

## SEVIS Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) for F1 and J1 Students

---

### What is SEVIS?

SEVIS stands for Student Exchange Visitor Information System, which operates under the Student Exchange Visitor Program (SEVP). SEVP changes “the nonimmigrant student and exchange visitor (F, M, & J visa categories) process, converting what is currently a manual procedure into an automated process. This change is expected to improve data collection and reporting, enhance customer service, facilitate compliance with regulations, and help the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) better monitor school and exchange programs.” SEVIS is the “Internet-based system that maintains accurate and current information on non-immigrant students (F and M visa), exchange visitors (J visa), and their dependents (F-2, M-2, and J-2). SEVIS enables schools and program sponsors to transmit electronic information and event notifications via the Internet, to the INS and Department of State (DOS) throughout a student or exchange visitor’s stay in the United States. The system will reflect international student or exchange visitor status changes, such as admission at Port of Entry (POE), change of address, change in program of study, and other details. SEVIS will also provide system alerts, event notifications, and basic reports to the end-user schools, programs, and INS field offices.” (Quoted from the INS website).

NOTE: Beginning March 1, the INS was absorbed into the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and has been divided into the Bureau of Citizenship and Immigration Services (BCIS) and the Bureau of Immigration and Customs Enforcement (BICE) under the Directorate of Transportation and Security.

**The new [F1 regulations](#) came into effect on January 1, 2003. The new [J-1 regulations](#) became effective on December 11, 2002. All student records MUST be converted to SEVIS records by August 1, 2003.**

### How Does SEVIS Affect You?

SEVIS will not drastically affect the way we process requests and do business at the International Center, but there will necessarily be some changes in our forms and requirements, and in our deadlines and timeframes for processing requests. You, the student/exchange visitor, also need to be more aware of your responsibilities as a nonimmigrant in order to make sure you comply with federal rules and regulations, which are quite stringent. SEVIS does not make the International Center an enforcement arm of the DHS. We are not the DHS, but we do now have to report data directly, via the SEVIS website, to the INS. All requests and updates must be entered into SEVIS, whether they are for extensions, adding dependents, changing majors, readmission to the graduate level, change of address, and even enrollment each semester. To understand more about SEVIS, the reporting requirements and how it works, please view the PowerPoint presentation on the IC SEVIS web page.

### When does my current non-SEVIS I-20 or DS2019 (formerly IAP-66) expire?

For continuing students, while your non-SEVIS documents are valid until July 31, 2003, the IC will convert all non-SEVIS documents (I-20s and DS2019s) to SEVIS documents in the Spring and summer semesters. New students should already be in possession of SEVIS documents.

**What are the new regulations and how do they affect me?**

You will need to inform us of any changes in your name, address, enrollment, program (degree or major), funding (major changes only) and enrollment as soon as possible. As a general rule, always enroll in a full course of study and, consult with an adviser before you make any changes in your enrollment or initiate any withdrawals.

Based on the new regulations, you will need to report to us the following events, so that they can be reported to the DHS via SEVIS.

EVENT / UPDATE	NEW REGULATIONS	When and What to Report to the International Center (IC)	IC Reporting Deadline to INS & Consequences of Non-Compliance
<p><b>Enrollment in less than a Full Course of Study</b></p>	<p>Must be approved prior to Finalizing enrollment. Full course of study is defined as:                      Ugrad: 12 credit hours                      Grad: 12 credit hours but:                      9 credit hrs w/ assistantship or as defined by your department to the IC.</p> <p>A reduced course load may be authorized for only one semester in a student's entire program (either Bachelors, Masters, or Ph.D.); however, for a medical reason, it may be authorized up to a total time of one year maximum, but must be authorized at the beginning of each semester.                      Anyone authorized for a reduced course load must take a minimum of 6 credit hours of study and must enroll full-time in the next regular semester.</p> <p>Continuing students do not have to be enrolled during the summer, or may take any number of credit hours as they wish. However, for <b>First semester at FSU:</b> Students whose first semester is during the Summer sessions MUST be enrolled in a full course of study, defined as follows: If enrolled for</p> <p>Session A only - 13 hours                      Sessions B &amp; C only - 6 hours                      Any combination of sessions - 9 credit hours</p>	<p><b>By the Last Day of Drop/Add</b>, you must obtain authorization for taking less than a full course of study.</p> <p>For those taking less than a full course of study for medical reasons, first semester language or adjustment problems, or improper course placement, please fill out and submit to the IC a <a href="#">Request for Reduced Enrollment form</a>.</p> <p>If there are other reasons for taking less than a full course load, please submit <a href="#">Confirmation of Full Course of Study form</a>.</p>	<p>30 days after last day of drop/add</p> <p>NOTE: Anyone who is not taking a Full Course of Study will be Out-of-Status and may have to leave the US and re-enter to regain status.</p>
<p><b>Enrollment in Online or Distance Classes</b></p>	<p>May only take one online class or three credits per semester toward the full course of study requirement. For example, if you are a graduate student with an assistantship taking 9 credit hours this semester, only 3 of those hours (one class) may be an online class.</p> <p>For summer enrollment, you may enroll in as many online courses as you wish.</p>	<p>Enrollment will be checked after the last day of drop and add. Online classes have specific codes.</p>	<p>30 days after last day of drop/add</p> <p>NOTE: Enrollment in more than one online course is cause for termination of your program.</p>

<b>EVENT / UPDATE</b>	<b>NEW REGULATIONS</b>	<b>When and What to Report to the International Center (IC)</b>	<b>IC Reporting Deadline to INS &amp; Consequences of Non-Compliance</b>
<b>Cancellation or Withdrawal from Classes</b>	<p>Must be approved <b>before</b> the cancellation or withdrawal is requested from the Dean of Students/Registrar's office.</p> <p>Retroactive withdrawals are not allowed.</p>	<p>As soon as Possible prior to actual application for withdrawal or cancellation.</p>	<p>Within 21 days of the event</p> <p>NOTE: DSO-authorized withdrawal – must leave U.S. within 15 days</p> <p>Non-authorized withdrawal – no grace period (must leave immediately)</p>
<b>Extensions of I-20 / DS2019</b>	<p>Extension must be done <b>prior to the expiration date</b> on the I-20 / DS2019.</p> <p>Under the old regulations, extensions for F1 students could be done only within a month before the expiration date. This window no longer applies.</p>	<p>For administrative purposes, the IC is setting the following windows for extensions for both F1 and J1 students:</p> <p><b>Spring semester:</b> in the months of February and March</p> <p><b>Fall:</b> in mid-September to mid-November.</p> <p>This is a commonly convenient time for departments, students and the IC staff.</p>	<p>Recorded in SEVIS as soon as sent (or, within 21 days of the event)</p>
<b>Optional Practical Training (OPT) for F1 students</b>	<p>12 months of OPT is now allowed at each higher degree level, instead of just one 12-month period during your entire academic career. You may apply for OPT up to 120 days before your graduation date.</p> <p>Must apply for OPT before completion of all degree requirements or before completion of course of study ("course of study" for those with only class work requirements)</p> <p>OPT automatically terminated when student transfers to other school or begins study at different level.</p> <p>Student on OPT must report any change of name/address and interruption of employment to the DSO for the duration of authorized OPT, and DSO must update SEVIS.</p>	<p>Up to 120 days before your graduation date. Submit all completed forms (please follow instructions on the cover sheet of the packet) to the IC together with all supporting documents. The information will be sent to SEVIS and a SEVIS I-20 generated for this purpose, but the packet must still be sent to the DHS Texas Service center as usual.</p> <p>Note: Because of the currently lengthy processing times at the Texas Service center, for post-completion OPT, the best time to submit this would be at the beginning of the semester you are requesting it for.</p>	<p>Reported upon issuance of SEVIS-I20 for OPT.</p> <p>Any changes to your name, address or employment (if terminated or laid off) must be reported to the IC for subsequent reporting to SEVIS.</p>

EVENT / UPDATE	NEW REGULATIONS	When and What to Report to the International Center (IC)	IC Reporting Deadline to INS & Consequences of Non-Compliance
<b>Academic Training (for J1 Students)</b>	New Rules are the same as the old rules. See the <a href="#">IC web page on AT</a> .	See <a href="#">IC web page on AT</a> .	Reported within 21 days.
<b>Dependents (F-2 and J-2 visas)</b>	<p>F-2 or J-2 spouse may not engage in full-time study; only study that is avocational or recreational (preamble defines “avocational or recreational” study as undertaken for a “hobby” or study that is “occasional, casual or recreational in nature”). F-2/J-2 child may only engage in full-time study from K-12.</p> <p>F2 dependents enrolled in higher education and taking a full course of study, should have applied for a Change of Status (COS) to F1 or J1 status on or before March 11, 2003. K-12 dependents continue studies as usual. For J2 dependents, the same rule will eventually apply. The deadline for COS has not been set.</p>	<p>May submit a request for dependent any time.</p> <p>NOTE: If your dependent applies for a Change of Status and is approved, we must enter this information into SEVIS.</p> <p>If you did not submit a Change of Status application as required by the new regulations, inform the IC adviser as soon as possible.</p>	<p>May be requested anytime.</p> <p>If your dependent is approved for a Change of Status reaches 21 years of age, he/she will be terminated in SEVIS. Your dependent should seek his/her own visa status before this date.</p>
<b>Reinstatement (for F1 students)</b>	<p>Reinstatement must generally be filed within 5 months of status violation, unless the student can demonstrate exceptional circumstances.</p> <p>Must prove that the status violation resulted from circumstances beyond the student’s control — may include injury, illness, closure of school, natural disaster, or DSO inadvertence, oversight or neglect. And, the student does not have a record of repeated or willful violations. OR</p> <p>Status violation is for a Reduced Course Load which DSO could have authorized and reinstatement denial would result in extreme hardship for student.</p>	<p>Must be filed within 5 months of the occurrence of the violation.</p>	<p>Must be filed within 5 months of the occurrence of the violation.</p> <p>NOTE: Rules for reinstatement are much stricter.</p>
<b>Reinstatement (for J1 students)</b>	<p>The regulations regarding correction of minor infractions and rules for Reinstatement for J students have not changed</p>	<p>Please note that a record cannot be corrected past 120 days and reinstatement is NOT possible if more than 270 days have passed since the infraction.</p>	<p>The request for reinstatement must be made to the US Dept. Of State and the student must prove exceptional hardship would result if not reinstated. Also, a fee of \$198 must be paid.</p>

EVENT / UPDATE	NEW REGULATIONS	When and What to Report to the International Center (IC)	IC Reporting Deadline to INS & Consequences of Non-Compliance
<b>Name/Address Change</b>	Students must report a change of address <b>within 10 days of their transfer</b> to a new address. This is an INS regulation as well as a University Regulation.	<p>1) Update the Address database at the Registrar's office. Go to: <a href="#">StudentsFirst</a>, and Under Time and Info, go to Update Address.</p> <p>2) Fill up Form <a href="#">AR-11</a> and send it via certified mail with return card to the INS at the address provided on the form.</p> <p>NSEERS students must report changes as mandated by that program directly to INS, using form <a href="#">AR-11 SR</a> instead of AR-11.</p> <p>3) Fill up the <a href="#">Change of Address form</a> on the IC website. Students must provide a physical address (no P.O. boxes, U-boxes or office addresses are allowed). If it is not possible to receive mail at your physical address, you must also provide a mailing address.</p> <p>At present, you have to complete steps 1-3 (plus NSEERS changes for those who fall under Special Registration). We are working to shorten this process but changes are not likely until the fall semester.</p>	Within 21 days of your notification to the IC or 31 days of your change of address.
<b>Curricular Practical Training (CPT)</b>	<p>If CPT is granted for one year or more, a student becomes ineligible for post-completion OPT unless the student was enrolled in graduate studies that require immediate participation in CPT.</p> <p>May begin CPT only after receiving Form I-20 with the IC Adviser's endorsement.</p> <p>Must provide name and address of employer.</p>	Anytime.	CPT is reported directly into SEVIS when the I-20 is created for the IC adviser's endorsement.

<b>EVENT / UPDATE</b>	<b>NEW REGULATIONS</b>	<b>When and What to Report to the International Center (IC)</b>	<b>IC Reporting Deadline to INS &amp; Consequences of Non-Compliance</b>
<b>Grace Periods</b>	<p>Before initial attendance = 30 days;</p> <p>F-1: After completion of studies = 60 days; J-1: After completion of studies = 30 days;</p> <p>Failure to maintain status = None. Must leave immediately.</p>	<p>A new student must check in at the IC in order for us to be able to activate his/her SEVIS record.</p> <p>An F1 student who has applied for Optional Practical Training but has not received approval is within legal non-immigrant status. After completion of OPT, an F-1 student has a 60 day grace period before he/she has to leave the U.S. unless he/she is readmitted to another program or has a change of status.</p> <p>A J-1 student on Academic Training has a 30 day grace period after completion of Academic Training unless he/she is readmitted to another program or has a change of status.</p>	<p>Reporting of completion of studies must be done within 30 days of graduation or completion of OPT/Academic Training.</p>
<b>Transfers</b>	<p>A student who has maintained status may transfer to another SEVIS-approved school following SEVIS notification procedures.</p> <p>The transfer must take place within 5 months, i.e., the student must begin classes at the new institution within 5 months after transferring out of the current school or within 5 months of the program completion date on the current I-20, whichever is earlier.</p> <p>Note: If a student changes the choice of school to which his/her record is being transferred, a cancellation of the transfer request has to be made before the release date. After the release date, the new school will have the student's record and we will no longer have access to it in SEVIS.</p>	<p>If you are transferring out of FSU, the IC will likely have to fill out a transfer recommendation for the school you are transferring to. We will also set a release date at which your record will be transferred to the new school.</p> <p>Transfers to FSU will have to be released by their former school before we can gain access to their SEVIS record.</p> <p>As the timing between transfers may be quite tight, remember to give yourself enough time to be admitted to your new school and go through this transfer process. Ideally, your transfer should occur before the end of the semester, with the last day of classes being your transfer release date.</p>	<p>A notification to SEVIS about the transfer occurs when the DSO at the schools submit the transfer information to SEVIS.</p>
<b>Suspension or Expulsion</b>	<p>Requires termination in SEVIS. No grace period. Must leave immediately.</p>	<p>Make an appointment to see your IC Adviser.</p>	<p>Reported to SEVIS within 21 days.</p>