

SEVIS II Text for Student Guidance 2010:

SEVIS Changes for 2009-10: Advice for Students and Exchange Visitors

The United States uses a Web-based data base to monitor the entry, presence and exit of international students, exchange visitors and their dependents. Currently, the school which accepts you will enter the necessary data into SEVIS, the Student and Exchange Visitor Information System, and will issue you a Form I-20 which allows you to apply for student (F-1 or M-1 visa) or exchange visitor (J-1) visa. SEVIS data is used by many government agencies which you will encounter in your journey to the United States: the US embassy or consulate where you will apply for your visa, the US Customs and Border Protection which will review your documents when you apply to enter the US at a port of entry, and the colleges, universities and programs where you will study.

The Student and Exchange Visitor Program which manages SEVIS (Student and Exchange Visitor Information System) is planning major improvements in SEVIS. The new database - called SEVIS II - will be implemented in two phases, the first beginning in October 2009. The planned advanced upgrades will make it easier for all users to navigate and use the system.

The new system is based on the idea that there will be one - and only one - SEVIS record for each person. If you are a student or exchange visitor, you and your dependents will each have one record for your entire relationship with the US immigration system. This will be possible through the use of an Immigration Identification Number or IIN - a unique identifier component.

What does this mean for you?

If you are currently attending school in the U.S. your school will tell you when and how to create this unique identifier, sometime in the last three months of 2009. Creating this account will require you to enter personal data from your travel documents for yourself and your dependents into a web-based application. If you are a student under the age of 18 or if you require the assistance of someone to help you create the account, your parent or legal guardian may do so. Your school will review your application and make changes to correct it.

SEVIS II will also match all records that belong to the same individual. Students will be asked to validate that the records being matched do, in fact, belong to them. They will also have the opportunity to identify records that belong to them that the system may not have identified as theirs.

Once SEVIS II is fully implemented in 2010, you will use your IIN to access SEVIS II - again online - to review your record, make changes to your personal information such as a change in your physical address, and ask your school to correct mistakes in your record.

If you are not a continuing student, but a new student who is planning on starting your studies in 2010 when SEVIS II is fully implemented, your process for obtaining your IIN will be slightly different. You will access the SEVIS website to create your account, which will then be made available to all the schools to which you apply.

Once they accept you, they will create a SEVIS record for you based upon the information you have entered. If you have applied to more than one school you will have to decide which school you wish to attend. Once you decide on a particular school, all of the other electronic records created by all of the other schools will be eliminated. When you apply for the appropriate visa, you will no longer have a paper Form I-20; the embassy or consulate will just check SEVIS II to verify your data. The creation of a one person-one record system based upon IINs means that SEVIS II will be paperless. Your visa will be issued to reflect the school of your choice.

What this means is that once you register in SEVIS, which is your responsibility, it will now be a “one person, one record” system. The improved system will not be complicated. In fact, it’s going to make it easier for you by saving you time, reducing data entry inconsistencies and duplications. SEVIS II will also help eliminate document fraud.

SEVP is planning many different ways to get you information about the account set-up process and your role with SEVIS II and will work with schools, programs, and the EducationUSA Advising Centers affiliated with US embassies abroad to make sure that you have all the information you need to make this transition to SEVIS II effortless.

Check the SEVP website at www.ice.gov/sevis for updates on this process, but remember that while you are an international student in the US, your international student advisor at your school is your best source for information.

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