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PREPARING FOR CHANGES AFFECTING INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS IN F AND J IMMIGRATION STATUS

Introducing SEVIS

SEVIS (pronounced SEE-viss), the Student and Exchange Visitor Information System, is the system that INS (Immigration and Naturalization Service) and DOS (Department of State) will be using to track international students and scholars in F, J, and M (vocational programs) immigration statuses and their dependents, from the time of the production of the initial visa document to the individual's program completion or departure from ACCHS, or in the case of those students who elect to participate in what Immigration calls "Optional Practical Training" or "Academic Training" – a period of employment or attempted employment after the completion of studies. There are two main components in SEVIS: (1) visa document production; and (2) reporting "events". The compliance date for SEVIS is January 30, 2003.

What are the effects of non-compliance with SEVIS?

A few examples...

- In order to re-enter the U.S. after a trip outside the U.S., the F or J student must present an I-20 (Fs) or a DS-2019 (Js) with the SEVIS barcode. Without this document, the student could be barred from entry into the U.S.

- If an F or J student's registration and full-time enrollment status at ACCHS is not reported to SEVIS and his/her visa document is therefore voided, it cannot be used to re-enter the U.S. should the student leave for any reason. Also, if the student is determined to be "out of status" due to failure to report registration and full-time enrollment status at ACCHS, it will be very difficult for the student to be reinstated. If not reinstated, the student will have to leave the U.S.

What F and J international student information will have to be reported to SEVIS?

1. The information on an I-20 (for Fs) or a DS-2019 (the old IAP-66, for Js).
2. Examples of "events" (caveat: the timing and the final details of this reporting **have not yet been finalized**) include:
 - Registration
 - Full-time enrollment, where full-time enrollment, according to immigration regulations, for undergraduates is 12 units; for graduates, it's what the department determines OR the reason for less than full-time enrollment and if it's authorized according to immigration regulations, which is meant (for F-1 students) to be reported to ACCHS before any change takes place
 - Residential address and any changes, where PO boxes and departmental addresses are not accepted
 - Changes of major

- Leaves or reasons for interrupting the program of study through withdrawal – again (for F-1 students) this is meant to be reported to ACCHS before any change takes place
- Completion of program – either earlier than the date specified on the I-20 or DS-2019, on that specified date, or on a later date (which requires an extension) – exceptions are meant to be reported by the F-1 student to ACCHS before the current end date
- Dependent information

Are there other aspects of SEVIS that will affect international students in F or J immigration status?

There are other aspects, but the F regulations have not yet been finalized; J regulations haven't been issued even in a proposed form. Here are some examples of what we've seen from the F perspective.

- Students in F status will not be able to enter the U.S. earlier than 30 days before the first day of classes.
- Students in F status who are transfers (from an immigration perspective) will have to notify ACCHS that they are here within 15 days of the first day of classes in order to be compliant and complete the transfer process.

Who will be doing the reporting?

ACCHS Institutional Relations office, in partnership with the Dean of Administration, will be reporting this information to SEVIS.

Is there anyone else who will be part of SEVIS at ACCHS?

Besides ACCHS international students in F or J immigration status, SEVIS also includes our F and J students who have completed their studies and are on post-program completion Optional Practical Training (Fs) and Academic Training (Js) as well as all of our J international scholars. SEVIS also includes all of these peoples' dependents. *We are interested only in those people for whom ACCHS prepared the visa document.*