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Student and Exchange Visitor Program

07/24/2020

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ICE continues March guidance for fall school term

WASHINGTON – Nonimmigrant students and schools certified by the Student and Exchange Visitor Program (SEVP) should abide by SEVP guidance originally issued in [March 2020](#). The guidance enables schools and students to engage in distance learning in excess of regulatory limits due to the public health emergency generated by COVID-19. The March 2020 guidance applies to nonimmigrant students who were actively enrolled at a U.S. school on March 9 and are otherwise complying with the terms of their nonimmigrant status, whether from inside the U.S. or abroad. SEVP will not issue a temporary final rule impacting nonimmigrant students for the fall school term.

In accordance with March 2020 guidance, nonimmigrant students in new or initial status after March 9 will not be able to enter the U.S. to enroll in a U.S. school as a nonimmigrant student for the fall term to pursue a full course of study that is 100 percent online. Additionally, designated school officials should not issue a Form I-20 to a nonimmigrant student in new or initial status who is outside of the U.S. and plans to take classes at an SEVP-certified educational institution fully online.

SEVP will continue to provide the latest COVID-19-related information and guidance to stakeholders at www.ICE.gov/COVID19 and via its other communications channels, including Broadcast Messages, SEVP field representatives, Study in the States blog posts and social media.

Stakeholders should continue to refer to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Department of State and U.S. Customs and Border Protection for the latest COVID-19 information, specific port-of-entry screening processes, as well as any travel restrictions.

SEVP monitors more than one million nonimmigrant students pursuing academic or vocational studies (F and M visa holders) in the U.S. and their dependents. It also certifies schools and programs that enroll these students. The U.S. Department of State monitors exchange visitors (J visa holders) and their dependents and oversees exchange visitor programs.

Both use SEVIS to protect national security by ensuring that students, visitors and schools comply with U.S. laws. SEVP also collects and shares SEVIS information with government partners, including U.S. Customs and Border Protection and U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, to reduce fraud.

HSI reviews SEVIS records for potential violations and refers cases with possible national security or public safety concerns to its field offices for further investigation. Additionally, SEVP's Analysis and Operations Center analyzes student and school records for administrative compliance with federal regulations related to studying in the U.S.

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