change is that schools are no longer able to create a new SEVIS record for any student that is not initially entering the United States as a student or applying for a change of status while in the United States.* This change to the system should not pose a major obstacle to schools, since all foreign F and M status students currently in the United States should already have a SEVIS record in the system. This includes F and M students that may now be transferring into another school, as well as students that may have fallen out of status and need to apply for reinstatement. SEVP reminds P/DSOs that, once a record is created with an issuance reason of “Initial Attendance” or “Initial Attendance – Change of Status Requested,” SEVIS will automatically change the issuance reason upon re-prints, based on the status of the record at that time.

We anticipate that some schools may come across anomalies involving a continuing student that is found to be without a SEVIS record anywhere in the system. Should such a case arise, a P/DSO should follow this guidance.

**A. For a student whose course of study has not been completed:**

1. Create a SEVIS record for initial attendance.
2. Immediately terminate this record for the reason “otherwise failing to maintain status.”
3. Enter the text “No SEVIS Record by Deadline” in the blank field associated with the “otherwise failing to maintain status” termination reason.
4. Enter the text “Continuing student whose SEVIS record was first created after the SEVIS record creation deadline” in the remarks field of the I-20.
5. If appropriate, the student can apply for reinstatement based on the now terminated SEVIS record. This will require, in addition to an I-539 filing, that the P/DSO recommend reinstatement via SEVIS.

**B. For a student granted post-completion Optional Practical Training (OPT) *prior* to SEVIS record creation:**

1. Follow the directions above if a student is out of status for a reason other than absence of a SEVIS record; however,
2. For cases in which the P/DSO did not understand the requirement or process for creating SEVIS records for students in post-completion OPT, the P/DSO may, at his or her discretion, create an “initial attendance” record for the post-completion OPT participant and activate that record, rather than terminating it.
  - a. Enter “Student participating in approved OPT” in the remarks field; and
  - b. Register and activate the record without termination.
  - c. The student’s OPT end date should be substituted for the “Program End Date” and “Current Session End Date” in creating such a record.
  - d. P/DSOs who wish to exercise this option are asked to notify the SEVP Office by sending an e-mail to “toolbox.sevis@dhs.gov” with a subject line of “OPT Record Created”. Please include the student’s name, SEVIS ID, school name and school code in this e-mail.

If the school believes that there are extraordinary or extenuating circumstances not covered in the instructions above that may require a data fix, the school should contact the SEVIS Help Desk at (800) 892-4829. Accommodation of this request will be made based on the circumstances of the individual case.