



U.S. Immigration  
and Customs  
Enforcement

May 7, 2010

**POLICY GUIDANCE FOR:** Designated School Officials of SEVP-Certified Flight Training Schools

**FROM:** SEVP Policy

**SUBJECT:** Policy Guidance 1004-08 – DSO Reporting Tips

**Authority:** 8 CFR 214.3(g)(1) and (2)

**Purpose:** This Policy Guidance<sup>1</sup> emphasizes essential recordkeeping and reporting requirements for designated school officials (DSOs). It looks at what a DSO must report in the Student and Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS) to accurately reflect student status, minimize data fixes on student records, avoid unnecessary student reinstatements and prevent on-site reviews at his or her school. Failure to comply with these requirements can lead to serious negative effects on the maintenance of a student's visa status and the school's continued Student and Exchange Visitor Program (SEVP) certification. While the overwhelming majority of SEVP-certified schools meet these requirements with excellence and professionalism, SEVP provides this guidance to ensure that all DSOs are aware of their responsibilities, and to give immediate notice to school officials that noncompliance is not acceptable.

**Background:** SEVP relies on accurate and timely recordkeeping of F and M nonimmigrant records to protect national security and prevent immigration-related fraud. Data from SEVIS, combined with a high number of unnecessary data fixes and student reinstatements, indicate that reporting at some SEVP-certified schools does not meet an acceptable standard. As SEVP formalizes its compliance processes and approaches the upcoming cycle of school recertification, DSO recordkeeping and reporting practices will be a primary measure for evaluation.

Automatic SEVIS design features initiate actions after the legal time limits that DSOs have to update student records if the DSO has not done so. Automatic SEVIS actions

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<sup>1</sup> This guidance represents SEVP's current thinking on this topic. It is advisory in nature, informational in content and is intended to provide guidance to the SEVIS user community and to all SEVP personnel involved in the adjudication and review of petitions for SEVP certification and appeals.

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cannot accurately and consistently reflect actual student status. Consequently, students fall out of status for no fault of their own. School and government officials waste time and resources making corrections, and law enforcement expends resources unnecessarily. In sum, an otherwise positive experience for the foreign visitor can end with an unfortunate conclusion – an improperly cancelled or terminated student record.

As long as the DSO properly maintains the initial SEVIS record, a student never needs a new SEVIS record for the duration of status. DSOs should avoid creating duplicate student records for normal program functions, such as transfers or changes of educational level.

**Comments:** To comment on this Policy Guidance or suggest a change, please e-mail [sevis.source@dhs.gov](mailto:sevis.source@dhs.gov) with “Policy Guidance 1004-08 Comment” entered in the subject line.

**Policy:** Federal law and regulations require SEVP-certified school DSOs to update and maintain the SEVIS records of F and M nonimmigrants at their school. In accepting selection to become DSOs, individuals assume a legal liability, both for themselves and the school that employs them, for knowledge of regulations applicable to their position and for compliance with those regulations. The following chart summarizes critical student and DSO reporting requirements.

Reporting Requirements	Time Limits	Automatic SEVIS Functions
<b>1. Initial reporting for F and M students</b>		
<p><b>A. Normal:</b> All initial F and M students must report to a DSO within 30 days of and no later than the program start date.</p>	<p>Within 30 days of the program start date, the DSO must register the student record if the student has arrived at the school and enrolled or terminate the student record for no show.</p> <p>SEVIS alert: <u>Students in Initial Status with port of entry (POE) records</u></p>	<p>SEVIS automatically terminates the student record if the DSO fails to register the student.</p> <p>Termination reason: No Show – System Termination</p>
<p><b>B. Reporting without POE data:</b> If an initial student record did not appear in the SEVIS <u>alert for Students in Initial Status with port of entry records</u> or there is no POE information, the DSO must update the record to indicate whether or not the student arrived and enrolled in classes.</p>	<p>Within 30 days of the program start date, the student record must be registered (i.e., enrolled) or cancelled.</p> <p>Note: If the DSO knows that the student entered the country and has not enrolled for classes, he or she must terminate the student’s record for no show regardless of POE information.</p> <p>SEVIS generated list: Records in Initial Status</p>	<p>SEVIS automatically cancels the student record if the DSO fails to register the student.</p>

Reporting Requirements	Time Limits	Automatic SEVIS Functions
<p><b>C. Delayed arrival:</b> If an initial student delays entry into the United States beyond the program start date, the DSO must revise the program start date and issue the student a new Form I-20, <u>Certificate of Eligibility for Nonimmigrant Student Status</u> – For Academic and Language Students, before the student arrives.</p> <p>If the student does not alert the DSO to the delay in intended arrival beyond the program start date, the DSO must cancel the student’s SEVIS record, create a new SEVIS record, and issue the student a new Form I-20.</p> <p>An initial student must not seek admission into the United States with a Form I-20 of a cancelled record.</p>	<p>Before the student arrives in the United States – Defer the student’s program start date, or</p> <p>If a student’s anticipated arrival is later than the program start date, the DSO should advise the student to begin on the next available term and issue a revised Form I-20 with a program start date for that session.</p>	<p>SEVIS will not allow deferral of a program start date after the program start date entered for that session has already passed.</p>
<p><b>2. Continuing F and M students: Recurring reporting</b></p>		
<p><b>Every session:</b> Each new session (term, semester, trimester, or quarter), the DSO must report whether or not the continuing (i.e., active) student reported and enrolled in classes.</p>	<p>At the next session start date or within 30 days after, the DSO must register the student record or terminate for Failure to Enroll.</p> <p>SEVIS alert: Active Students Requiring Registration</p>	<p>SEVIS automatically terminates the student record if the DSO fails to register the student.</p> <p>Termination reason: Failure to Enroll</p>

Reporting Requirements	Time Limits	Automatic SEVIS Functions
<b>3. Transfers: F Students</b>		
<p><b>A. Draft student records:</b> After the record release date for an F student transferring to the transfer-in school, the DSO at the transfer-in school must update the draft transfer-in record to initial status by submitting the student's information.</p> <p>Note: This does not complete the F transfer record reporting requirements.</p>	<p>The DSO must update the draft record to initial status after the record release date, but prior to the program start date.</p> <p>SEVIS generated list: Students in Transferred Status</p>	<p>SEVIS automatically terminates the student record if the DSO fails to update the draft student record to initial status.</p> <p>Termination reason: Transfer Student No Show</p>
<p><b>B. Initial records:</b> F students transferring into a new school must report to the DSO at the transfer-in school within 15 days of the program start date. They may report earlier. The DSO must update the student's record in SEVIS to indicate whether or not the student arrived and enrolled in classes.</p>	<p>The DSO must register or terminate the student record for Transfer Student No Show within 30 days of the program start date.</p> <p>SEVIS alert: Transfer-in Students Not Registered by Program Start Date</p>	<p>SEVIS automatically terminates the initial student record if the DSO fails to register the student.</p> <p>Termination reason: Transfer Student No Show</p>

Reporting Requirements	Time Limits	Automatic SEVIS Functions
<b>4. Transfers: M Students</b>		
<p><b>Transfers for M students to another school:</b> When an M student transfers to another SEVP-certified school, the DSO at the new (transfer-in) school will have access to the record immediately after the transfer-out school completes the transfer request. The DSO must update the student's record, and print an initial Form I-20, <u>Certificate of Eligibility for Nonimmigrant Student Status</u>, as early as possible before the record release date. The student will submit this Form I-20 to U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) along with the Form I-539, <u>Application to Extend/Change Nonimmigrant Status</u>.</p> <p>The student must report to the school by the program start date, even if USCIS has not adjudicated the Form I-539.</p>	<p>The DSO at the transfer-in school must update the student's record from draft to initial as soon as he or she has access.</p> <p>Register or terminate the student record for Transfer Student No Show within 30 days of the program start date.</p> <p>SEVIS generated list: Students in Transferred Status</p>	<p>SEVIS automatically terminates the student record if the DSO fails to update the draft student record to initial status in the system or if the DSO fails to register the student.</p> <p>Note: If the application is denied, the record will automatically be terminated for transfer denied and the student must leave the United States or return to the transfer-out school and file for reinstatement.</p> <p>Termination reason: Transfer Student No Show</p>
<b>5. Continuing F and M students: Event or change reporting</b>		
<p><b>A. General F and M student record reporting requirements:</b> The DSO must report any change in a student's personal information or academic status including, but not limited to, disciplinary action by the school resulting from a criminal conviction, change of address, change of the student's or dependant's name or early graduation.</p>	<p>Make changes within 21 days.</p>	<p>None</p>

Reporting Requirements	Time Limits	Automatic SEVIS Functions
<p><b>B. Change of status:</b> All nonimmigrants changing to F or M status must report to a DSO at the school where they will be enrolling once USCIS approves the change. The DSO must update the student's initial record in SEVIS to indicate whether or not the student arrived and enrolled in classes.</p> <p>Note: If a change of status is still pending as of the anticipated program start date, the DSO must defer attendance until the next earliest possible program start date.</p>	<p>The DSO must register or terminate the student record for no show within 30 days of the program start date.</p> <p>SEVIS alert: Pending Change of Status</p>	<p>SEVIS automatically terminates any student record with a pending or approved Change of Status if the DSO fails to register the student or if the DSO does not defer attendance.</p> <p>Termination reason: No Show</p>
<p><b>C. Graduation and program completion:</b> The DSO must report a student's graduation or successful completion of the program by maintaining an accurate program end date.</p> <p>Note: The program end date should not be updated to reflect post-completion OPT.</p>	<p>The DSO must update the active student's program end date within 30 days.</p> <p>SEVIS alert: Students Within 45 Days of Program End Date</p>	<p>SEVIS automatically completes any student record once the program end date or the OPT end date has been reached (whichever is later).</p>
<p><b>D. Reduced course load for F and M students—Approvable reason:</b> The DSO must update SEVIS to authorize a reduced course load prior to the F or M student initiating the course reduction or the student will be out of status.</p>	<p>Prior to term affected by the reduced course load</p>	<p>None</p>

<p><b>E. Reduced course load–Not approvable:</b> For credit-based courses of study, review course completion for the preceding session prior to the new session to ensure that the student enrolled in a full course of study and remained in enrollment throughout the session.</p>	<p>Every term.</p> <p>If it is determined that the student was not enrolled in a full course of study for the duration of the session, terminate the SEVIS record and advise the student to apply for reinstatement. The student may continue the course of study with a pending USCIS adjudication.</p>	<p>None</p>
<p><b>F. Failure to attend full-time by students attending courses of study measured by clock hours:</b> School operating procedures must have clearly defined attendance policies that comply with SEVP requirements. DSOs must track student attendance and terminate SEVIS records of students that do not comply with SEVP requirements for full course of study.</p>	<p>Ongoing and timely.</p> <p>Review attendance records in a timely manner to ensure that the student complies with the requirements. Where a pattern of non-attendance is evident, Terminate the SEVIS record.</p>	<p>None</p>