

# Student and Exchange Visitor Program Office

## SEVIS Technical Conference Call with the Educational Community

### Questions and Answers from Wednesday, February 22, 2006

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#### 1. December 29, 2005 versions of RTI User Manuals

Could you describe how the December 29, 2005 versions of the RTI User Manuals for both the F and M and the J programs have changed from the November 11, 2005 versions?

*RESPONSE:*

*The difference in the manuals include the following:*

- *Instructions for downloading the Adobe Reader, which is required for printing forms*
- *New screen prints that contain the Get Adobe Reader link*
- *Instructions for changing a password every 90 days (the button names have been changed to Yes/No)*
- *'Sensitive but Unclassified' was added to the bottom of all DHS and DoS reports*
- *A resource section has been added to both F/M and J manuals (emails, phone numbers, and links to more information)*

#### 2. Funding glitch when creating F-1 student transfer-in record

A member reported that when attempting to create an F-1 student transfer-in record in SEVIS, the DSO was unable to submit the record until dependent funding information was provided, even though the dependent record had previously been terminated in SEVIS. The DSO bypassed this by putting \$1 in the funding field, and then later removing the funding after the record was submitted.

*RESPONSE:*

*SEVP is aware of this issue and has created a System Change Request (SCR) to address this accordingly. We are currently considering this SCR for a future release. In the interim, filling in a \$1 and then later removing the funding after the record was submitted will be the temporary solution. Please note that this would only happen in the case where there is a Terminated dependent. If further guidance is needed when performing this action, please contact the SEVIS Help Desk.*



### 3. “Resolved” Help Desk tickets

A member opened a Help Desk ticket (the record needed to be active, but it was completed automatically although the change of status was not effective until a future date), but in order for the SEVIS Help Desk to resolve the issue, they requested the I797 change of status approval form. The member received a call on 1/6/2006 around 11am requesting the additional document, and then received an e-mail on 1/10/2006 around 9:00am saying that the ticket was RESOLVED (no option available that the ticket will be automatically/permanently closed in 10 days-just RESOLVED). The member spoke to a Tier 2 staff person, who told the member that he needed to call in again to the 1800 number to open the case with a new ticket number when the additional documentation is ready to be submitted. He said that this is the new procedure for pending tickets.

#### RESPONSE:

*If the SEVIS Help Desk requests additional information and/or documentation from a P/DSO or A/RO to complete a data fix, the official has 48 hours to provide the requested information. Given that the Help Desk is open from 8am-8pm EST, this would equate to 4 business days. (Guidance has been given to the Help Desk staff ensuring that it is 4 business days, not calendar days.) If the documentation is not received within the allotted timeframe, the ticket will be set to Resolved status and an e-mail will be automatically sent to the user notifying them that the ticket has been resolved. We strongly recommend that upon receipt of the email, the user verify the correction in SEVIS. If at that point the user finds that their 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 those 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 SEVIS Help Desk and open a new ticket for their issue.*

### 4. Input on development of 5-year J functionality in SEVIS 5.4

NAFSA is very interested in providing input towards the development of the 5-year J professor/research scholar functionality that is planned to be implemented in SEVIS 5.4. At what stage is the development process at this time? How can NAFSA be of assistance?

NAFSA remains interested in providing input on the development of the 5-year J professor/research scholar functionality that is planned to be implemented in SEVIS 5.4.

- o At what stage are you in the development process at this time?
- o Did you find useful the information NAFSA earlier provided to SEVP on this topic?
- o How can NAFSA continue to be of assistance in this process?

#### RESPONSE:

*The information NAFSA provided to the Department of State's Office of Exchange Coordination and Designation was very helpful. By utilizing this feedback in conjunction with other information, requirements were crafted for the changes to Section 62.20 of the Exchange Visitor Program regulations published in the Federal Register on May 19, 2005. The SEVIS Development Team will reflect these requirements in the implementation of SEVIS Release 5.4 (scheduled for Fall 2006), which is currently in development. The Department encourages the exchange community to continue to share suggested changes, enhancements, and expansions of the Program to foster the enrichment of the Exchange Visitor Program with us.*



## 5. Speed of J-1 RTI Lists versus F-1 Lists?

A member reports significant delays in the amount of time it is taking to review certain EV lists in SEVIS RTI (e.g. "All Exchange Visitors and Their Dependents" and "Active Status Exchange Visitors and Their Dependents"). At this particular school, these lists are quite long (over 1000 records), and a small delay between screens is understandable, but recently, the school discovered that it was taking minutes to move from one screen to another in these longer lists. They then compared it to similarly long lists of F-1 student records in RTI and were able to move relatively quickly (1-3 seconds) from one screen to another. Is it the case that J SEVIS is retrieving the entire list of records every time the user clicks the "Next" link, instead of just the next 20 records? Is this something that SEVP is already aware of?

*RESPONSE:*

*This issue is currently being investigated. The lists for "All Exchange Visitors and Their Dependents" and "Active Status Exchange Visitors and Their Dependents" differ from the lists for F & M students because they include dependents, which requires querying another table in the database. The F and M lists do not include dependents. This could be a cause for the longer wait on the J side, but we are investigating options for increasing the speed of this query.*

## 6. Port of Entry arrivals list in SEVIS

IIE's ARO staff use batch processing predominantly. We find this effective and efficient and have seen welcome improvements with each new release. Often enough AROs have to use RTI to obtain information contained in the EV's record such as the visa and arrival information.

Staff at IIE have noticed that the List of Port of Entry Arrivals includes data on exchange visitors who have left the program and returned home. i.e. the Program End date has passed, they are Inactive. In turn the list contains more and more records and has become less valuable as a useful tool in monitoring the travel activity of our sponsored participants. In reviewing the usefulness of this report, we would suggest either keeping the information limited to active exchange visitors or perhaps giving sponsors the capability to sort the information contained in the list by status, Program Begin Date, Family name etc.

Alternatively, and also helpful would be to have the records in the various lists include some sort of alphabet link; the numbers 1 2 3 etc are not helpful when you have several hundred records and you are searching for a name where you don't have the SEVIS ID.

*RESPONSE:*

*The Department of State has looked into this situation and has written a System Change Request (SCR) to limit the records posted on the List of Port of Entry Arrivals to only those records with a SEVIS status of Initial or Active. Because this SCR had been recently created, it is not assigned to a specific release.*

