SEVIS Release 6.10 Anticipated System Changes

April 13, 2012
Estimated Production Release Date: April 20, 2012

The following summarizes the anticipated system changes to SEVIS with Release 6.10.

F/M School Officials

Modify H-1B Cap-Gap Business Rules

The business rules to apply H-1B Cap-Gap upon receipt of an F-1 to H-1B change of status from the Computer-Linked Application Information Management System (CLAIMS) will change. Several new checks will determine eligibility for either a status or status and employment extension.

First, the following existing criteria will remain in place to determine eligibility:

- F-1 student record in *Active* status
- Change of status to H-1B

Second, the following new rules will check that the F-1 student record has either a program end date or optional practical training (OPT) end date that qualifies for an H-1B cap-gap:

- Without an *Approved* Status, Current or Future Post-Completion OPT: Program end date must be between 2/1 – 9/30 of the current year
- With an *Approved* Status, Current or Future Approved Post-Completion OPT: Latest OPT end date must be between 4/1 – 9/30 of the current year

Last, the following new rules will verify that the F-1 to H-1B change of status receipt from CLAIMS qualifies for an H-1B cap-gap:

- Pending status: Receipt from CLAIMS must occur between April and September of the current year
- Approved status: Receipt from CLAIMS must occur between April and September of the current year and the benefit start date must be 10/1 of the current year

Upon receipt of a *Pending* or *Approved* status F-1 to H-1B change of status from CLAIMS, the Student and Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS) will run the above checks as applicable. If the F-1 student record qualifies for an H-1B cap-gap, the following actions will occur:

- Without an *Approved* status, current or future post-completion OPT:
    - Comment detailing status extension will be added
    - If exists, filed or waitlisted cap-gap extension will be removed
- With an *Approved* status, current or future approved post-completion OPT:
    - Comment detailing status and employment extension will be added
    - OPT end date will be set to 9/30 of the current year
    - If exists, filed or waitlisted cap-gap extension will be removed

Conversely, if a *Pending* or *Approved* status F-1 to H-1B change of status is received from CLAIMS and the F-1 student record does not qualify for an H-1B cap-gap, different rules will apply. The same rules for a non-qualified F-1 student record will also apply for receipt of a *Denied* or *Withdrawn* status F-1 to H-1B change of status receipt from CLAIMS. For these situations, the following actions apply:

- If exists, filed or waitlisted cap-gap extension will be removed

- If exists, either status or status and extension comment will be removed
- If previously extended, OPT end date will roll back to the original approved date
- If none of the above three bullets apply, no action

Complete F-1 with Denied or Withdrawn H-1B

New logic will be put in place to determine if an *Active* status F-1 student record should be set to Completed status upon receipt of a *Denied* or *Withdrawn* F-1 to H-1B change of status from CLAIMS. The following rules will apply:

- Without an *Approved* Status, current or future post-completion OPT: If the *Denied* or *Withdrawn* status change of status is received after the original grace period (i.e., program end date plus 60 days), the F-1 student record will be set to Completed status immediately
- With an *Approved* Status, current or future approved post-completion OPT: If the *Denied* or *Withdrawn* status change of status is received after the original grace period (i.e., latest OPT end date plus 60 days), SEVIS will set the F-1 student record to *Completed* status immediately

If the record does not meet the above criteria, the F-1 student record will stay in *Active* status. The existing nightly jobs will remain in place to set the Active status student to either *Completed* or *Terminated* status when applicable.

Disable Cap-Gap Extension Functionality

The Student and Exchange Visitor Program (SEVP) will have the ability to disable cap-gap extension functionality. If disabled, a designated school official (DSO) will not have the ability to enter a filed or waitlisted cap-gap extension or edit an existing request. In SEVIS, this means that the cap-gap extension link will not display on an otherwise eligible F-1 student record.

Validate Primary Major for OPT Extension Requests

Currently, a DSO has the option to request a 17-month OPT extension if the following conditions are met:

- F-1 student record in *Active* status
- Education level of bachelor's, master's, or doctorate
- Student has a current, *Approved* status, post-completion OPT segment
- No 17-month OPT extension in *Requested*, *Pending*, or *Approved* status exists

New validation will be added to check for a science, technology, engineering, or math (STEM)-designated primary major. Therefore, in order for the 'Extend' link to display to the DSO, the F-1 student record will need to meet all of the existing conditions as well as have a STEM-designated primary major. Otherwise, the 'Extend' link will not be available.

NOTE: The current list of DHS-approved 17-month extension degree programs is available at http://www.ice.gov/sevis/stemlist.htm.

Restrict Form I-17 Updates on a Recertification Application

SEVIS will no longer allow updates to the Form I-17, "Petition for Approval of School for Attendance by Nonimmigrant Student," as part of the initial submission of a recertification application. Therefore, the principal designated school official (PDSO) must no longer initiate or click through all five pages of the Form I-17 to submit a recertification application. Rather, when applying for recertification, the PDSO will see instructional text that provides guidelines to be followed prior to submission. From this page, the PDSO may submit the current approved Form I-17 to SEVP for recertification adjudication.

J Sponsor Officials

Add J-2 Following Visa Issuance

SEVIS will allow a responsible officer (RO)/alternate responsible officer (ARO) to add a J-2 spouse or dependent record to an *Initial* status J-1 exchange visitor record with visa issuance data.

Annual Report Status

The annual report status reminder will be modified to display on the first day of the month in which the report is due and be removed when a Department of State (DoS) user enters the date the report was received into SEVIS or the day following the due date. If a DoS user has not entered the receipt date into SEVIS and the due date has passed, a new status reminder will display: Annual Report Past Due.

Also, a new field will be added to the Program Sponsor Information screen: Status of Current Annual Report. The following will display in the field:

- 'Due' beginning on the first day of the month in which the annual report is due
- 'Submitted' after a DoS user enters the date the report was received
- The field will be blank for newly designated sponsors whose first annual report is not due

View Allotment History

An RO/ARO will be able to view the allotment history of their program, which will include the approval date of an allotment as well as the number of Form DS-2019, "Certificate of Eligibility for Exchange Visitor (J-1) Status," forms allotted or deleted. The View Allotment option will be available on the Program Information screen.

Reprint Reason on the J-1 Form DS-2019: "Other" Comment Field Extension

When requesting a Form DS-2019 reprint for a J-1 exchange visitor and selecting the reprint reason of 'Other', an RO/ARO must enter a comment. On the printed J-1 Form DS-2019, the Purpose of This Form section will increase to print the first 100 characters.

Reprint Reason on the J-2 Form DS-2019: "Other" Comment

When requesting a Form DS-2019 reprint for a J-2 spouse or dependent and selecting the reprint reason of 'Other', an RO/ARO must enter a comment. The first 100 characters of the comment will print in the Purpose of This Form section of the printed J-2 Form DS-2019.

Terminate Exchange Visitor: "Other" Comment

When performing a termination of a J-1 exchange visitor and selecting a termination reason of 'Other', an RO/ARO must enter an explanation. SEVIS will display the explanation in the Termination Reason field on the Exchange Visitor Information screen.

Display Program Website

A new field is being added to the Program Sponsor Information screen: Program Website. When an RO/ARO enters the program website using the Update Address and General Contact Information function, the web address will display on the Program Information screen.

SEVIS Batch

NOTE: While there are changes that will impact Batch processing with Release 6.10, no updates to the Batch schemas will be required.

Add Validation for Student.Request.CapGapExtension Events

As described in the F/M School Officials section of this document, the SEVP office will have the option to disable cap-gap extension functionality. For Batch, this will require a new error code of S1140 with a description of 'CapGapExtension and CapGapExtension.Status events are not permitted at this time' to reject Student.Request,CapGapExtension and Student.Request,CapGapExtension.Status events submitted when the Cap-Gap extension functionality is disabled.

Add Validation for Student.OPTEmployment.Extend Event

As described in the F/M School Officials section of this document, new validation will be added to a 17-month OPT extension request to check that the F-1 student has a STEM-designated primary major. To handle in Batch, a new error code of S1139 with the description 'OPT extension requests are only permitted for students with a STEM primary major' will be added to cover a Student.OPTEmployment.Extend event that fails this validation.

Remove Validation from UpdateEV.ExchangeVisitor.Dependent.Add Event

As described in the J Sponsor Officials section of this document, an RO/ARO will be able to add a J-2 spouse or dependent record to an *Initial* status J-1 exchange visitor record with visa issuance data. Therefore, in Batch, the validation to error the addition of a J-2 record when a J-1 record is in Initial status with visa issuance data will be removed from the UpdateEV.ExchangeVisitor.Dependent.Add event.

User Manuals, Online Help, and Tutorials

The SEVIS Online Help and user manuals for school and program sponsor officials will be updated as necessary to reflect the changes implemented with SEVIS Release 6.10.