

Student and Exchange Visitor Program Office

SEVIS Technical Conference Call with the Educational Community

Questions and Answers from Wednesday, January 25, 2006

Contents:

1. Transfer issues – “manually enabled” and “cancel transfer” functionality?.....	1
2. December 29, 2005 global data fix	2
3. Help Desk ticket resolution difficulties?	2
4. Suggestions for modifications to current SEVIS alerts and lists.....	3
5. Mass registration via RTI?.....	4
6. Presentation of COL SEVIS data in CCD confusing to consulates.....	4
7. OPT to H-1B completion instead of termination.....	4
8. Documentation requirements for Help Desk Tickets	5
9. Contact information for SEVIS Web-based training issues.....	5
10. Possibility to post conference slides on the web FSA.....	6
11. Terminated students being admitted at the port of entry.....	6

1. Transfer issues – “manually enabled” and “cancel transfer” functionality?

1) Members are reporting that they are unable to transfer in a released SEVIS record (receiving the message: “submit denied! can not submit student before transfer release date”.) The Help Desk stated that this was a known issue, and that SEVIS transfers require that the record be “manually enabled”. What does it mean when a record must be “manually enabled”? Is this something that was resolved in the December 29 data fix? Are there other situations when a record must be manually enabled?

2) Members are reporting that the “Cancel Transfer” function is not showing up for all “Transfer Out” records prior to the transfer release date. The SEVIS Help Desk stated that they were having problems with this issue. Is this an issue that was resolved with the December 29 data fix?

RESPONSE:

- 1) *There is a known issue with the student transfers where a system error occurs when the Transfer-in school attempts to submit an I-20 after the release date. The issue has been correcting itself, and after a day or two, the user is able to submit the I-20 with no errors. SEVP is currently investigating what is causing this problem, but there is nothing being done to “manually enable” the record. This does not occur for all transfers.*
- 2) *This is also a known issue that is typically resolved with a data fix by canceling the transfer for the user. It only occurs sporadically and is currently being investigated.*

In any case where you believe there is a SEVIS functionality issue (such as these above), we ask that you report an example of the instance to the SEVIS Help Desk for further investigation.



2. December 29, 2005 global data fix

Could SEVP clarify what issues were covered in the December 29 data fix?

RESPONSE:

There was no global data fix on December 29. There were several data fixes and a maintenance release that occurred in December. The following issues were resolved –

- *The nightly maintenance job that terminates students that have not had an I-20 created by the transfer-in school within 6 months of the student's release date with a reason of Transfer Student No Show incorrectly terminating Terminated and Completed records that had a transfer completed. The job should only terminate records that do not have a transfer completed. (Note: Student status may be Draft, Completed, or Terminated prior to this termination).*

On December 7th, all records that had been affected by this job were reverted back to their previous status. On December 12th all records that had been affected by this job had their dates updated to reflect the date the record had originally been terminated or completed. The job is now working correctly.

- *The alert, students within 45 days of termination had two issues:*

1) It was displaying students incorrectly due to the issue with the nightly maintenance job mentioned above. 2) The students appearing on the alert related to the job (Transfer students in Initial status 60 days beyond program start date) were appearing on the list when the termination date was more than 45 days in the future.

Both issues were resolved with a maintenance release that was implemented on December 21.

- *Attempting to display certain EV or dependent records resulted in an application error. This issue was resolved with a maintenance release that was implemented on December 21.*

3. Help Desk ticket resolution difficulties?

Members have reported in some cases receiving email messages stating that Help Desk ticket has been resolved, but when the member logs onto SEVIS, she finds that it has not been resolved.

- *Could you review with us what your procedures are for communicating the resolution of a data fix?*

RESPONSE:

In the majority of cases when a user receives an e-mail that their ticket has been resolved the change that they have requested has been implemented. In cases where the user has failed to respond to or provide the SEVIS Help Desk the necessary supporting documentation within 4 business days from when the ticket was opened, their ticket will then be set to resolved status. In either case, once the ticket has been placed in Resolved status, the Remedy system automatically sends an e-mail message to the user stating that



their ticket has been resolved. We strongly recommend that upon receipt of the automatic email, users verify the correction in SEVIS. If at that point the user finds that the request has not been completed, they have 10 calendar days from the date the ticket went into Resolved status to contact the SEVIS Help Desk to either provide the additional documentation or address any outstanding issues. If the SEVIS Help Desk does not hear from the user within 10 days, the Remedy system will automatically update the status of the ticket to Closed. Please keep in mind that once a ticket has been Closed, it cannot be reopened. The user will need to contact the help desk to open up a new ticket for their issue.

4. **Suggestions for modifications to current SEVIS alerts and lists**

Would it be possible to modify the following alerts? (Suggestions and reasons listed below.)

a) **Transfer in students not registered by the program start date.** One member relates the school's experience: "We have a handful of students who did not report to us by the transfer in date – most from 2003 when SEVIS was first implemented. We terminated the records as required and they show on SEVIS that they have been terminated, but the students continue to show up on our alert list." Once the SEVIS action is taken (like termination), it would be less confusing if the students were no longer on the alert. In these cases, the same terminated students show up on the student list for "students in transfer status", which also seems confusing.

RESPONSE:

This alert will be corrected in release 5.4 (targeted for fall '06) to only include Transfer-in students in "Initial" status that are past their program start date.

b) **Students with pending change of status request** and the student list **students with change of status request.** It would be helpful if these two lists divided the change of status requests by those changing "to" F-1 or M-1 and those changing "from" F-1 status. Many students change status from F-1 to H1B each year and it can be cumbersome to look through pages and pages of names when, for example, we want to view all students who have applied to change status to F-1 just before the quarter begins.

RESPONSE:

This alert and list will be modified in release 5.4 (targeted for fall '06) to only include students with a Pending change of status "to" F or M. Note that with release 5.1, the system began showing change of status requests on the student record to the "From" school only once/if the request is approved. The list and alert are now being modified to reflect the same change.

c) **Terminated students nearing their reinstatement deadline.** The alert shows up for any student terminated for any reason. Would it be possible to list the termination reason for each record? In many cases, a student would not want or need to apply for reinstatement. ("Change of status approved" or "authorized early withdrawal" for example.) The alert itself is very helpful, but would be more so if the termination reason was listed.

RESPONSE:

This alert will be corrected in release 5.4 (targeted for fall '06). The following changes will take place once this release is implemented: 1) The title will be changed to "Terminated Students Nearing Their Reinstatement Deadline." 2) Records that already have reinstatements requested



will not be listed on this alert and 3) The alert will include the Termination Date and Termination Reason.

5. Mass registration via RTI?

Would SEVP consider adding a "mass registration" function to SEVIS RTI in a future update? A DSO could check a box for those students who needed to be registered and enter a current session end date and next session start date. It would be most helpful for those schools with too few students to make a batch product worthwhile and would prevent data entry errors made when entering the same information repetitively for each individual record.

RESPONSE:

This has been previously suggested and is currently under internal review within SEVP.

Follow-up on question from 1/11/06 policy call

6. Presentation of COL SEVIS data in CCD confusing to consulates

Members have reported that active F-1 students applying for visas in their home countries are being told by the visa officer that they see a "deactivated" SEVIS record for the student listed as the "last in time" in the CCD, and are reluctant to issue visas. In these cases, the students have had a change of level, resulting in an active and deactivated record under the same SEVIS ID. This may be occurring because the prior level is not deactivated until the new level is activated; if the consulate defers to the notation that occurred latest in time, it will always be the deactivated notation in the case of changes of level.

RESPONSE:

If a record has been deactivated, it is only because there is another record in valid status. We are working to inform U.S. Consular Offices to ensure searches are performed for the valid record in these cases.

Follow-up on question from 1/11/06 policy call

7. OPT to H-1B completion instead of termination

Members have noticed that F-1 students on OPT who apply for H-1B status are having their SEVIS records completed (with the notation "Student Automatically Completed. Change of Status has been approved.") instead of terminated.

- Can SEVP confirm that this is now the policy for all change of status approvals (whether or not on F-1 OPT and whether or not the change is to H-1B) and that the SEVIS update is still performed through a data exchange with CLAIMS?

RESPONSE:

Yes, the updating is performed through the SEVIS/CLAIMS Interface.



- Would SEVP consider an alert or list for this type of record so that DSOs can more easily track the records? (Perhaps adding a "Completion Reason", similar to the "Termination Reason" on the list of students in terminated status?)

RESPONSE:

At this point, a new alert is not being considered. Can you provide reasons as to why DSO's would need this as COS requests do not require a recommendation from the school.

- If a change of status to H-1 (or another I-129 petition-based status) is approved on 9/01/2006, for an H petition with a start date of 01/01/2007, does the SEVIS record remain active until the start date of the H-1, and will CLAIMS then complete the record on 1/1/2007.

RESPONSE:

Regarding the completion vs termination of records – When a change of status approval is received to change a student from F or M to another visa class, SEVIS will take action on the benefit start date provided by CLAIMS. If the benefit start date is prior to the student's program end date the student will be Terminated. If the benefit start date is after the program end date the student will be completed. This change took affect with release 5.0.

8. Documentation requirements for Help Desk Tickets

Pending OPTs – is it possible to modify the requirements on what users need to send in as proof of documentation? Can they send a spreadsheet with the student's name, SEVIS ID, etc? Currently, too much paperwork has to be sent in.

RESPONSE:

In an effort to enhance the efficiency and processing time of data fix requests we have revised the data fix documentation requirements for school users. Prior to the revision, school users were required to provide the following documentation for employment related requests: 1) Letter from school stating circumstances and requested action, 2) Copy of student information screen, 3) Copy of Request Authorization Details Screen, 4) Copy of SEVIS Form I-20, 5) Copy of EAD or Notice of Action from the Service Center and 6) A spreadsheet (if the ticket included more than 5 students). The streamlined criteria now only requires the user to provide a detailed letter on official letterhead, which includes: the circumstances and requested action, the employment type (OPT/OCE), the employment start and end dates and the associated receipt number from the Service Center. Users will still be required to complete a spreadsheet if the ticket includes more than five students.

9. Contact information for SEVIS Web-based training issues

In regard to Web-based training, some users are not allowed access and can't create a password. What is the reason for this and whom do we contact?

RESPONSE:

To our knowledge, the SEVIS web-based training is working properly. We would like to encourage users to make another attempt to create an account. If difficulties still arise, for each issue, we ask that users provide us with examples of the error messages and detailed



descriptions of their problems. These can then be emailed to SEVIS.Source@dhs.gov where a SEVP representative will contact you in regards to your issue.

Please note that if this will be your first time taking the online training, you must first register a new account. Attempting to log on with your user ID/password/or email address used with the SEVIS system will not grant you access. In addition, when registering an account, your information does not need to match your user ID and/or password used for the SEVIS system.

10. Possibility to post conference slides on the web FSA

Would you be able to post our conference slides on the web FSA?

RESPONSE:

SEVP would like to ask for some clarification on this inquiry and defer this to the next NAFSA Technical Conference call. Please email Toolbox.SEVIS@dhs.gov.

11. Terminated students being admitted at the port of entry

CBP still admitting students who are in Terminated status and are not I-515ing them – what is the action that is needed to be taken?

RESPONSE:

SEVP is currently researching this issue with CBP and would like to defer this to the next NAFSA Technical Conference call.

