

# NAFSA/Department of State Consular Affairs Liaison Call

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### 1. Technical problems with DS-160 on-line NIV application

**NAFSA Question.** Members have reported that their students and scholars have had problems accessing the new on-line DS-160, namely that the form times out and there appear to be technical glitches. Does DOS have advice for visa applicants who experience problems accessing the on-line DS-160?

**NAFSA summary of DOS response:** The DS-160 is an interactive form whose functionality is evolving. DOS is aware that there was a major systems failure due to combination of factors in early March. As of today, many of the technical issues, including the latency or ‘timing out’ issue, have been resolved. In the case of some countries with limited bandwidth, posts have disabled the photo-capture to help the process run more smoothly.

The DS-160 has been deployed in 174 posts to date. All posts must implement the DS-160 by May 31, 2010. If there are problems using the form, DOS recommends that visa applicants check with the Consulate they are planning to visit to see if there are any DS-160 fixes particular to that post. DOS is confident that all posts can implement DS-160 as scheduled; however, if a post can’t use the DS-160 due to unforeseen circumstances, they may revert to the old forms (DS-156, 157, 158). DOS strongly urges visa applicants to seek specific instructions from the post if that happens.

[www.travel.state.gov](http://www.travel.state.gov) ([http://travel.state.gov/visa/frvi/forms/forms\\_4230.html](http://travel.state.gov/visa/frvi/forms/forms_4230.html)) has list of all posts currently using the DS-160. Until the next version of the DS-160 is released, the old forms will remain on line as backup, but DOS doesn’t anticipate having to use them. We’ll know better in June.

### 2. 9 FAM Appendix on naming conventions no longer available on web

**NAFSA Question.** The link to the [9 FAM Appendix F home page](#) to Section 500 (Guides on Proper Names and Name Citing, at <http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/87981.pdf>) does not retrieve that document. When you click on the link, it reads:”We’re sorry. That page can’t be found and may have moved.” Is it being revised? Is there a timeline for when it will reappear on the web site?

**NAFSA summary of DOS response:** Due to security concerns, as of November 9, 2009, the naming conventions have been removed from public distribution.

Note: NAFSA has asked that DOS make the non-sensitive information related to the database aspect of SEVIS available to the public. DOS will follow up with SEVP, and this will be revisited on our next call.

### 3. Status on annual student and exchange visitor cable

**NAFSA Question.** Since May 2006, the State Department has published a cable to all diplomatic and consular posts that outlines the procedure for expediting student and exchange visitor visa applications. The last cable was published in February 2009. These cables have been extremely helpful for our incoming students and scholars in obtaining their visas. Is another cable of this nature going to be going out to posts in 2010?

**NAFSA summary of DOS response:** After the liaison call, the cable was posted to the DOS Web site, and is also available on the NAFSA Web site at:

<http://www.nafsa.org/resourcelibrary/default.aspx?id=20113>

### 4. Impact of recent travel warnings for Mexico on TCN visa processing

**NAFSA Question.** Given the [recent travel warnings for Mexico](#), membership is interested in whether the Department of State anticipates any impact on third country national (TCN) visa applications in posts in Mexico.

**NAFSA summary of DOS response:** Due to the unpredictable nature of current events in Mexico, visa applicants should check with the post where they plan to apply. The best way to see if a Consulate is open for business is to check its website, but even then sometimes events develop very quickly. If there is a disruption it's going to be for everyone, not just TCNs.

The US Consulate in Nuevo Laredo is now open to the public starting April 13, 2010.

### 5. Increased use of “Qualification Questionnaire” in visa applications

**NAFSA Question.** Members have noticed an increase in the use of the “Qualification Questionnaire” in visa applications involving technology-related business or study (for example the [Qualification Questionnaire used in Mumbai](#)). We understand that the new DS-160 will allow the Consulates to make quicker determinations on administrative processing, possibly even before the applicant arrives at the Consulate. Will this decrease the use of the Qualification Questionnaire?

**NAFSA summary of DOS response:** DOS acknowledged posts in certain countries use the Qualification Questionnaire to gather all the information needed to determine visa eligibility up front; this helps officers get adequate information in the system so that people can go through the Mantis process, which right now is at 11 working days—much better than a year ago at this time. That's the intent with the questionnaire, and DOS is always looking to make it better. The DS-160 provides an opportunity for that, but DOS doesn't anticipate it being implemented right away—perhaps in a year's time. With the DS-160, posts can direct applicants to answer further questions that may arise without them having to return to post. This is a best practice DOS hopes to make available worldwide, but in the interim, posts have to use the Qualification Questionnaire for technology transfers and security concerns.