

The electronic reporting system, SEVIS (Student and Exchange Visitor Information System), required by law, impacts all international students, scholars and their dependents, who hold F, M or J immigration status. This system tracks enrollment and employment, and affects how the ISSI processes documents.

What is SEVP/SEVIS?

- SEVIS, the Student Exchange Visitor Information System, is the database that the Department of Homeland Security uses to track and monitor non-immigrant students and exchange visitors. It is part of SEVP, the Student Exchange Visitor Program, which was created and developed by the Immigration and Naturalization Service of the Department of Justice (DOJ), the Department of State (DOS), and the Department of Education (DOE). Born out of IIRAIRA (Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act of 1996) and the pilot program, CIPRIS (Coordinated Interagency Partnership Regulating International Students).
- The INS, no longer under the DOJ, is now split into three new agencies under the supervision of the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS), Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) and Customs and Border Protection (CBP).
- SEVIS collects data on international students such as biographical information (date of birth, country of citizenship and birth, etc.), local and overseas address academic information (enrollment status, academic level, major, start and end date of program), and employment authorizations and recommendations.

Important information to be aware of:

- **SEVIS I-20 or DS-2019** - All active F-1 and J-1 students and scholars in good standing must have an I-20 or DS-2019 issued in SEVIS. If you have not already obtained your new SEVIS document, complete a request form (Form 122) at the ISSI (also available on our website: <http://www.issi.neu.edu/forms.htm>).
- **Extension of stay** – Students must apply for an extension of stay if they are unable to complete their program of study by the end date listed on the SEVIS I-20 or DS-2019. Students should notify the ISSI as soon as they know they will need an extension but at least 30 days prior to the current end date. Complete ISSI forms 122 and 129.
- **Travel** – Any student applying for a visa or returning to the United States must have a SEVIS issued I-20 to be admitted to the U.S. Every time you plan to travel outside of the U.S., check with the ISSI at least two weeks before your departure to make sure your papers are in order. Please note that it takes at least 2 business days to endorse your current SEVIS I-20 or DS-2019. Students approved for Optional Practical Training (OPT) must also have a SEVIS I-20 and the Employment Authorization Document (EAD card).
- **Visa Renewal** – Students should allow sufficient time for the visa application as new visas may take a long time to process. Security checks, personal interviews, or other delays may increase the time it normally takes to obtain the new visa. Students should contact the U.S. Embassy or Consulate regarding visa application procedures and processing times. Students should carry with them a valid passport, current or DS-2019 and all previous I-20 or DS-2019 (IAP-66) forms. A verification of enrollment (request a Certificate of Attendance at the ISSI), an official transcript from the Registrar's Office and proof of funding (recent financial documents such as bank statements and scholarship letters) should be obtained and presented as part of the visa application.
- **Transfer** – An F-1 immigration transfer now involves both the current and new schools. If a student is planning to transfer to another institution, a SEVIS I-20 must be issued by the new school, which will usually require a transfer form/verification of status completed by the current school. Upon the request of the student, the current school will need to release the SEVIS record to the new school so a transfer I-20 can be issued.
- **Optional Practical Training (OPT)** – F-1 students must apply for post-completion Optional Practical Training before they complete the program. We advise students to contact the ISSI more than 90 days before the expected completion date to begin the application process.
- **Address changes** – All students must notify USCIS, the ISSI and the Northeastern University Registrar's Office, 120 Hayden Hall, of any address change within 10 days of moving. Immigration will be notified of the change of address for all F or J students and families by the ISSI. All other visa-holders must complete the AR-11 form (<http://www.uscis.gov/graphics/formsfee/forms/ar-11.htm>) and submit it to immigration within 10 days of the change of address.
- **SEVIS Fee** – The SEVIS fee (\$200 for F-1 students and \$180 for J-1 Exchange Visitors) was implemented by the Department of Homeland Security in September 2004 for all F-1 and J-1 students and scholars applying for a visa to begin a new program. Students and scholars may pay the SEVIS fee with a credit card online at <https://www.fmjfee.com/index.jhtml> once they receive their I-20 or DS-2019, which bears their SEVIS number that is needed to pay the fee.

Other important responsibilities of students in F-1 or J-1 non-immigrant status:

- **Enrollment** – Every student must be registered full-time each term (except during the designated vacation period), i.e., if you are required to be in classes/co-op in the summer, then summer is not a designated vacation period for you. Do not take a leave of absence or a reduced course load without checking with the ISSI at the beginning of each term. The ISSI must verify full-time enrollment each term in SEVIS.
- **Full-time enrollment** – Full-time enrollment is based on the number of semester/quarter hours of credit per term: undergraduate day/evening students – minimum is 12 semester or quarter-hours; graduate students – minimum of 8 semester hour; stipended graduate assistant (working 20 hours per week) – minimum of 6 semester hours.
- **On-line course limitation** – Students are prohibited from taking more than 3 credits of online course work per term to count towards their full-time enrollment status as explained above.
- **Employment** – Students are prohibited from working more than 20 hours per week during the academic terms. Any off-campus employment must be authorized or recommended by an advisor at the International Student & Scholar Institute. Students should never begin any kind of employment, including co-op, without proper authorization.
- **Financial support** – Students must provide evidence that they are financially able to support themselves throughout their program of study. New evidence of financial support will be necessary to process a SEVIS document for a new program.
- **Penalty** – Students who violate their immigration status are subject to removal from the U.S. The ISSI is required to comply with immigration regulations governing your student status and must submit information as required. Violations of status will result in the need for reinstatement or reentry to regain legal status.

In order to better serve you, please adhere to the following processing times when requesting services and documents at the International Student & Scholar Institute.

<u>REQUEST</u>	<u>PROCESSING TIME</u>	<u>ISSI FORM(S)</u>
Request for SEVIS I-20/DS-2019 (continuing students)	5 business days	ISSI 122
Updated signature on SEVIS I-20/DS2019	2-4 business days	ISSI 134
ISVF (On campus work letter)	2-4 business days	ISSI 107
Certificate of Attendance	5 business days	ISSI 104
Letter of Invitation	5 business days	ISSI 110
Transfer recommendation	2-4 business days	ISSI 121
Co-op Authorization	5 business days	ISSI 153
Other Curricular Practical Training	By appointment	ISSI 106
Optional Practical Training	By appointment	ISSI 133
Academic Training (Js)	By appointment	ISSI 303
Changes of Visa Status/Reinstatement	By appointment	ISSI 137/ISSI 214
J-1 Scholar DS-2019 request	5 days	ISSI 500

Please keep in mind that the following external factors could extend the processing times that are listed above:

- Withdrawal or Block by Customer Service Center, Health Services, Dean’s Office, etc.
- Lack of proof of full-time enrollment
- Need to update/reissue an I-20/DS-2019 due to a significant change (major, funding, etc.)

If you have an emergency, the front desk staff member will refer you to the Advisor on Duty. Please be patient and we will do all in our power to assist you.