

SEVIS Conference Call: Technical Issues

NAFSA Questions

Wednesday, February 25, 2004

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1. When will SEVIS 5.0 ICD be made available?

At the batch vendor meeting in November, 2003, ICE indicated that it expected to have the SEVIS 5.0 ICD available in mid-January 2004 for vendors and individual developers of SEVIS batch software. As of mid-February, the revised ICD is still not available. Is there an update on the release schedule for the revised ICD?

RESPONSE: The updated SEVIS 5.0 Batch ICD is expected to be released by the beginning of March; however, the exact release date has been overcome by events due to other urgent events. We will deliver the SEVIS 5.0 ICD as soon as possible. In addition, a user survey will be distributed, where batch users must vote on possible implementation dates of Release 5.0. Comments and suggestions made during the last Batch Technical Forum have been incorporated within the ICD.

2. SEVIS not permitting second period of employment with international organization

A school has reported that SEVIS will not permit a second period of employment with an international organization. When the DSO selects the link for "off-campus employment" the only options are to view last year's recommendation and approval or to return to the summary page. No option to recommend a new period is available (Example: SEVIS ID N0000265331).

RESPONSE: SEVIS was designed to permit only one off-campus employment request; however, this does not meet students' needs. The work-around for requesting additional segments of off-campus employment are for the student to request the additional off-campus employment through the Service Center using Form I-765. When the Service Center adjudicates the additional off-campus employment request, the results will be added to SEVIS. In addition, you can notate the I-20 on P.3 to reflect the multiple off-campus employment requests. A system change request has been opened to change this functionality.

3. Will students on "Students Authorized to Drop Below Full Course of Study Requiring Update" alert list be automatically terminated if no Resume Full Course event within 60 days?

The Help Desk has informed callers that when the "Students Authorized to Drop Below Full Course of Study Requiring Update" alert is "turned on," all students on this list must have a "Resume Full Course" event within 60 days of the end date of the Authorization to Drop Below. If no "Resume" event occurs, the student will be terminated. This poses a big problem for students who are less than full-time during the spring semester. A student in this situation would have an Authorization to Drop Below with an end date of mid-May, and if on a semester-based system, the student's resumption of studies the next term would not begin until late August or September, far more than 60-days from the RCL end date.

RESPONSE: The alert entitled "Students Authorized to Drop Below Full Course of Study Requiring Update" is not functioning correctly at this time. In a future release, the functionality associated with Drop Below Full Course will be changed. With that change, it will not be necessary for a Resume Full Course action to be performed. Until the system is updated to reflect the new functionality of the Drop Below Full Course of Study, the maintenance job that would terminate those students (who have not resumed a full course of study within 60 days of the end date of the drop below authorization) will not be activated.

4. Reduced course load for successive medical leaves

There is a great deal of confusion about how P/DSOs authorize a *second* period of medical leave for the term immediately following a first period of authorized medical leave. When a second period of RCL is submitted, two RCL events appear on the list of "students authorized to drop below full course." This authorize drop below list page is the one from which schools link to the resume full course load input page (the option to "resume" is not available from any other page in SEVIS). Two events appear even when the RCL periods are successive. Should P/DSOs "resume" the first RCL for the student, even though the student is NOT "resuming" a full course of study, but continuing on a medical RCL?

RESPONSE: Successive segments of reduced course load may be submitted as separate authorizations. Each segment will be listed on the student's record. The Resume Full Course Load should be selected only when the student is ready to return to a full course load. At that time, all segments of reduced course load would be marked as ended. However, the Resume Full Course Load action is not currently performing correctly in SEVIS. Users should not use this option until the system has been updated as described in the response to Question 3.

5. Reduced course load and Verify Status link

It is our understanding that the Verify Status link only becomes available if a record hasn't been "touched" in six months, and goes away when status is verified. P/DSOs have reported that when they recommend a second period of RCL for a student, the "verify status" link remains. In any event, the presence of this link indicates that the drop below authorizations do not constitute touching of the record. What actions in SEVIS will constitute "touching" the record? Is selecting the "verify status" link the only option?

RESPONSE: SEVIS is not functioning as intended. Employment requests and drop below authorizations are not currently included in the evaluation of record updates. An SCR has been opened to address this issue.

6. Is it possible to create an Initial Attendance I-20 after canceling reinstatement?

A school has reported that when it cancelled a pending reinstatement in the SEVIS test environment, the result screen gave the option to "return to record" button and a "print I-20 button." On selecting the print I-20 option, the DSO got an I-20 for initial attendance. If this sequence of events occurs in the production version of SEVIS, is this an option that could be utilized in cases where a student decides to cancel a reinstatement in order to travel and re-enter the US?

RESPONSE: This is a system malfunction. At the time the reinstatement request is canceled, the reprint option should not be available. An SCR has been opened to correct this functionality.

Additional questions added:

This first group is from

The second group below is from Nancy Mills (Director of Exchange Visitor Services) and Dennis Kear (Deputy Director of Information Technology) with the Institute of International Education (IIE)

Questions from Aimee Bellemore with The Association of Boarding Schools (TABS):

1. The PDSO of one school wrote that SEVIS implementation has been smooth, but he has encountered just a few minor tech issues that he wanted to share.
 - a. A multi-category name search would be helpful for him because he has a large number of international students enrolled (180, which is large for a boarding school) and he doesn't always know the status of a student in SEVIS and is forced to search all categories (e.g., active, terminated, etc.). He prefers not to use the less informative detailed student report pull because it pulls all students, not just the ones he is looking for. It takes longer and he cannot make the necessary changes from that report.

RESPONSE: This request will be considered.

- b. (Wish List Item) The radio buttons next to the type of search required should switch automatically -- actually they seem redundant to begin with. If we enter a name in the name search field and no SEVIS number, it should perform a name search. Currently there are two inputs needed for each entry -- a click on the button and input in the field. Also, since it is a radio button there is no keyboard shortcut, you have to use the mouse. Really nit-picky, I know, but I am surprised by how often I click "search" and get an alert saying I must specify the type of search.

RESPONSE: This request will be considered.

- c. (Wish List Item) The "reports" (i.e. Detailed Student Report) that we can pull are terrific -- especially for finding duplicates, but they could be much more useful. The great thing about the reports is that we can cut and paste them into Excel spreadsheets, or Filemaker databases. If only they listed more of the information it would be a terrific tool for us in many aspects of life. As it is, they just give name, SEVIS ID, Status, date, and Visa type. DOB, Foreign Address, program start/end dates, passport # would be great. It would answer our questions instead of just showing us which status to search in.

RESPONSE: A robust reporting tool is being considered for implementation in SEVIS.

2. Several schools wrote about graduation clarification. Since most of our international students do plan on attending college or university here in the US, this question will come up a lot. Should the boarding schools transfer out graduating students or just let them end (as the program end date would indicate, which would also mean deactivation, if the college office doesn't pick them up right away).

RESPONSE: The SEVIS Program Office is currently reviewing this issue.

3. I understand that this issue has already been addressed, but more than one school DSO wrote to me about it, so I wanted to include it to be sure that you are aware of their concern. Last summer while trying to issue I-20s to two students transferring to a boarding school, one DSO encountered the following problem. When he tried to issue the I-20s, he could not put in a program end date that was more than a year from last summer. When he called the SEVIS Help Desk, he was told that they were aware of the problem, which arose because the secondary school transfer program was written with public schools in mind, and they could not have a student attend for more than a year.

RESPONSE: This problem was corrected in SEVIS Release 4.7 implemented in July 2003. If the problem is occurring again, please contact the SEVIS Help Desk.

Questions from Nancy Mills (Director of Exchange Visitor Services) and Dennis Kear (Deputy Director of Information Technology) with the Institute of International Education (IIE):

4. Is "Correct Minor or Technical Infraction" supposed to work in SEVIS batch the same way it works in RTI? In RTI, the option to perform this action behaves according to expectations. However, when the event is uploaded to SEVIS through the batch interface, the request fails with error code S2128 (Failure to extend DS-2019 is not within 120 days of program end date.), which is erroneous, because the event is only being transmitted within the allowed 120-day window. Help Desk has opened ticket number 35645.

RESPONSE: This issue is being researched.

5. The email notices IIE receives from SEVIS "sysadmin", as well as the confirmation messages that are displayed in RTI, for example, when registering for batch processing, do not indicate the EVP#. For an organization like IIE, which administers six different EVP#s, if the allotment is increased, or the re-designation is approved, it is not always apparent which EVP# is being referred to. Likewise, when batch registration is successful, since the only receipt available to us is a screen shot, it is important to have the EVP# displayed there as well. Can this be addressed?

RESPONSE: This request will be considered.

6. Currently, while there is the option to add and delete AROs and replace ROs, there is no way to update their titles. Can this be addressed?

RESPONSE: A system change request has been opened to address this issue; however, this is not considered a high priority issue as the title does not print on the Form DS-2019. Data fix requests will not be accepted for this type of change.

Other Agenda Topics:

7. Provide an update on Release 4.10

RESPONSE: Release 4.10 will go into production on March 22, 2004. The release notice is posted on the SEVIS website.