To: All SEVIS Users

Date: April 7, 2016

Re: From SEVP Director Lou Farrell: The School Certification Unit Continues to Improve Processes to Support Backlog Reduction

Number: 1604-03

General Information

Dear Stakeholders,

I strongly believe that promoting transparency through open communication is crucial to the success of the Student and Exchange Visitor Program's (SEVP) overall mission. In my previous broadcast message, distributed on March 25, 2016, I informed you that SEVP successfully eliminated the backlog of principal designated school official (PDSO) and designated school official (DSO) updates and that, as such, we are currently processing PDSO and DSO updates submitted with complete and accurate information within two weeks.

It is also important that you are aware of the great work being done behind the scenes at SEVP to continue clearing all backlogs and maintaining a reasonable turnaround period. The SEVP School Certification Unit (SCU) is making incremental changes that we strongly believe will lead to overall improved work processes that will allow us to manage adjudications more efficiently. Below are specific examples of our efforts to support the backlog reduction plan in all areas of SCU:

- **Student and Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS)**

  o SCU is collaborating with the SEVIS team to identify requirements for system upgrades that will help make the adjudication process more efficient. This includes revising how schools complete and update the Form I-17, "Petition for Approval of School for Attendance by Nonimmigrant Student," by modifying instructional texts to make requirements easier to understand and follow.

  o SCU is looking for ways to enable schools to submit evidence at the time of filing to reduce the number of requests for evidence.

- **Website Content**

  o SCU is continuously developing new and updated content for both ICE.gov/SEVP and Study in the States. The enhanced information regarding initial certification, updates and recertification will help guide schools through SCU processes.

  o Future additions to the websites will include information on evidence needed to support different types of updates, including program changes or additions.

- **Policy Guidance**

    o SCU is working closely with the SEVP Policy Team to develop guidance for program updates made to the Form I-17, such as pathway programs and secondary postgraduate year programs.

    o SCU is also working with Policy to develop additional clarifying guidance for hybrid programs and other specialty programs. These documents will help adjudicators as they consider nontraditional programs of study, and will assist schools in understanding standards for certification program eligibility.

On behalf of SEVP, I want to thank all of you for your ongoing support and patience as we work to enhance our processes so we can better serve you. Keep a look out for more updates about our progress.

Respectfully,

Lou

Comments

To comment on this Broadcast Message, please email SEVP@ice.dhs.gov with "Broadcast Message 1604-03 – Comment" entered in the subject line.

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