



NEWS RELEASE

Contact: Media Services
Office of Public Affairs
(202) 514-2648 Fax: (202) 514-1776
Internet: www.ins.gov

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FINAL RULE FOR STUDENT AND EXCHANGE VISITOR INFORMATION SYSTEM ANNOUNCED

WASHINGTON, D.C. – The Department of Justice today announced the final rule that implements the Student and Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS). SEVIS will allow the United States to ensure that foreign students and exchange visitors who have entered our nation to study in our schools actually enroll in those schools.

Congress required the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) to maintain updated information on the approximately one million non-immigrant foreign students and exchange visitors during the course of their stay in the United States each year. SEVIS implements section 641 of the Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act (IIRIRA) of 1996.

The publication of the final rule further demonstrates the commitment of the INS to develop a system by which our country can invite international students and exchange visitors to enjoy an educational experience in the United States, but also protect our nation's security by maintaining accurate records on who is inside our borders.

The final rule maintained the mandatory compliance date of January 30, 2003, after which all authorized schools must use the system to issue SEVIS Forms I-20 to all new students, as well as for current students who need a new Form I-20 because of a reportable event. Other significant changes from the proposed to the final rule include:

- Sets August 1, 2003 as the date by which schools must enter data into SEVIS about those students who were enrolled prior to January 30, 2003;
- Requires schools to report both a student's physical and mailing address when the two addresses are different;
- Allows schools and other educational institutions to have up to ten designated school officials to enter data into SEVIS, increased from the proposed limit of five;
- Clarifies the rules regarding the authorization by schools of a student taking less than a full-time course load for medical or academic reasons;

- Clarifies the rules regarding the transfer of students;
- Clarifies the rules regarding the authorization of optional practical training.

The rule, published in the Federal Register, amends the INS regulations concerning visas categories F (academic students), J (exchange visitors), and M (non-academic students) for temporary foreign visitors, as well as the way information is gathered and reported. The rule also serves to efficiently streamline the process of maintaining accurate information for all F, J, and M temporary foreign visitors by both schools and the INS.

SEVIS is scheduled to be operational on January 1, 2003.

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