

U.S. Department of Homeland Security
Bureau of Immigration and Custom Enforcement

HQSEV

425 I Street NW
Washington, DC 20536

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MEMORANDUM FOR ACADEMIC INSTITUTIONS THAT ARE NOT CURRENTLY SEVIS
CERTIFIED

FROM: Jill Drury /s/
Director, SEVIS Program Office
Bureau of Immigration and Customs Enforcement

SUBJECT: Implications of August 1, 2003 Deadline for schools currently or recently applying for Student and Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS) certification.

February 15, 2003 was the deadline for all previously approved educational institutions to apply for SEVIS certification and begin using SEVIS for all new students or event changes. The intent of this deadline was to ensure that schools applied and completed the certification process in sufficient time to enter data on all continuing students before the final August 1, 2003 deadline to have all new and continuing students in SEVIS. As this August 1, 2003 date approaches, it is important that schools who are still in the process of applying understand the certification timeline set in 2002 so that they can respond accordingly.

All schools and exchange visitor programs are reminded that the process of SEVIS Certification entails the follow steps:

- Certification application (I-17) filed with DHS
- Full Fee Payment of the Correct Amount (\$230 plus \$350 for *each* campus listed on the electronic Form I-17)
- Site Visit
- DHS Final Adjudication of complete application, financial information and site-visit data

This certification process, on average, has taken 60 days to complete.

Our records indicate that there are a significant number of academic institutions and programs that are only now applying for SEVIS certification. Given the steps in the certification process, it is uncertain whether any school that applied after June 1, 2003 will be certified and able to data enter and forward SEVIS Forms I-20 to students, prior to the beginning of classes this fall semester.

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The purpose of this message is to encourage schools that filed after June 1, 2003, to take measures to notify returning students that they may not be allowed entry into the United States, since their school is not yet SEVIS certified. While we will make every effort to work with schools and programs that are not currently approved, schools that did not file timely applications may wish to notify students of the potential risk that they will not be permitted to enter the United States or transfer to their school to participate in their academic program.

For those schools that did not file in a timely manner, if final school certification can be completed in the near term, admission may be granted. However, such an admission will require School Official contact and/or supporting evidence of the students intention to continue in the program. Supporting documents might include registration receipt or housing assignment information. Ultimately, the decision to admit students will be made on a case-by-case basis.

In closing, the SEVIS Program is committed to balancing the security of the homeland with facilitating the entry of legitimate foreign students and exchange visitors, so that they can continue to attend our world class academic and cultural programs. DHS will continue to make every effort to work with schools that are only now applying for certification to accommodate the re-entry of students wherever possible. Additional information regarding school certification status can be obtained via e-mail Toolbox.SEVIS@DHS.gov or by phone at (202) 353-3049.