

SEVP Spotlight

April 2012
Volume 2, Issue 2

1
Director's Corner

2
Website Update
CTCEU Update

3
Conference Update

4
SEVP Update
Contact Us

Better Serving SEVP Stakeholders

DIRECTOR'S CORNER



*A message from
Louis M. Farrell,
Director of ICE's
Student and Exchange
Visitor Program*

The Student and Exchange Visitor Program (SEVP) has always sought to provide high quality service to our partners and stakeholders in the academic and government community. Our overarching goal has been to provide the tools and information you need to fulfill your responsibilities.

We hope to continue improving our service due to recent positive changes at U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), where SEVP resides as part of the National Security Investigations Division (NSID).

Recently, NSID was elevated to an assistant directorate level within ICE. This, in turn, elevated SEVP to one of the three divisions under NSID. Previously, SEVP was one of the many units in a division. This re-organization is a testament to the importance of SEVP's national security mission, and it will allow SEVP to collaborate more effectively with our counterparts across the law enforcement spectrum.

For SEVP stakeholders, this reorganization will not change your working relationship with us. The internal organizational structure of SEVP will remain the same as we work together to support ICE's national security mission.

Director, SEVP
Louis M. Farrell

INTERNAL OPERATIONS

Comprised of staff from information technology, training, mission support, administration and conference planning; Internal Operations creates a unified environment so that all SEVP personnel are fully prepared with the correct equipment and knowledge to meet our stakeholders' needs.

EXTERNAL OPERATIONS

Comprised of staff from school certification, policy, the SEVP response unit, field representative unit and the SEVP Analysis and Operations Center; External Operations are on the front line interacting with external stakeholders to address various inquiries and ensure SEVP is in compliance with federal regulations.

Together, SEVP's Internal and External Operations will work cohesively to ensure the mission is accomplished and we are meeting the needs of our varied stakeholder communities.

In addition, the role of SEVP's mission in maintaining national security remains the same; however, SEVP is now receiving greater recognition within the Department of Homeland Security for the impact our work has on the larger ICE mission. It is a recognition that SEVP and our stakeholders play a critical role in protecting the United States, and we recognize the seriousness of that responsibility.

You play a vital role in helping SEVP succeed, as you are on the front line, interacting with students and school leaders. We continue to encourage your feedback on items such as our participation in outreach events and the Student and Exchange

Visitor Information System. We appreciate your feedback and want to ensure that there are no disruptions in operations while maintaining a high level of satisfaction and availability.

SEVP sincerely thanks all of our stakeholders for their continued dedication and support in helping to carry out our mission. The elevation of our program would not have been possible without your support and feedback.

Take care,
Lou



U.S. Immigration
and Customs
Enforcement

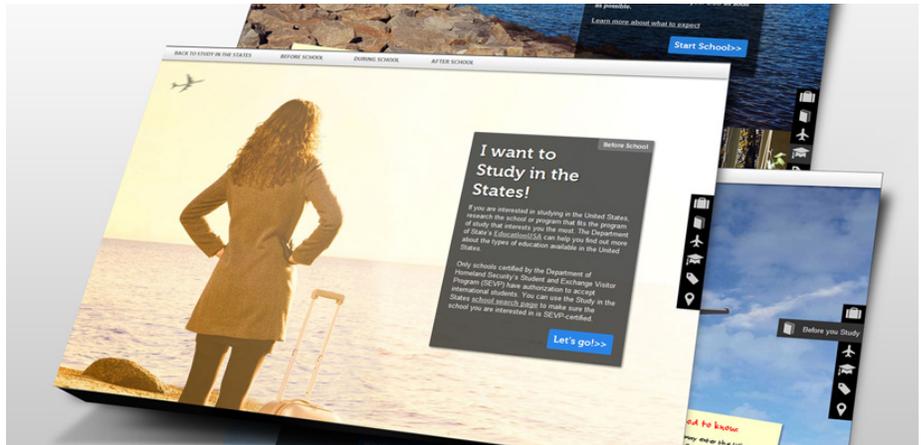
Study in the States Expands Web Features

Study in the States (StudyintheStates.dhs.gov) has made tremendous progress since its launch in September 2011. The website offers a streamlined, easily navigable online source of information for international students, as well as for Student and Exchange Visitor Program (SEVP) stakeholders.

In March 2012, SEVP launched two new interactive features on the site: the Study Guide to the States and language translation capabilities.

The Study Guide to the States provides high-level information and directs students to the appropriate resource, bringing together relevant information from all of the government agencies that play a role in the international student lifecycle. For example, it provides a visual overview of the entire international student lifecycle, from the initial visa application through the completion of an academic program. Students can use the Study Guide's scrolling navigation to explore each stage of the process (before school, during school and after school).

The second new feature, language translation capability, will make the Study in the States site



more accessible for visitors to the site who speak languages other than English. This new functionality allows users to instantly translate content into the native language of international students from the top sending countries, allowing them to more easily understand their responsibilities for compliance during their time in the United States. Translating a page is easy: students simply click the flag icon at the top right of the page to select the target language.

In March 2012, the first phase added Chinese translation capability to the site, as more Chinese students participate in United States programs than any other nationality. SEVP will introduce additional language options in the coming months.

CTCEU UPDATE

Counterterrorism and Criminal Exploitation Unit

Online and Distance Learning: Know Your Responsibilities



Thanks to affordable computers and the expansion of the Internet, distance learning is easier and faster than ever. Students of all ages appreciate the flexibility, convenience and effectiveness of distance learning.

Schools that apply distance learning to their respective programs and enroll foreign students should be aware of their responsibility to adhere to the relevant sections of the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR).

School administrators and officials should be particularly aware of the regulations highlighted below. The full text of these regulations is available in *8 CFR 214.2(f), (m)*; *8 CFR 214.3 and 214.4*; and *22 CFR 62*.

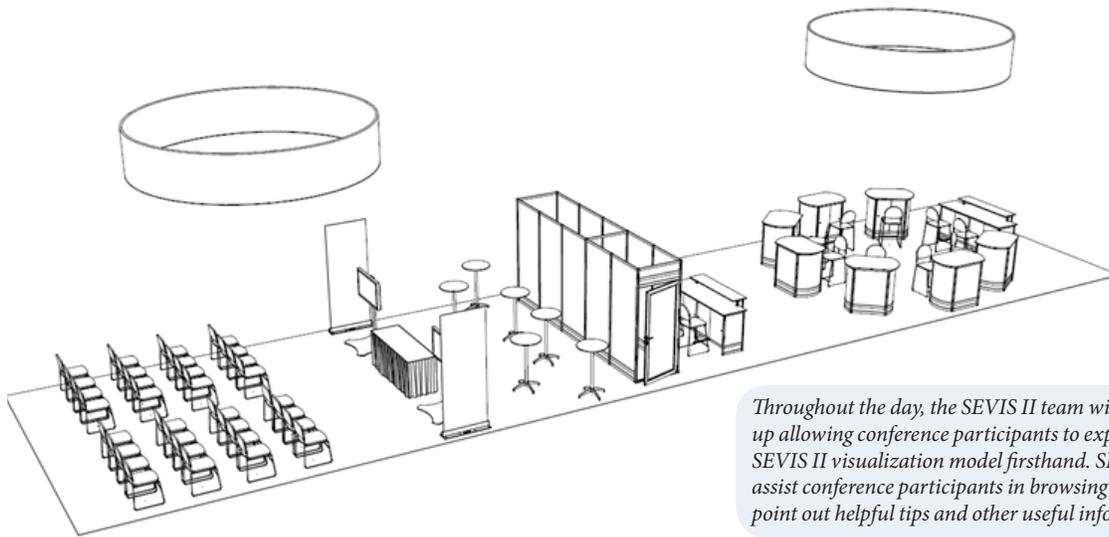
- An online or distance education course is “a course that is offered principally through the use of television, audio, or computer transmission including open broadcast, closed circuit, cable, microwave, or satellite, audio conferencing, or computer conferencing.” [*8 CFR 214.2(f)(6)(i)(G), 214.2(m)(9)(v)*]
- “No online or distance education classes may be considered to count toward an M-1 student’s full course of study requirement if such classes do not require the student’s physical attendance for classes, examination or other purposes integral to completion of the class.” [*8 CFR 214.2(m)(9)(v)*]
- “If the F-1 student’s course of study is in a language study program, no online or distance education classes may be considered to count toward a student’s full course of study requirement.” [*8 CFR 214.2(f)(6)(i)(G)*]

- “(N)o more than the equivalent of one class or three credits per... (academic)... term may be counted toward the full course of study requirement if the class is taken online or through distance education and does not require the student’s physical attendance for classes, exams or other purposes integral to completion of the class. [*8 CFR 214.2(f)(6)(i)(G)*]

Homeland Security Investigations (HSI), a directorate of U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement, investigates criminal exploitation of the student visa system, among other crimes. If you suspect criminal activity, contact your local HSI Special Agent or call 1-866-DHS-2ICE (1-866-347-2423).

Information may also be reported via the HSI Tip Form, which can be found at www.ice.gov. Tips may also be emailed directly to the Counterterrorism and Criminal Exploitation Unit at CTCEU@dhs.gov.

One DHS at NAFSA National Conference



Throughout the day, the SEVIS II team will have computer stations set up allowing conference participants to experience specific areas of the SEVIS II visualization model firsthand. SEVP staff will be available to assist conference participants in browsing through the model, and to point out helpful tips and other useful information.

SEVIS II CONFERENCE TOPICS

- Updating your Customer Account
- Creating Certificates of Eligibility (COE)-Initial and Transfer
- Nonimmigrant Signs COE; Pays I-901 Fee; Verifies Information
- Registering Nonimmigrants in SEVIS II
- Registration Events
- Updates to Form I-17 Petition-IOC
- Updates to Form I-17 Petition-FOC; Group Updates; Recertification
- Change Program Level; Change Program of Study; Managing Dependents
- Correct Entry/Exit Information; Admissibility Indicator; Domestic Report
- Reduced Course Load; Out of Country; Period of Status; SEVIS II Counters and Indicators
- SEVIS II Event History; SEVIS II Alerts
- Communications: Message Boards, Student Messages; Emails and Text Messages
- Update Nonimmigrant Financial Information; Extend Program; Shorten Program
- Employment Authorizations; Reporting Employment
- SEVIS II Search and Reporting
- FMJ Status: Managing, Monitoring and Ending Nonimmigrant Status

NAFSA National Conference: May 27 to June 1, 2012; Houston, Texas

A key part of U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Secretary Janet Napolitano's academic engagement initiative is enhanced outreach coordination between the federal agencies that play a role in international student issues.

Previously, each DHS agency engaged in its own robust outreach initiatives; however, these activities will now be coordinated into a "One DHS" approach.

Each year, the Student and Exchange Visitor Program (SEVP) participates in the Association of International Educators (NAFSA) National Conference and Expo. With approximately 10,000 members, NAFSA is the world's largest nonprofit professional association dedicated to international education. This year, NAFSA's national conference will be in Houston, Texas, May 27-June 1.

SEVP sponsors a booth in the convention center where stakeholders can talk directly with SEVP's subject matter experts. This year, SEVP will host an expanded display called the "U.S. Department of Homeland Security Pavilion," to more fully reflect the wide range of DHS programs engaged in student and exchange visitor issues.

The pavilion will be divided into two parts. One side will have a classroom set-up and will be devoted entirely to presenting SEVIS II tutorials throughout the conference. The classroom will feature six stations where stakeholders can participate in "hands-on" SEVIS II training.

On the second side, representatives from the following DHS agencies will be available to address stakeholder questions:

- Office of Academic Engagement
- U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement
 - SEVP
 - Counterterrorism and Criminal Exploitation Unit
- U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services
 - Office of Public Engagement
 - E-Verify
 - Systematic Alien Verification for Entitlements Program
- National Protection & Programs Directorate
 - US-VISIT
- U.S. Customs and Border Protection
- Federal Emergency Management Agency

Seven kiosks, arranged in a circle, will incorporate all of the DHS programs. Finally, two large, circular "U.S. Department of Homeland Security" signs will hang prominently above our section to ensure visibility of the DHS pavilion.

This expanded pavilion is part of a coordinated "One DHS" effort by the department to conduct more effective and unified outreach to stakeholders. We encourage NAFSA conference attendees to visit the pavilion to learn more.

Accreditation Law To Have Major Impact on ESL Programs

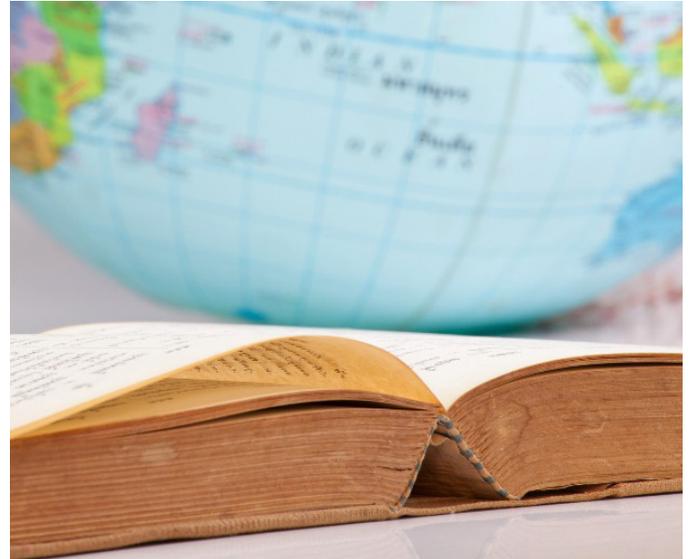
The Accreditation of English Language Training Programs Act (Accreditation Act), signed into law by President Obama in December 2010, requires all English language training programs of study (commonly called English as a second language (ESL)) either to have or to have applied for accreditation before December 15, 2011. Accreditation must be performed by a regional or national accrediting agency currently recognized by the Department of Education. ESL program administrators should be aware of this requirement and how it might affect both their programs and their students.

SEVP is committed to working with programs to make this process as efficient as possible. SEVP received lists from national accrediting agencies of all ESL programs that are accredited or have applied for accreditation by the applicable date. Based on these lists and additional cross-checking with SEVIS records, SEVP has been conducting a two-tiered approach to ensure compliance among SEVP-certified ESL programs.

SEVP has divided ESL programs into two categories: 1) stand-alone programs and 2) those programs combined with another SEVP-certified institution. SEVP has proceeded with checking the compliance of the stand-alone programs followed by programs combined with another SEVP-certified institution.

SEVP will notify school officials of any ESL program that fails to submit adequate evidence of compliance with the Accreditation Act of such status. Those found to be unaccredited will no longer be certified by SEVP in the Student and Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS). Accordingly, those programs of study will not be able to issue a Form I-20, "Certificate of Eligibility for Nonimmigrant Student Status," and nonimmigrant students will no longer be able to receive F-1 nonimmigrant visas to attend that program of study. In the event an ESL program loses its SEVP certification, nonimmigrant students attending those programs will have the following options:

- Nonimmigrant students at non-compliant programs of study can complete the current session at the institution and must transfer within



30 days after the end of the current session to another SEVP-certified ESL program of study that is compliant with the Accreditation Act.

- A nonimmigrant student who does not wish to transfer must depart the United States within 30 days of the completion of the current session.

SEVP has been working closely with ESL associations to help raise awareness and understanding of the requirements of the Accreditation Act. We appreciate the support our stakeholders have provided in the widespread dissemination of this guidance. As SEVP progresses with the review of ESL programs of study, we will be sure to relay relevant information to our stakeholders.

Contact Us

SEVP Contacts

The Student and Exchange Visitor Program (SEVP) is dedicated to maintaining open communication with international students in an effort to provide necessary support while studying in the United States. SEVP has multiple contact options:

- If you need assistance with passwords or Student and Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS) technical help, call the SEVIS Help Desk at 800-892-4829 between 8:00 a.m. and 8:00 p.m. Eastern Time or email SEVIShelpdesk@hp.com
- If you are a DSO, RO or ARO with technical issues requiring immediate attention, please email Toolbox.SEVIS@dhs.gov
- Our offices are open Monday through Friday, 7:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Eastern Time, except holidays
Phone: 703-603-3400
Email: SEVP@dhs.gov
Find us on the web:
www.ice.gov/sevis
<http://studyinthestates.dhs.gov>
Follow us on Twitter @StudyinStates
Like Study in the States on Facebook

ICE Contacts

To report national vulnerabilities or national security concerns:

Contact ICE's **Counterterrorism and Criminal Exploitation Unit** at CTCEU@dhs.gov

To report exploitation of student visa programs:

Contact your local HSI Special Agent or call 1-866-DHS-2ICE (1-866-347-2423) or www.ice.gov