



Washington International Education Conference

Pre- and Post-conference Questions and Answers

Feb. 14, 2018

Note: This document provides answers that interpret U.S. government regulation, but does not serve as a replacement for federal regulation or official Student and Exchange Visitor Program (SEVP) policy guidance. Questions have been edited for grammar and style.

1. Can SEVP explain the reason for lengthy processing times for Form I-17, “Petition for Approval of School for Attendance by Nonimmigrant Student,” updates? What is SEVP doing to decrease these processing times?

A. The SEVP School Certification Unit (SCU) receives, on average, 350 Form I-17 update requests per week. The term “Form I-17 update” can refer to anything from a simple change to one field, to changes to all 26 fields. Additionally, processing times vary depending on the complexity and type of update submitted. For example, an update to add a program of study will take longer than an update to a school’s contact information. The majority of pending updates have four to six different fields that require adjudication.

SEVP leadership monitors the SCU workload and reviews this workload on a regular basis to see if it is growing within a specific area. SCU works to re-prioritize resources if one or more adjudication queues become problematic.

One particularly labor-intensive priority is maintaining a 10-day processing time for Form I-17 updates that *only* involve principal designated school official (PDSO) and designated school official (DSO) changes. SEVP prioritizes this processing time since DSOs are the conduit between SEVP,



SEVP-certified schools and nonimmigrant students, and are also responsible for updating and maintaining student and school data in the Student and Exchange Visitor Information System.

2. How can a school make changes to its Form I-17 during the recertification process?

A. Schools that need to update their Form I-17 during the recertification process should email SEVP@ice.dhs.gov and include, “Attn: Recertification,” the school name, and school code in the subject line. In the email, include a description of the update and attach all necessary supporting evidence prior to submission to SEVP. Refer to the Evidence Guides, located at [ICE.gov/SEVIS/Schools](https://ice.gov/SEVIS/Schools), under the “Petition Updates” tab, for evidence requirements.

3. In what situations will SEVP expedite a Form I-17 update request? Does SEVP still prioritize updates for schools with pending certification expiration dates (CEDs)?

A. SEVP does not expedite Form I-17 updates, and processes updates on a first-in, first-out basis. SEVP prioritizes DSO and PDSO updates, as well as updates for schools approaching their CED.

4. SEVP notes schools cannot file a change in instructional site when filing for recertification, and must submit this as a separate Form I-17 update. What does a change in instructional site mean? Is it the same as a change in location?

A. A change in instructional site includes any change to a location listed on a school’s Form I-17. This includes changes to the school’s physical location, as well as adding instructional sites to the Form I-17.



5. How should a school handle a situation where it has an upcoming CED, but needs to make a change in instructional site? Should the school file a Form I-17 update before its CED to add the instructional site? In this situation, would SEVP extend the school’s CED until it adjudicates the instructional site?

A. Schools with an upcoming CED should file a Form I-17 update for a change of location and include all necessary evidence at the time of filing. SEVP prioritizes Form I-17 updates for schools approaching their CED to ensure these schools are able to file for recertification on time. SEVP adjudicators have the discretion to provide CED extensions on a case-by-case basis.

6. How should a school handle a situation where it needs to change its instructional site during the recertification process?

A. Schools that need to update their Form I-17 to add a new instructional site during the recertification process should email SEVP@ice.dhs.gov and include, “Attn: Recertification,” the school name, and school code in the subject line. In the email, include a description of the update to add an instructional site, and attach all necessary supporting evidence prior to submission to SEVP. Refer to the Evidence Guides, located at [ICE.gov/SEVIS/Schools](https://ice.dhs.gov/SEVIS/Schools), under the “Petition Updates” tab, for evidence requirements to add an instructional site.