

MBUG Conference: International Students

As a Student Exchange and Visitors Program (SEVP) College

What is it?

SEVP Certification is the process schools go through to enroll nonimmigrants. Once certified, the school has access to Student Exchange and Visitors Information System (SEVIS) to issue Forms I-20, "Certificate of Eligibility for Student Status." The school must comply with SEVP policies, as well as record keeping and reporting requirements.

Why do we want it?

We are turning away eligible students to other community colleges.

Who are these students?

- F-1 nonimmigrants are foreign students coming to the United States to pursue a full course of academic study in SEVP-approved schools. An F-2 nonimmigrant is a foreign national who is the spouse or qualifying child of an F-1 student.
- M-1 nonimmigrants are foreign nationals pursuing a full course of study at an SEVP-approved vocational or other recognized nonacademic institution (other than in language training programs) in the United States. An M-2 nonimmigrant is a foreign national who is the spouse or qualifying child of an M-1 student.

How will this affect our admissions policies?

Schools are free to set its own admissions policies. For example, SEVP schools often require passing the TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language).

How does SEVIS work?

- After a school admits an international student, SEVIS is notified, and the DHS approves the schools request to issue an immigration form (I-20 or DS-2019). The schools send the form to the student.

- The student pays a SEVIS fee and a visa application fee and visits the U.S. consulate abroad, and the consulate confirms through SEVIS that the immigration form the student is carrying is a valid document. If everything is in order, the consulate issues the visa.
- A DHS officer at the U.S. port of entry reports to SEVIS the student's entry into the U.S.
- When the student arrives on campus, he/she reports to an International Support Services Officer, and the school confirms through SEVIS the student's enrollment. The school continues to provide regular electronic reports to DHS throughout the student's academic career.
- Finally, SEVIS records the student's departure from the United States.

What happens if a school fails to comply with the SEVIS regulations?

The DHS is required to audit the school's compliance with these new requirements every two years. Failure to comply with the federal regulations could result in the loss of a school's ability to accept international students.

How do we become a SEVP school?

Schools must petition online for certification in the Student and Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS), the database which compiles the data for the Form I-17, "Petition for Approval of School for Attendance by Nonimmigrant Student," and must submit a nonrefundable certification fee of \$3,000 for filing the petition and \$655 for a site visit per location listed on the Form I-17 through www.pay.gov.

How does your college process International Students?

- In Order to be certified the school must apply for SEVP Certification to enroll F and/or M student by completing Form I-17, "Petition for Approval of School for Attendance by Nonimmigrant Student. Online use [Student and](#)

Exchange Visitor Information System and pay all required fees online at pay.gov.

- SEVIS certification is the result of a determination process that includes a review of the form I-17 application, submission of supporting documentation, payment of the application fee, site visits, research and federal ruling.
- To obtain SEVP certification, a school makes a legally binding commitment to comply with applicable federal laws, regulations, and DHS requirements. School officials should carefully consider the decision to petition for certification. It is a business decision that requires a financial commitment, significant personnel commitment and strict adherence to reporting and record keeping requirements. School officials should consider this decision within the context of the school's strategic direction, long-term planning and ability to conform to regulatory requirements.
- The SEVP Certification process is described in detailed within the following resources:
 - [Getting Started with SEVP Certification](#)
 - [Schools and Programs-ICE.gov](#)
 - [SEVP Certification Frequently Asked Questions](#)
- Provide a translated and evaluated transcript

There are many reputable services in the U.S. which you may utilize including the following:

1. **American Education Research Corporation, Inc., (AERC)**, P.O. Box 996, West Covina, CA 91793-0996, Phone: (626) 339-4404, Fax: (626) 339-9081, Web:www.CredentialsEvaluation.com. **Evaluates and translates** foreign credentials, degrees, and diplomas.

2. **Education Credential Evaluators, Inc.**, P.O. Box 92970, Milwaukee, WI 53202-0970, Phone: (414) 289-3400, Fax: (414) 289-3411. Evaluates foreign educational credentials, degrees, and diplomas. **Does not** do translations of documents.

3. **Global Credential Evaluators, Inc.**, P.O. Box 1904, Ocean Springs, MS 39566-1904, Fax: (228) 818-4487, Web: www.gcevaluators.com, Email: gce@gceus.com. Evaluates foreign educational credentials, degrees, and diplomas. **Does not** do translations of documents.

4. **International Education Research Foundation, Inc.**, P.O. Box 66940, Los Angeles, CA 90066, Phone: (310) 390-6276, Fax: (310) 397-7686, Web: www.ierf.org, Email: info@ierf.org. Evaluates foreign educational credentials, degrees, and diplomas. **Does not** do translations of documents.

5. **Josef Silny and Associates, Inc.**, P.O. Box 248233, Coral Gables, FL 33123, Phone: (305) 666-0233, Fax: (305) 666-4133, Web: www.jsilny.com, Email: info@jsilny.com. **Evaluates and translates** foreign credentials, degrees, and diplomas.

6. **Lisano International: Foreign Educational Credential Evaluation**, P.O. Box 407, Auburn, AL 36831-0407, Phone and Fax: (334) 745-0425, Web: www.Lisano-INTL.com, Email: LisanoINTL@aol.com. Evaluates foreign educational credentials, degrees, and diplomas. **Does not** do translations of documents.

7. **World Education Services, Inc.**, P.O. Box 745, Old Chelsea Station, New York, NY 10113-0745, Phone: 1-800-937-3895 ext. 316, Fax: (212) 966-6395, Email: support@wes.org.

Evaluations should be mailed directly to the Office of Admissions from the evaluation services.

- **Student pays out of state fees**
- **Some schools do not issue I-20's for students that are here on a student visa**

What is the difference between a Form I-20, a visa and student's status?

A student's Form I-20 is a document issued to accepted students by Student and [Exchange Visitor](#) Program (SEVP)-certified schools that indicates a student's primary purpose for coming to the United States. A student visa is a travel document you receive from a U.S. consulate or embassy before entering the United States. A student's status is what a person must maintain after they are granted entrance into the United States.

Both a visa and a status reflect someone's primary purpose for coming to the United States. As an F-1 or M-1 student, this purpose is to complete a full course of study at an SEVP certified school.

An I-20 is essential to apply for a visa, not the F-1 student visa itself.

The I-20 leads to an entrance admission provided by educational institutions, granted by the U. S. government. It is filled in with the subject of study and the duration of the course.

An I-20 is the precondition to apply for a student visa to the U. S. Embassy.

The duration of an I-20 does not necessarily correspond with the duration of a student visa.

A person may say, "My I-20 has expired, but my student visa's period is still legal." In the event that a I-20's duration is expired and more than 60 days have passed, a continued stay is illegal even if the F-1 student visa is still legal.

*60 days after the final day of an I-20 are referred to as a grace period. During this period, a student must make a choice of leaving the U.S.A or transferring to another school.

With New York English Academy, if you want to extend the length of your program, you must apply for and extend the I-20 duration before the completion of the program in your school.

On the other hand, as far as the period of the I-20 is kept valid, it is legal to stay even if the period of the F-1 student visa has expired. In the event of the departure from the U.S.A after the student visa is expired, a new visa is required to reenter the U.S.A.

**Students Certified by Student and Exchange Visitor Program (SEVP)
enroll F or M nonimmigrant students**

F & M STUDENT STATUS: KNOW THE DIFFERENCE

F-1 INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS		M-1 INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS
Are in an academic program, often with a core academic curriculum.		Are in a vocational program, typically without a core academic curriculum.
Are eligible for annual vacation.		Are not eligible for annual vacation.
Can change their major or program of study.		Cannot change their major or program of study.
Can transfer anytime during their program or begin a new program after completing one.		Can only transfer in the first six months after arrival and must apply to U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services for transfer by filing Form I-539, "Application to Extend/Change Nonimmigrant Status."
Can work during and after their program of study, with permission.		Can only work after their program of study ends and with permission.
Can participate in up to four types of work including, on-campus, off-campus for economic hardship, curricular practical training (CPT) and optional practical training (OPT).		Can participate in one type of work, practical training (PT), one month for every four months of their program.
Can remain in the United States for the duration of their program of study.		Can only remain in the United States for up to one year unless they apply for an extension.
Can stay in the United States for up to 60 days after their program or OPT end date.		Can stay in the United States for up to 30 days after their program or PT end date.

For more information visit StudyintheStates.dhs.gov/Maintaining-Your-Status

After a college has been approved by SEVP to accept International students, what would be the next step?

Policy

School then updates its catalog to reflect admission of International students. A typical entry is something like this:

“Regardless of program, all students whose native language is not English must provide evidence that they are able to use the English language with sufficient facility to do college-level work in an English speaking institution. Prospective international students residing both in and out of the U.S. may obtain evidence of their English proficiency by one of the following methods:

- Taking the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) or the International English Language Testing System (IELTS). [See the section on TOEFL and IELTS](#) for more information.
- Graduating from a college or high school where English is the primary language of instruction.
- Completing an ESL program at an institution that is recognized by a body recognized by the U.S. Department of Education.”

Source: <https://strayer.smartcatalogiq.com/en/2017-2018/Catalog/Admission-to-the-University/Additional-Admission-Requirements-for-International-Students>

Annual Verification Process

“As a federal database, SEVIS is subject to the Federal Information Security Management Act (FISMA). FISMA requires the annual verification that all users who access federal systems have both the business need and the authorization to access the system. To comply with FISMA, PDSOs and ROs must annually verify that every Primary Designated School Official (PDSO), Designated School Official (DSO), Responsible Officer (RO), and Alternate Responsible Officer (ARO) who has access to SEVIS:

- Is still regularly employed by the organization and continues to be the designated PDSO, DSO, RO, or ARO.

- Requires continued access to SEVIS.”

Source: <https://studyinthestates.dhs.gov/sevis-help-hub/learn-more/sevis-faq/sevis-annual-verification-of-school-and-sponsor-users-faq>

Also, can a student attend with just a Visa? If so how is this handled?

In a word, NO. See below:

“An I-20 is essential to apply for a visa, not the F-1 student visa itself.

The I-20 leads to an entrance admission provided by educational institutions, granted by the U. S. government. It is filled in with the subject of study and the duration of the course.

An I-20 is the precondition to apply for a student visa to the U. S. Embassy.

The duration of an I-20 does not necessarily correspond with the duration of a student visa.

A person may say, "My I-20 has expired, but my student visa's period is still legal." In the event that a I-20's duration is expired and more than 60 days have passed, a continued stay is illegal even if the F-1 student visa is still legal.

*60 days after the final day of a I-20 is referred to as a grace period. During this period, a student must make a choice of leaving the US or transferring to another school.

If you want to extend the length of your program, you must apply for and extend the I-20 duration before the completion of the program in your school.

On the other hand, as far as the period of the I-20 is kept valid, it is legal to stay even if the period of the F-1 student visa has expired. In the event of the departure from the US after the student visa is expired, a new visa is required to reenter the US.

A student studying abroad with an F-1 visa has to check the validity of his/her I-20 more than that of a student visa.

The mistake of keeping the I-20 in one's suitcase upon entering the US sometimes occurs. The I-20 has to be handed over with a visa to the immigration officer as part of the entry procedure. You must never fail to have your I-20 on your person when going abroad."

Source: <https://www.newyork-english.edu/student-visa/i20.htm>

How do you process a student that is attending another college but would like to take a course with your college? Is it possible?

"(iv) Concurrent enrollment. An F-1 student may be enrolled in two different Service-approved schools at one time as long as the combined enrollment amounts to a full-time course of study. In cases where a student is concurrently enrolled, the school from which the student will earn his or her degree or certification should issue the Form I-20, and conduct subsequent certifications and updates to the Form I-20. The DSO from this school is also responsible for all of the reporting requirements to the Service. In instances where a student is enrolled in programs with different full course of study requirements (e.g., clock hours vs. credit hours), the DSO is permitted to determine what constitutes a full time course of study."

Source: <https://www.ice.gov/sevis/schools/reg>

Does an International student affect anything with the State Audit guidelines?

WHAT ABOUT INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS?

International Students are expected to have the documents that correspond to their admission status (current visa, if classified as an international student; translated transcripts if admitted based upon transcript; and proof of residency, if student has established residency status in MS or the U.S.). Colleges set their own admission standards for international students. The MCCB does not audit a college's admission standards or its SEVIS compliance.

Does the MCCB have requirements for admitting International Students?

Colleges may set their own admission standards for international students. College personnel will want to familiarize themselves with the Student and Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS) if they are admitting students on F, J or M visas, because federal law requires institutions to report certain information on those students to the federal government. More SEVIS information is available at: <http://www.ice.gov/sevis/> .

Does the MCCB audit differently on International Students?

Auditor procedures for international students are the same as for all other students. They are expected to have the documents that correspond to their admission status (current visa, if classified as an international student; translated transcripts if admitted based upon transcript; proof of residency, if student has established residency status in MS or the U.S., etc.). Please refer to the MCCB Audit Guidelines for more detailed information on the types of documents we look for during an admissions audit. Note: the MCCB does not audit an institution's international student admission standards or institutional SEVIS compliance.

NON-IMMIGRANT VISA HOLDERS

Persons holding non-immigrant visas are NOT entitled to MS residency. Because those visas are temporary in nature, non-immigrant visa holders retain the residency of their home country. (In rare cases, exceptions may be made due to special provisions or special circumstances allowed by law. But those provisions or circumstances would require legal documentation.)

Non-immigrant visa categories include, but are not limited to:

A – diplomats

J – exchange visitors

B – tourists and business visitors

K – fiancé or fiancée

C – visitors in transit

L – intra-company transfers

D – crew members

M – vocational students

E – traders and investors

N – relatives of employees of international orgs

F – academic students

O – persons with extraordinary abilities

G – representatives of international orgs

P – athletes and artists

H – temporary workers

Q – international cultural exchange

I – media representatives

R – religious workers

Can International Students take courses at other Colleges while attending another?

Yes, they can take online courses at another university to complement their degrees, but they would have to get a new I-20 if they were to take a full semester at another college I believe.

Do International Students have to provide health insurance?

Yes, all international students have to have proof of insurance or they would have to buy the policy provided by the University/college.

Viewpoint from a previous International Student

I applied to DSU in 2002. I printed an application off of their website and had to provide translated transcripts. I saw that nowadays, DSU requires applicants to utilize a third party like World Education Services (WES) or Education Credential Evaluation (ECE) for Translated Transcript evaluation and conversion into a GPA equivalent score (most of other countries do not use a GPA grading). I had to take an SAT exam and a TOEFL exam for English proficiency. I also had to provide a bank statement and had to have a financial sponsor provide a financial affidavit (Uncle David provided that for me) all of that was sent to the Office of International Services, along with proof of vaccinations. Once I was accepted into the program. DSU sent me an I-20 form that I had to take and present to the US embassy in Beirut, along with my transcripts, proof of financial support, fees and pictures. The US counselor evaluated my application and credentials and he had the final say if I would be issued an F-1 visa or not. The process took 6 months, but eventually I was contacted by the Embassy to be informed that I will receive my Visa. When I made it to DSU, I had to report to the international student advisor and she helped me get situated and signed my I-20 (had to have it signed every year or a new one issued every year). That office was our reference for everything. They kept us informed of everything, had events for us; like dinners, meets and greets, Delta tours. We also had an international student association (I

was the president my junior and senior years); we met every month, had planned activities, like pot luck, visited churches and other clubs/associations to share our background and diversity etc. At undergrad level, there are no host families assigned to international students. My relationship with the Russell's and the Daniel's was a very unique relationship that was a blessing to me. The Russell's took me in as a son of theirs, but they were not my sponsors. Technically Uncle David was my sponsor on paper. So as far as entertainment, international students like to party, meet new people and travel. So I would not worry much about keeping them entertained. But it would be nice to have events for them like tours, dinners, etc. Also raising awareness in the community that you have international students and maybe some families may want to invite some of them over for dinner and that is how they may get connected with families in the community. I also wanted to mention that international students are allowed to work on campus part time, while in school, so they can provide themselves with some income. They are also allowed to work off campus full time during school breaks as long as it pertains to their field of study, like internships etc. That work permit is called CPT (curricular practical training) issued by the international advisor.