

**DHS**

**ICE  
SEVP**



**Homeland  
Security**

**U.S. Department of Homeland Security**

**U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement  
Student and Exchange Visitor Program**

# **Recertification: Highlights and Issues**

**Fall 2012**

**DHS**

**ICE  
SEVP**

## **Introduction**

*This presentation focuses on informing you, our most valued stakeholders, of the important issues surrounding Recertification. It also provides you with a preview of some new procedures SEVP will soon be initiating to increase efficiency and shorten the amount of time it takes to review initial certification applications.*

*You can download this presentation from the SEVP website as a Portable Document Format (pdf.), which includes presenters' talking points.*

<http://www.ice.gov/sevis/outreach.htm>



**Homeland  
Security**

**DHS**

**ICE  
SEVP**



**Homeland  
Security**

## **Agenda**

- **School Certification Unit**
  - Current and Future Initial Certification Process
  - Recertification Basics
  - Recertification Processing Times
  - Form I-17 Updates
- **SEVP Updates:**
  - Study in the States Initiative
  - SEVIS/SEVIS II
  - Policy
  - SEVP Analysis and Operations Center (SAOC)
  - Field Representatives
  - SEVP Response Center (SRC)

**DHS**

ICE  
SEVP

SCU



Homeland  
Security

# School Certification Unit



**DHS**

**ICE  
SEVP**

**SCU  
Update**



**Homeland  
Security**

## **Initial Certification Process – Now, and Coming Soon**

- **Current Status:**

- Average processing time over 270 days
- Limited number of adjudicators
- Intensive process
- Process requires multiple requests for evidence (RFEs)

- **New Process:**

- Sixty-day average to process a petition
- Minimalized RFEs
- Uses additional staff resources
- Estimated implementation in 2013



5

- **Current status:**

- Difficult to process new petitions with only a few adjudicators.
- 90-day due dates
- There is a lack of information (unless we call or enter into the adjudication process).
- Process is intensive – requires duplicative pieces of evidence.

- **Once updates have been adjudicated:**

- Sixty-day (average) process will trim more than 200 days from the process schedule.
- We will minimize the work created on our end and streamline the process using:
  - Lessons learned through the Recertification process
  - Feedback from schools
  - Internal SEVP working group

**DHS**

**ICE  
SEVP**

**SCU  
Update**



**Homeland  
Security**

## **Features of the 60-Day Initial Certification Process**

- **Standardization**
  - Evidence
  - Templates
  - Language
- **Timely processing**
  - Sixty-day process that starts once a petition is filed
- **Centralized communication on the *Study in the States* website**
  - Updated tutorials
  - Evidence requirements
  - Step-by-step information on how to file properly

6

- **Standardization**
  - Templates will be standardized
  - Common language and definitions will be standardized.
- All this information will be found on the Study in the States website.
- The main difference is our goal will be educate schools before they petition.

# DHS

ICE  
SEVP

SCU  
Update



Homeland  
Security

## Steps of the New 60-Day Initial Certification Process

	Current Process	New Process
<b>Pre-Filing</b>	School officials may call or search for resources, but there is no required work before pre-filing.	School officials must complete a tutorial and review evidentiary requirements.
<b>Filing</b>	School officials must submit Form I-17 and payment online. School officials frequently fail to provide payment, and SCU must then send an RFE for a signed Form I-17 before being able to schedule a site visit.	School officials must submit complete packages to include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Signed Form I-17</li><li>- SEVIS electronic submission of Form I-17</li><li>- Payment</li><li>- Evidence</li></ul>
<b>Filed</b>	SCU considers the petition filed once school officials make payment and the RFE for the signed Form I-17 has been sent and submitted.	SCU will reject the file as improperly filed if the package is not complete upon submission.
<b>Site Visit</b>	As the first step of the adjudication process, a site visit is scheduled and evidence is collected at the time of that site visit.	SCU will schedule and conduct a site visit. At the same time, an analyst will be reviewing information found in the complete package that school officials filed.
<b>Review</b>	The case analyst reviews the site visit report, and RFEs are sent for any required evidence that is missing.	SCU will issue a Notice of Intent to Deny (NOID) to the school if any required evidence is missing.
<b>Adjudication</b>	The adjudicator reviews the file, sends another RFE and issues a decision.	The adjudicator will review the file and issue a decision.

7

- There is currently a lot of waiting for answers regarding:
  - Requests for payment
  - Evidence
  - Site Visits
- The new process will eliminate all of this waiting:
  - Example: We will be able to save up to 30 days in pending review time per case for something as simple as conducting the site visit while an analyst is doing a preliminary review.
- Issuing a NOID instead of an RFE will streamline the requests made and the decision once rendered.
- Requiring school to submit evidence, payment, and a signed I-17 upon filing will eliminate the current average of 3 requests per school that the current process almost requires with every petition.
  - This will also discourage schools that may not currently meet regulatory requirements from petitioning.

**DHS**

**ICE  
SEVP**

**SCU  
Update**



**Homeland  
Security**

## The Basics for Recertification

- **After receiving the 180-day notice:**
  - Review the Form I-17.
  - File necessary updates immediately.
- **After adjudication of the updates:**
  - Send your Recertification package.
  - Submit your Recertification petition in SEVIS.
- **The Recertification checklist is on the SEVP website at the following address:**

<http://www.ice.gov/doclib/sevis/pdf/recertification-checklist.pdf>

8

- Most schools are still failing to file for Recertification.
- Only the PDSO can file for Recertification.
- All updates must be adjudicated prior to filing for Recertification.
- You will receive a response from SEVP within three business days.
- When your school is recertified, you will receive a scorecard that may have flagged items on it. These items may or may not require updates to the Form I-17.
- You can access the Recertification Attestation Statement on the SEVP website at:  
<http://www.ice.gov/doclib/sevis/pdf/recertification-attestation-statement.pdf>
- You can access the Recertification Withdrawal Statement on the SEVP website at:  
<http://www.ice.gov/doclib/sevis/pdf/recertification-withdrawal.pdf>
- Questions about the Recertification process?  
Call the SEVP School CERT LINE at 703-603-3400.



**DHS**

**ICE  
SEVP**

**SCU  
Update**



**Homeland  
Security**

## **Recertification Processing Times**

- **Currently processing petitions with September certification expiration dates (CEDs).**
- **You may receive an RFE during the adjudication process.**
  - Requires a response within 15 calendar days.



9

- SCU receives approximately 120 updates per week.
- As a CED approaches, pending Recertification updates are monitored daily.

# DHS

ICE  
SEVP

SCU  
Update



Homeland  
Security

## Form I-17 Updates

- **Ownership Change**
  - School must report this within 60 days
  - \$1,700 petition fee
- **Change of Main Location**
  - \$655 petition fee
- **State Licensure**
  - List the state licensing body in this field.
- **English Language Training Programs**
  - Must possess or have applied for accreditation by December 14, 2011

10

- **Change of Main Location:**
  - Please allow a generous timeframe, as these updates require a full review.
- Changing location of an instructional site does not require a fee or site visit.
- **State Licensure:**
  - If exempt from state licensing, please indicate “exempt” and the name of the state licensing body.
- **English Language Training Programs**
  - For schools with institutional accreditation, school must provide a letter from the accrediting agency stating that the Language Training program is accredited.

**DHS**

**ICE  
SEVP**

**SCU  
Update**



**Homeland  
Security**

## **Form I-17 Updates & Recertification**

- **Updates with upcoming CEDs are high priority.**
  - The Update Pending Statement is no longer required.
- **Updates submitted after school recertification do not receive expedited service.**
  - SCU may require additional evidence.



11

- Every effort is made to adjudicate petitions with upcoming CEDs before the CED.
- General updates have a backlog of 1500 cases.
- Updates submitted (due to flagged items) after a school is recertified are not expedited.

**DHS**

**ICE  
SEVP**

**SCU  
Update**



**Homeland  
Security**

## **Form I-17 Updates – P/DSO Changes**

- **Adding a principal designated school official (PDSO) or designated school official (DSO) who has served as a PDSO or DSO at another school:**
  - Does not require adjudication
  - Can be changed by the school at any time
- **For urgent P/DSO changes on a pending update:**
  - Call the SEVIS Help Desk at 800-892-4829.



12

- **Adding a P/DSO who has served as a P/DSO at another school:**
  - Use the “Existing P/DSO” button.
- **For urgent P/DSO changes on a pending update:**
  - The SEVIS Help Desk can help change your school officials while the Updates Team continues to review any other changes to your Form I-17 petition.

DHS

ICE  
SEVP

SCU  
Update



Homeland  
Security

## Form I-17 Updates – For P/DSO Changes

- **Submit your P/DSO update in SEVIS, and at the same time, e-mail all of the following evidence:**
  - Proof of citizenship
  - Proof that the school official is a regularly employed school member
    - ◆ Include the school site at which the DSO is located.
- **Submit signed Form I-17**
  - Include Page 3 and both pages of Supplement A

**Send all evidence to:**  
[DSOPDSO@ice.dhs.gov](mailto:DSOPDSO@ice.dhs.gov)

13

- In response to stakeholder frustration, SEVP has changed procedures regarding P/DSO update processing times.
  - We are asking that schools submit their petition update in SEVIS and submit **all** of the necessary evidence at one time.
    - This will eliminate the lengthy RFE process.
- **Proof of Citizenship** (*one of the following*)
  - Copy of U.S. passport (current or expired);
  - Copy of U.S. birth certificate;
  - Copy of alien registration card; or
  - Copy of naturalization/citizenship certificate
- **Proof that the school official is a regularly employed school member** (*one of the following*)
  - Pay stub
  - Letter of Employment

**DHS**

**ICE  
SEVP**

**SCU  
Update**



**Homeland  
Security**

## **Form I-17 Updates – For P/DSO Changes**

- **Complete the web-based P/DSO training, and submit a copy of the issued certificate at the following address:**

<http://www.ice.gov/exec/training/login.asp>

- **If PDSO or DSO changes are necessary and the Form I-17 petition is locked,**
  - Contact the SEVIS Help Desk at 800-892-4829 or [sevishelpdesk@hp.com](mailto:sevishelpdesk@hp.com).



14

- **Proof of Citizenship** (*one of the following*)
  - Copy of U.S. passport (current or expired);
  - Copy of U.S. birth certificate;
  - Copy of alien registration card; or
  - Copy of naturalization/citizenship certificate
- **Proof that the school official is a regularly employed school member** (*one of the following*)
  - Pay stub
  - Letter of Employment

**DHS**

ICE  
SEVP

*Study in the  
States  
Initiative*



Homeland  
Security

# *Study in the States* **Initiative**



# DHS

ICE  
SEVP

*Study in the  
States  
Initiative*



Homeland  
Security

# STUDY in the STATES

*Study in the States* website is part of a DHS initiative to make information more accessible and encourage the best and brightest F and M students to study and learn about expanded post-graduate opportunities in the United States.



**Find Us Online:**

[StudyintheStates.dhs.gov](http://StudyintheStates.dhs.gov)

[Facebook.com/StudyintheStates](https://www.facebook.com/StudyintheStates)

[@StudyinStates](https://twitter.com/StudyinStates)

16

- Study in the States is part of a major academic engagement initiative that was introduced by DHS Secretary Napolitano in September 2011.
- The Office of Academic Engagement (OAE) was also at this time. Its mission is to build new, and leverage existing relationships within the academic community.
- On this website, you'll find up-to-the-minute news and information related to nonimmigrant international students, as well as detailed information on pertinent topics such as maintaining student visa status or using newfound skills in the workplace while here in the United States.



DHS

ICE  
SEVP

*Study in the  
States  
Initiative*



Homeland  
Security

# STUDY in the STATES

- ***Student to Student: Studying in the States***

- New video that provides prospective and current international students with key tips they should keep in mind in order to stay in compliance with immigration rules.

- ♦ View it on the DHS YouTube Channel.



17

DHS

ICE  
SEVP

*Study in the  
States*  
Initiative



Homeland  
Security

## STUDY in the STATES

- *Study in the States* has over **1,100 Twitter followers** and over **1,000 Facebook fans**.
- Visitors from **198 countries and territories** have viewed *Study in the States*.
- Web pages from **185 schools** have links to *Study in the States*.

facebook



**DHS**

**ICE  
SEVP**

**SEVIS/SEVIS II**



**Homeland  
Security**

# **SEVIS SEVIS II**



**DHS**

**ICE  
SEVP**

**SEVIS/SEVIS II  
Update**

**SEVIS Update**

- **SEVIS Release 6.11**
  - Release date to be determined
- **Several improvements included in the next release:**
  - Can handle common data fixes within the application to avoid backlogs

**IMPROVEMENTS**

 **Homeland  
Security**

- The improvements referenced in the second bullet are associated with the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and the U.S. Department of State (DoS) System Support Users.
  - Stakeholders will now be able to perform various data fix-related functions directly within SEVIS (instead of having to send those requests to the SEVP Production Support Team).
  - A few examples are:
    - For the DHS System Support User – the ability to make changes to a student’s Cap Gap record
    - For the DoS System Support User - the ability to make changes to EV statuses

**DHS**

**ICE  
SEVP**

**SEVIS/SEVIS II  
Update**



## **SEVIS II Update**

- **The SEVIS II Visualization Model has finished.**
- **A series of SEVIS II webinars is upcoming.**
  - Schedule is available on *Study in the States*.



- SEVIS II Visualization Model will be used as a training tool.
- SEVP is exploring ways to make the Visualization Model available via the internet.
  - A way to get feedback from stakeholders who are unable to attend conferences.
- Webinars will be on a variety of SEVIS II topics.
- The SEVIS II Life Cycle Cost Estimate (LCCE) is being updated.
  - A planning tool to assist in basing time and cost estimates.

**DHS**

**ICE  
SEVP**

**Policy**



**Homeland  
Security**

# Policy



# DHS

ICE  
SEVP

Policy  
Update



Homeland  
Security

## Policy Update

- **Regulatory Agenda**

- 8 CFR 214
  - ♦ Revision to include elements necessary for Initial Operating Capacity (IOC) for SEVIS II
- Other initiatives
  - ♦ New comment process for SEVP guidance documents via *Study in the States*



23

- Form I-797 is going to phase out. SEVP is currently working on determining a new process .

**DHS**

ICE  
SEVP

SAOC



Homeland  
Security

# SAOC

## SEVP Analysis & Operations Center





# DHS

ICE  
SEVP

SAOC  
Update



Homeland  
Security

## Student Support

- **Specific student issues and questions:**
  - Specific SEVIS records
  - Benefits for a specific student
  - Port of entry issues
  - Visa and class of admission issues
  - Students whose schools have been closed
  - Outreach activities



25

- **Specific SEVIS records** – when a policy or regulatory analysis is needed.
  - Record status
  - Status changes
- **Benefits for a specific student**
  - Liaison with USCIS, SSA, DMV
  - Employment
  - Reduced course load, etc.
- **Visa and class of admission issues**
  - As related to SEVIS/SEVP
- Facilitates letters sent to students as a result of a school closure or a school's loss of certification.
- Much of the work is done via a tracking tool to track compliance with:
  - Students' timely departures, transfers, reinstatements or change of status



## Student Support, *cont.*

- **Referrals come from the following:**
  - SEVP Response Center (SRC)
  - SEVIS Help Desk
  - Other units/agencies



26

- **Instances where the SAOC Student Support Team is needed:**
  - **SEVIS Help Desk**
    - Approving or denying a SEVIS record's return to *Active* status.
    - Granting data fixes due to poor SEVIS record maintenance.
  - **SRC**
    - Answering the public's questions regarding F or M students
  - **DMV/SSA**
    - Requests for assistance with obtaining or renewing a driver's license or obtaining a SSN from SSA.
  - **Redress Trip**
    - Assigned by TSA - where a student or exchange visitor has filed a Redress in regards to secondary inspection at the port of entry.
    - It is another way to request a flag removal.

# DHS

ICE  
SEVP

SAOC  
Update



Homeland  
Security

## Data Analysis

- **Perform data analyses and research studies**
  - Identify factors and trends
- **Analyses and studies results are in high demand by these groups:**
  - U.S. Congress
  - Foreign embassies
  - Media
  - Various DHS components
  - Other agencies



27

- **Perform data analyses and research studies**
  - Identify factors and trends that affect SEVP-certified schools and the nonimmigrant student community.

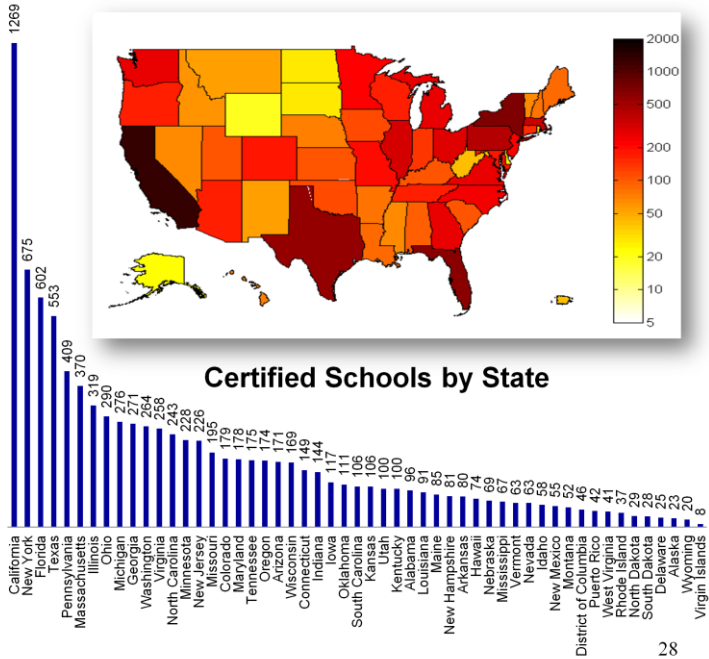
# DHS

## ICE SEVP

## SAOC Update



### Homeland Security



- This is just one example of the type of information the SAOC can generate.
  - This, and similar types of information are available to you on the SEVP website.

**DHS**

ICE  
SEVP

Field  
Representatives



Homeland  
Security

# Field Representatives



**DHS**

**ICE  
SEVP**

**Field  
Representatives  
Update**



**Homeland  
Security**

## **SEVP Field Representative Hiring Update**

- **Four classes of Field Representatives (FRs):**
  - **First Class**
    - ♦ Projected to be announced in 4Q2012.
  - **Second Class**
    - ♦ Projected to be announced in 1Q2013.
  - **Third Class**
    - ♦ Projected to be announced in 2Q2013.
  - **Fourth Class**
    - ♦ Projected to be announced in 3Q2013.
- **Eight-week training classes will be held in Washington, D.C.**

30

- **There will be 15 Field Representatives per class.**
  - Five from each region:
    - Eastern
    - Central
    - Western
- **First Class locations:**
  - Eastern: GA, NC, MD, OH and north of NY city
  - Central: FL (Miami and south), TX (Dallas and north), TN, Chicago, MN
  - Western: San Diego, Los Angeles, San Francisco, OR, WA, AK
- **Second Class locations:**
  - Eastern: southern VA, northern VA, NJ, PA, MA
  - Central: FL (Tampa), TX (Houston), MS, LA, MO, IN
  - Western: east San Diego, central CA, OK, AZ, CO
- **Third Class locations: TBD**
- **Fourth Class locations: TBD**

**DHS**

**ICE  
SEVP**

**Field  
Representatives  
Update**



**Homeland  
Security**

## **SEVP Field Representative Hiring Update, *cont.***

- **Go to the USAjobs.gov website if interested in federal employment.**
  - Establish an account
  - Upload résumé
- **SEVP will send a broadcast message when posting the job announcement.**



31

- The broadcast message SEVP will send out will also provide information on how long the posting will be open (how long applications will be accepted).

**DHS**

**ICE  
SEVP**

**SRC**



**Homeland  
Security**

# **SRC**

## **SEVP Response Center**





# DHS

ICE  
SEVP

SRC  
Update



Homeland  
Security

## SRC Summary

- **A single point-of-contact for program inquiries**
- **Began operations on January 26, 2009**
- **Activity in 2012** (*as of September*):
  - 20,147 inquiries resolved
    - ◆ 11,104 phone inquiries
    - ◆ 5,620 e-mail inquiries
    - ◆ 3,423 voicemail inquiries



33

# DHS

ICE  
SEVP

SRC  
Update



Homeland  
Security

## SRC Update

- **SRC**
  - Receives an extremely high volume of calls and e-mails
  - Devising strategies to provide a more timely first call resolution
  - Hours of operation:
    - ◆ Monday through Friday  
(excluding federal holidays)
    - ◆ 7:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.  
Eastern time



34

- In collaboration with other ICE divisions, SRC is heavily involved with providing guidance to students and school officials during school closures (which has resulted in increased telephone and e-mail volume).
- In an effort to provide stakeholders with better customer service regarding student issues, school certification guidance and policy issues; the SRC is working with other SEVP internal units to create a knowledge base for SRC Customer Service Representatives (CSRs) to provide more timely first call resolution.

DHS

ICE  
SEVP

SRC  
Update



Homeland  
Security

## Enhanced SRC (E-SRC)

- **Planned enhancements for the SRC:**
  - Additional resources
    - ◆ Directly answer policy and operational questions
  - More robust system
  - Provide assistance with accessing SEVIS II
  - Route technical questions to the SEVIS Help Desk



35

- Additional resources means your inquiry will no longer have to be transferred to another SEVP unit for resolution.
- The SRC is currently overhauling its telephony system to a more robust voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) telephony system which will allow its CSR's to handle voice and e-mail inquiries more efficiently. The system will also feature a self-service menu and options.
- You will no longer have to call the SEVIS Help Desk separately.
  - Provide assistance for accessing SEVIS II.

**DHS**

ICE  
SEVP

SRC  
Update



Homeland  
Security

## Who to Contact?

**Policy &  
Regulation  
Questions**

**SEVIS  
(technical)  
Questions**

**SRC**

703-603-3400  
or  
[sevp@dhs.gov](mailto:sevp@dhs.gov)

**SEVIS Help Desk**

800-892-4829  
or  
[SEVIShelpdesk@hp.com](mailto:SEVIShelpdesk@hp.com)

# DHS

ICE  
SEVP



Homeland  
Security

