U.S. Immigration
and Customs
Enforcement

HOW TO FILE THE I-17 PEITION TO BE APPROVED TO ENROLL NONIMMIGRANT STUDENTS (F OR M VISA)

The Student and Exchange Visitor Program (SEVP) Office is providing the following guidance to educational institutions applying for SEVP certification, in order to assist with filling out the Form I-17, *Petition for Approval of School Attendance by Non-Immigrant Students*, as required by regulation 8 CFR 214.3(h)(2).

IMPORTANT NOTICE
Per federal regulation 8CFR103.2(a), "fees are non-refundable and, except as otherwise provided in this chapter, must be paid when the application is filed." Accordingly, once a payment is made for an I-17 petition, this fee will not be refunded.

REGULATIONS
Regulations concerning school approval can be found at: http://www.ice.gov/sevis; click on Schools and Programs.

CERTIFICATION CRITERIA
If your institution does not meet the following basic requirements, it will be ineligible for SEVP certification. The school must be:
1. A bona fide school;
2. An established institution of learning;
3. Possess the necessary facilities, personnel, and finances to conduct instruction in recognized courses of study;
4. The institution must currently be engaged in instruction at the time of filing and NOT at some point prior to final adjudication;
5. Institutions applying for M classification (vocational AND technical training), must have programs which meet for a minimum of 18 hours per week if the program is primarily classroom instruction, or 22 hours per week if the program is primarily lab work;
6. English language schools must have programs that meet for a minimum of 18 hours per week.

The following institutions are ineligible for certification:
1. Public K-8 schools
2. Pre-school and/or day care programs
3. Home schools
4. Schools primarily based on distance learning or online
5. Adult education centers which are publicly funded
6. Flight schools that are not Part 141 or Part 142 certified
7. Schools offering only part-time programs which do not meet the hour requirements as defined by 8 CFR 214.2(f) and/or 8 CFR 214.2(m)

OVERVIEW OF THE I-17 PROCESS

1. A school submitting their first I-17 petition should obtain a temporary UserID to access SEVIS to submit the I-17 petition. Instructions on obtaining a UserID can be found at http://www.ice.gov/graphics/sevis/pdf/tempid.pdf.

2. Remit payment at https://www.pay.gov within 14 days of submitting the I-17 petition. To remit payment, click on Search Public Forms, and in the agency field, select "Homeland Security (DHS) Immigration and Customs Enforcement I-17 fee). Once payment is made, send an email to the School Certification Branch with the Pay.Gov tracking number, date of payment, amount, school name, and the state in which the school is located.

3. E-mail is the primary form of communication. Please ensure your email accepts all email from *.gov and is not treated as SPAM.

4. After payment is recorded, the School Certification Branch (SCB) will schedule an on-site visit. The Principal Designated School Official (PDSO) will be contacted by an inspector to schedule a mutually agreed upon time for an on-site visit of all campus locations. Please note: The inspector has 10 business days to return all required documentation to our office. For further information on the site visit, please see the "How to Prepare for a Site Visit" on our website. If for some reason, the PDSO or any of the DSOs cannot meet the inspector and the inspector shows up, the school will be responsible for payment of a second site visit.

5. The school will submit all required documentation to the inspector, which will be forwarded to the School Certification Branch. If the school is missing any required documentation on the day of the visit, this can be forwarded separately to our office. Once the School Certification Branch receives a complete file, the time of adjudication is approximately three months.

Field-by-Field Instructions
The following instructions pertain to each field number on the I-17 petition in SEVIS (note that the field numbers on the electronic version in SEVIS are not the same numbers that appear on the printed I-17):

1. Academic or Vocational Certification: In general, the following types of institutions should seek certification for F (Academic and Language) students:
   a. K-12 institutions
   b. Language Schools
   c. Degree issuing institutions of higher learning (bachelors, masters, etc.)
   d. Ministry, seminary, divinity, or other training to be employed as a head of a religious organization that provides religious services.
   e. Fine Arts, which is defined as dance, music, theatre, or photography

   The following types of institutions generally fall within the M (Vocational/Technical) certification:
   a. Post-secondary vocational schools, which does not issue a recognized degree. The credentials issued are diploma or certificate.
   b. Technical training
   c. Colleges which offer non-degree programs

   Institutions may seek either F or M certification, or both, depending on the types of **programs** that the school is seeking approval.

2. <u>Name of School System</u>: Institutions should file under the individual school name, unless filing as a school system. In this case, file under the school district name and list each school as a separate campus. Public school systems (or private K-12 systems with record keeping centralized at a main office or school) should simply file under the school name and need not list the high schools as separate campuses, but instead should just list the main location where the student records will be maintain and all SEVP-related documentation. For example, an archdiocese could file the petition under the name of the archdiocese and list central office as the location. The site visit will be conducted at this location and, if approved, the entire archdiocesan school system will be certified.

3. <u>Mailing Address</u>: This address is where all mailed all mailed correspondence will be sent. This may be a P.O., but should include the complete street address for overnight delivery purposes. If the school is applying with multiple locations, enter the address of the main location.

4. <u>Location Address</u>: The location of the school is where the site visit will be conducted. For schools applying as school systems, this should be the equivalent of the main location where records will be maintained.

5. <u>School type</u>: Public institutions are defined as those funded through state, local, or federal funds. If this institution is filing as private, an owner name will be required. If the owner is an individual, list his or her name in this field. If the institution is instead operated via a Board of Directors or Trustees, this may be indicated here. If the institution is incorporated, list the corporation name and the governing body. The owner's address must be a street address and cannot be a P.O. Box.

6. <u>Education engaged in</u>: You may select multiple types of education in this field. Only select the fields which the school is seeking certification to enroll non-immigrant students.
   a. If the school is offers a full-time English as a Second Language program, indicate the school is engaged in English Language Training. If English is adjunct or will be taken in conjunction with other courses, do not indicate English language training.
   b. Do not include reference to any programs below the kindergarten level, as these are not approvable for non-immigrant students.

7. <u>Sessions</u>: Indicate in this field the type of sessions the school operates under. Other may be selected for annual and/or continuous enrollment. Alternatively, you may check "other" if the school operates on a type of session not given as a choice, for example, an "annual" session system. If you list "quarters" in Field 7, you should list four dates in Field 8.

8. <u>Registration</u>: Session start dates should match the type of session offered. For example, if the school checked quarters, four session start dates must be listed. Indicate the **month and day** in this field.

9. <u>Date of establishment</u>: To file a petition, the institution must currently conducting instruction in the course of study seeking approval. For example, if your institution operates multiple locations which are already SEVIS certified, and you are opening a new campus which holds only interim accreditation, it still may be eligible for certification. If you believe that your institution may fall into this category, contact the school certification branch.

10. <u>Authorizations</u>: Include all approvals obtained by the State. Do not abbreviate.

11. <u>Accreditations</u>: Include any type of accreditation or approval held from a **nationally recognized** accrediting body. A list of the accrediting bodies recognized for post-secondary education by the U.S. Department of Education can be found at: http://www.ed.gov/admins/finaid/accred/index.html.
12. <u>Areas of study</u>: Check only those fields in which the school is seeking approval to enroll non-immigrant students.
13. <u>Degrees available</u>: Check the degrees that the school wishes to seek certification for non-immigrant students. Credentials not listed (such as certificates or diplomas) should be listed in the "other" section.
14. <u>Education engaged in</u>: Leave all drop down boxes BLANK except those that apply to the type of school AND programs the school is seeking certification. Indicate English language training only if the school intends to issue Form I-20 specifically for English as a Second Language.
15. <u>Sessions</u>: Indicate when sessions for non-immigrant students will be held.
16. <u>Admission requirements</u>: Include all admission requirements for non-immigrant students. For public high schools, payment of the full, unsubsidized per-capita cost of education must be included as an admission requirement.
17. <u>Courses of Study</u>: List the programs that you intend to enroll non-immigrant students and the approximate duration of each program. For non-degree related programs or English language programs, you must list the hours per week of instruction, hours per week of lab work, number of weeks of the program, and total hours to complete the program. Public secondary schools should acknowledge F students may only attend one academic year in this field.
18. <u>Graduation Requirements</u>: This field should include graduation requirements. If the school is applying for multiple programs, a catalog or statement will be required to list the requirements for each program.
19. <u>Causes for expulsion</u>: Indicate the expulsion requirements that apply to non-immigrant students.
20. <u>Institution information</u>: Provide approximate figures in this field.
21. <u>Cost</u>: This figure should be the current year's cost. For public high schools, this value should be the full, unsubsidized, per capita cost of education. This should include all sources of funding (local and state).

Documentation Requirements
Please see the FAQ which outlines documentation requirements.

Questions/Concerns/Commendations/To Report Problems
If you have any questions, concerns, or wish to recognize an individual from the SEVP office, send an email to schoolcert.sevis@dhs.gov. SEVP Address:

800 K Street, NW
Suite 1000
Washington, DC 20536
Phone: 202-305-2346
Fax: 202-353-3723