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U.S. Department of Homeland Security

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

Recertification: Highlights and Issues

Fall 2012

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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>



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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)

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School Certification Unit



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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 –
After adjudication of updates:**
 - Sixty days to process a petition
 - Minimalized RFEs
 - Uses additional staff resources
 - Estimated implementation in 2013


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- **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 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

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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

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- **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.

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Steps of the New 60-Day Initial Certification Process

	Current Process	New Process
Pre-Filing	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.
Filing	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">- Signed Form I-17- SEVIS electronic submission of Form I-17- Payment- Evidence
Filed	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.
Site Visit	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.
Review	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.
Adjudication	The adjudicator reviews the file, sends another RFE and issues a decision.	The adjudicator will review the file and issue a decision.


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- 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.

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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 to SEVIS.
- **The Recertification checklist is on the SEVP website at the following address:**

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

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- 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.

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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.




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

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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


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- **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.

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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.



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- 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.

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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.




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- **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.

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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

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- 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

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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.



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- **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

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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

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

[@StudyinStates](https://www.instagram.com/StudyinStates)

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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.



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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*.

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twitter 

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SEVIS Update

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

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SEVIS/SEVIS II
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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.

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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*



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

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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



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- **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



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- **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.

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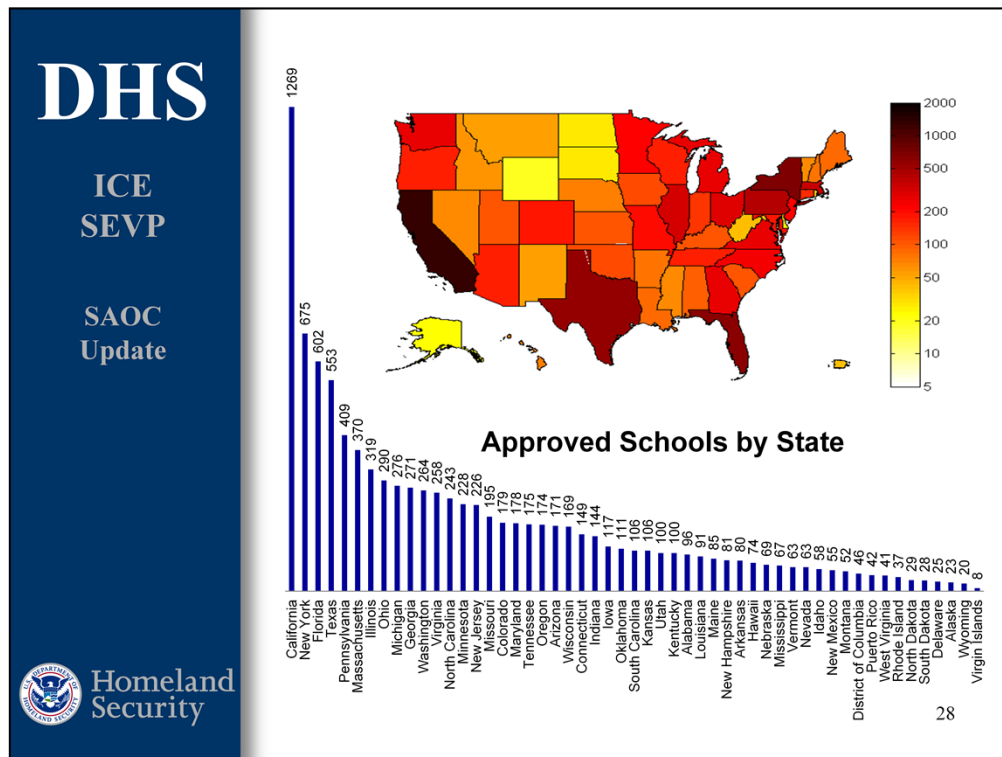
Data Analysis

- **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



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



- 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.

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Field Representatives



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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.**

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- **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**

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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.**



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- 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).

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SRC

SEVP Response Center



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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



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SRC Update

- **SRC**
 - Receives an extremely high volume of calls and e-mails
 - ♦ Answers each one
 - Hours of operation:
 - ♦ Monday through Friday
(excluding federal holidays)
 - ♦ 7:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.
Eastern time



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- Your calls and e-mails are very important to us.

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Enhanced SRC (E-SRC)

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



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- Additional resources means your inquiry will no longer have to be transferred to another SEVP unit for resolution.
- You will no longer have to call the SEVIS Help Desk separately.
 - Provide assistance for accessing SEVIS II.

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SRC
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Who to Contact?

**Policy &
Regulation
Questions**

SRC

703-603-3400
or
sevp@dhs.gov

**SEVIS
(technical)
Questions**

SEVIS Help Desk

800-892-4829
or
SEVIShelpdesk@hp.com

Urgent technical issues:
Toolbox.SEVIS@dhs.gov

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