



U. S. Department of Homeland Security
Bureau of Immigration and Customs Enforcement

425 I Street NW
Washington, DC 20536

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MEMORANDUM FOR SEVIS CERTIFIED ACADEMIC INSTITUTIONS

FROM: Michael J. Garcia 
Acting Assistant Secretary

SUBJECT: Student Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS) Reporting Requirements for Academic Institutions at the Start of Each Term or Session.

U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) received several inquiries from academic institutions requesting clarification of the SEVIS reporting requirements related to the definition of the start of each academic term or session. The wording, as contained in volume 8 of the Code of Federal Regulations: Aliens and Nationality [8 C.F.R. § 214.3(g)(3)(iii)(A)]¹ is as follows:

(iii) Each term or session and no later than 30 days after the deadline for registering for classes, schools are required to report the following registration information:

(A) Whether the student has enrolled at the school, dropped below a full course of study without prior authorization by the DSO, or failed to enroll;

Since the deadline for registering for classes varies among academic institutions, this memorandum establishes a standard, clearly recognizable means to determine the required reporting date. The 30-day deadline for reporting student registration in SEVIS is calculated based upon the entry made in the SEVIS Student Information page (also identified on the student's I-20) as the "Program start date" for new students, i.e. those in "initial" status." For continuing students, i.e. those students previously enrolled and attending your academic institution, the 30-day deadline for reporting student registration is calculated based upon the entry made in the SEVIS Student Information page as "Next session start date." The deadline for reporting student registration is 30 days after the "Program start date" or the "Next session start date," as applicable.

¹ Full text available at <http://www.access.gpo.gov/cgi-bin/cfrassemble.cgi?title=200308>

The primary purpose for reporting is confirmation that “. . . the student has enrolled at the school.” The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) must receive confirmation that the student reported to the program at the academic institution that they declared when admitted in to the country at the port-of-entry. If the student fails to report, DHS can follow up on the “no-shows” in a timely manner. Schools are required to update SEVIS to indicate that a student has reported to the school, and that the student reports each subsequent term or session, by updating the SEVIS “registration” page, which can be accessed via a link on the SEVIS Student Information page. Detailed instruction on this “registration” update in SEVIS is available in the SEVIS School User Manual.

Since most academic institutions offer a “window” for final completion of class registration that extends past the “Program start date” or “Next session date,” ICE recognizes that students may need more time to finalize their course registration for a particular term. However, the completion of the course enrollment process at each school is not necessarily related to determination of the SEVIS “registration” reporting deadline as described above. What needs to be updated in SEVIS within the 30 day deadline is that the student reported to the academic institution as expected. Our national security interests do not permit a broader interpretation of this requirement.

If your institutional business processes are such that a student’s full time status for a particular term or session cannot be confirmed within the first 30 days, the initial SEVIS update indicating that the student has reported to the school should still be made within the 30 day timeframe (as described above). Cases in which a student has “. . . dropped below a full course of study without prior authorization by the DSO . . .” still need to be reported in SEVIS, but may be done so at a later date. If a student maintains a full course of study, no updates pertaining to a student’s course load need to be made in SEVIS beyond the SEVIS “registration”. A report that a student dropped below a full course of study subsequent to that initial reporting event can be made when that information becomes available.

We recognize absent this clarification, some academic institutions established processes for reporting during the fall term based upon varying interpretations of the law; however, strict compliance is mandatory beginning November 15, 2003.

Should you have remaining questions or concerns, please contact Jessica Campese, SEVP Policy and Planning, at (202) 353-3713.