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Fact Sheet

Maintaining student status when an SEVP-certified school closes or loses its certification to enroll F-1 nonimmigrant students

Roughly 200 Student and Exchange Visitor Program (SEVP) certified schools each year go out of business or have SEVP certification removed. If you are a student at one of these schools, you need to know what to do to maintain your nonimmigrant status, what legal obligations your school has to assist you, and what you should do if the school does not fulfill its legal obligations.

Sections 1 and 2 of this Fact Sheet are for students that have not yet begun their academic program in the United States. Sections 3 through 7 are for currently enrolled students, addressing the different situations you may face and your alternatives to maintain nonimmigrant status.

1. If you have been accepted by such a school, but have not yet entered the United States to begin your program of study, you will need to apply and be accepted by another SEVP-certified school. You will not be admitted into the United States with a Form I-20 (*Certificate of Eligibility for Nonimmigrant Student*) or visa issued for you to enroll at the original school. Prior to seeking entry into the United States:
 - a. Consult the list of SEVP-certified schools at <http://www.ice.gov/sevis/> and apply to a school on that list.
 - b. Once you have been accepted and received a Form I-20 from the new school, apply for a visa that reflects your attendance at the new school.
2. If you have arrived in the United States, but have not yet reported to your school, and discover that your school will cease operations or lose SEVP certification at the end of the current session, do one of the following:
 - a. If the school is still enrolling students for the current session, you may enroll and attend that school for that session only. Report to the school and enroll by the program start date, and then follow the requirements for currently enrolled students. See section 4.
 - b. You may transfer to another SEVP-certified school instead of enrolling in the affected school. First, identify a new school in which you can be enrolled from the list at <http://www.ice.gov/sevis/>. The new school (transfer-in school) must have a program start date that is within 30 days of your date of entry. Notify your current school (transfer-out school) of your intent to transfer prior to the intended program start date there. As soon as the new school confirms that they will accept you, report to the

transfer-in school by its program start date and enroll. The designated school officials (DSOs) of the two schools will coordinate the transfer of your Student and Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS) record, including assignment of a record release date to the transfer-in school. Your record must be released to the transfer-in school prior to you beginning classes at that school. See Section 4 for details.

- c. If you do not enroll in the affected school for its last session, gain acceptance at another SEVP-certified school and do not have your SEVIS record transferred within 30 days of your entry date, or if you choose to delay studies, depart the United States immediately. Follow the procedure in Section 1 if you choose to return to the United States to study.
3. If you are enrolled at a school that closes unexpectedly, immediately transfer to another SEVP-certified school or depart the United States.
4. If you are currently enrolled at a school that plans to close or loses SEVP certification and you elect to transfer to another SEVP-certified school:
 - a. Identify a new school (the transfer-in school). Consult the list of SEVP-certified schools at <http://www.ice.gov/sevis> and apply to a school on that list.
 - b. Provide the transfer-in school all the same information that was required for acceptance by your current school (the transfer-out school), including verification of finances. Discuss your situation fully with the DSO at the transfer-in school. Include the following topics, at a minimum, in your conversation:
 - Any breaks or travel you plan to take, and what documents you must have for travel
 - Authorized employment benefits from your current school, if any, and how the records release date of the transfer will affect them

Note: All current employment authorization is cancelled upon completion of transfer to a new school; see *FAQ Transfers for F-1 Students*, sections 6.7 and 6.8, at <http://www.ice.gov/sevis>.

 - When your classes will start, and when you must report to the school (within 15 days before the transfer-in program start date)
 - What courses are available, registration requirements, and procedures for transfer of academic records
 - What credits will be accepted by the transfer-in school from the transfer-out school
 - The impact of your transfer on the length of your program
 - c. When you are assured that this is an acceptable transfer for you and the transfer-in school accepts you, in writing, have the transfer-in DSO contact the DSO at the transfer-out school to coordinate the transfer of your SEVIS record, including assignment of a record release date to the transfer-in school.
 - d. Your transfer-out school will coordinate with SEVP to determine the last day you can be enrolled at that school. The transfer-out DSO will advise you of that date, your responsibilities to complete the transfer, and the sequence of events.
5. If you are currently enrolled at a school that plans to close or loses SEVP certification, and you elect to discontinue your studies:
 - a. Contact the DSO from your current school and request an authorized early withdrawal. If granted, depart the United States within 15 days of your formal withdrawal date from the school. Ask the DSO to give you

a new Form I-20 showing that your record was terminated as a result of an authorized withdrawal, and not from any detrimental action. Retain this with your travel records to avoid potential difficulties in being admitted to the United States for future visits.

- b. If you stop attending classes at your school without first notifying the DSO of your intent to withdraw, your SEVIS record and nonimmigrant status will be terminated for reason of unauthorized early withdrawal, a detrimental action. You are subject to further investigation and possible deportation. Depart the United States immediately.
 - c. If you choose to resume classes at another school after leaving the United States, follow the procedures in section 1.
6. If you have problems related to your enrollment with your current school and have not yet been accepted for transfer by a new school:
- a. Contact SEVP immediately by email at SEVIS.Source@dhs.gov if:
 - Your school discontinues the classes/instruction for which you have contracted
 - You are unable to contact school officials
 - Your school officials will not assist you

Note: Students from the same school and acting as a group may provide a single report to SEVP about your situation.
 - b. Provide SEVP the following information:
 - Family name
 - First name
 - SEVIS ID
 - Date of birth
 - Form I-94 number
 - Contact information, including mailing address, telephone number, and email
 - School name and address
 - Date you became aware of the problem
 - Description of the situation (a summary; 1-2 paragraphs)
 - c. SEVP will assist you if you choose to enroll at another SEVP-certified school. However, the basic requirements for you to transfer or depart the United States remain the same as for all students, whether or not their school officials are supporting them.
7. If you are enrolled at a school that is closing or losing SEVP certification and are transferring, but it does not appear that the transfer-out school intends to meet its legal obligations to transfer your SEVIS record, or if the DSO at the transfer-in school cannot contact the DSO at the transfer-out school to transfer your SEVIS record, the transfer-in DSO should seek guidance from SEVP.
8. What action is taken by SEVP with schools that do not fulfill their legal obligations? Schools that have been SEVP-certified have serious legal obligations to you, the student, and to the U.S. government. SEVP will exercise the full authority of the U.S. government to protect you and to institute sanctions against any school that disregards its responsibilities.