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Student and Exchange Visitor Program

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COVID-19: Guidance for SEVP Stakeholders

The Student and Exchange Visitor Program (SEVP) has been monitoring developments with the Coronavirus (COVID-19) and will post information and resources for F and M students as well as SEVP-certified schools here as necessary.

SEVP is focused on ensuring that nonimmigrant students can continue to make normal progress in a full course of study as required by federal regulations. SEVP intends to be flexible with temporary adaptations. In all cases, schools and students should document any decisions made and be able to provide this information to SEVP upon request.

PLEASE NOTE: The [Center for Disease Control \(CDC\)](#) is the **primary resource** for up-to-date information on COVID-19.

Guidance for Students

- **Maintain status.** It is important that F and M students maintain their [nonimmigrant student status](#), even during emergency events. This means F and M students must continue to take all the necessary actions to remain in status, to the extent possible under the circumstances, and communicate with their designated school official (DSO) about the emergency plans on their campus, including any changes to their address.
- **Work with employers to maintain practical training agreements.** Changes to workplace requirements may impact nonimmigrant students engaging in practical training. SEVP encourages such students to consult with their employer to seek alternative ways to maintain training agreements, such as teleworking or other arrangements.
- **Be cautious traveling.** Refer to guidance from the CDC, U.S. Department of State, and the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) for specific port-of-entry screening processes, as well as any travel restrictions.

Guidance for Schools

- **Report procedural changes to SEVP within 10 business days of the change.** If your school plans to provide online instruction or instruction at an alternate physical location, please see [Coronavirus Disease 2019 \(COVID-19\) and Potential Procedural Adaptations for F and M nonimmigrant students](#) for instructions for when and how to report changes to SEVP. Download the [Optional Coronavirus School Reporting Template](#) to help you report your changes to SEVP.
- **Follow these steps for managing F and M student records.** Refer to [these instructions](#) for managing student records of F and M students impacted by COVID-19. Please make sure all **AILA Doc. No. 20031133. (Posted 3/13/20)**

information in SEVIS is up to date, including addresses.

Resources from Government Partners

- CDC: [Coronavirus Disease 2019](#)
- U.S. Department of State: [Current Outbreak of Coronavirus Disease 2019](#)
- DHS: [Notices of Arrival Restrictions Due to Coronavirus](#)
- U.S. Department of Education: [COVID-19 Information and Resources for Schools and School Personnel](#)
- U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services: [USCIS Response to the 2019 Coronavirus](#)

Updated Certification Expiration Date Process

Per regulation, all SEVP-certified schools must be recertified every two years. The certification expiration date (CED) is exactly two years from the date of initial certification or the date of previous recertification.

In response to the March 2019 U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO) recommendation for SEVP to more precisely establish a two-year recertification cycle, any school that is certified or recertified after March 1, 2020, will receive their next CED notice 180 days before the two-year deadline. Download [Frequently Asked Questions: Updated Certification Expiration Date Process](#) for answers to common questions about this change.

New Guidance on OPT Employment and Student's Major Area of Study

On Sept. 30, 2019, SEVP published new policy guidance titled, "Practical Training: Determining a Direct Relationship Between Employment and a Student's Major Area of Study."

Visit the [Schools page](#) to view the full guidance.

Curricular Practical Training Reminders

Download the new [Curricular Practical Training Fact Sheet](#) for reminders about the federal regulations governing curricular practical training (CPT) and answers to frequently asked questions about CPT.

New and Increased SEVP Fees

On June 24, 2019, new and increased fees for international students, exchange visitors and SEVP-certified schools took effect.

Please read [SEVP Final Fee Rule: Frequently Asked Questions](#) for answers to common questions about the new fee rule.

Important Message for ACICS-Accredited Schools

On Nov. 21, 2018, the U.S. Department of Education (ED) permanently restored federal recognition of the Accrediting Council for Independent Colleges and Schools (ACICS).

SEVP accepts ACICS as an ED-recognized accrediting body for certification. If you have questions about how this development may impact your certification or nonimmigrant status, please [contact](#) the SEVP Response Center.

School Alerts

Student and Exchange Visitor Program (SEVP)-certified schools are subject to a review of their certification at any time based on federal regulation. Upon this review, SEVP can exercise its authority to withdraw schools and/or terminate certain initial and active student records for noncompliance with SEVP regulations. Visit the [School Alerts page](#) for a list of schools that have been withdrawn and instructions students should follow.

SEVP Spotlight

December 2019 – Volume 10, Issue 4: Read the latest SEVP Spotlight on [Study in the States](#). (*posted: Jan. 2020*)

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