Getting Students Ready to Enter the United States

Understanding the initial steps is key to properly maintaining SEVIS records.

1. Applies to an SEVP-certified school
   - Must apply in writing
   - Must meet academic qualifications
   - Must prove financial support

2. Sends acceptance letter
3. SEVP-certified School
4. Applies for student visa or change of student status to F or M
   - Must have valid Form I-20
   - Must pay I-901 SEVIS Fee
   - Must meet all visa requirements

5. U.S. Department of State
   - Issues student visa

6. If entering the United States
   - Presents Form I-20
   - Presents student visa
   - May NOT enter more than 30 days prior to program start date

7. May allow entry to the United States
   - May issue Form I-515A if student is missing documentation

8. Report to PDSO/DSO
   - Must report no later than 30 days of program start date

9. It is against federal regulations for a PDSO/DSO to send Form I-20s to recruiting agents or agencies.

PDSO/DSO orients the student and registers in SEVIS

SEVP-certified School

Customs and Border Protection Officer

Report to PDSO/DSO
- Must report no later than 30 days of program start date

Nonimmigrant Student
Nonimmigrant (before Form I-20, “Certificate of Eligibility for Nonimmigrant Student Status”)

Sends Form I-20 directly to student
- Must issue Form I-20 directly
- Program start date may NOT be more than 30 days prior to the start of classes

Audience:
SEVP-certified School
Nonimmigrant Student
U.S. Department of State
Principal Designated School Official (PDSO)/Designated School Official (DSO)

For SEVIS technical questions, call: 800-892-4829 or email SEVISHelpDesk@ice.dhs.gov
Contact the SEVP Response Center at SEVP@ice.dhs.gov or 703-603-3400 for policy questions
For more information, visit http://studyintheestates.dhs.gov