

**Attention: Information No Longer Current
(Alert archived November 2011)**

Alert #13 – Update 1

Title: Transitioning to SEVIS: The Interim Student and Exchange Authentication System (ISEAS)

Prepared: September 2002

Type: New regulation, update to [Alert 13](#)

Summary

Section 501(c) of the Enhanced Border Security and Visa Reform Act of 2002 requires that a transitional student and exchange visitor tracking system be in operation by September 11, 2002. No student or exchange visa can be issued after September 11 unless the State Department receives "electronic evidence of documentation of the alien's acceptance" from an approved host institution. Because the Immigration and Naturalization Service's (INS) [Student and Exchange Visitor Information System](#) (SEVIS) program is not fully operational, the State Department Bureau of Consular Affairs is implementing a temporary parallel system, the Interim Student and Exchange Authentication System (ISEAS), to satisfy the requirements of the law. During the 30-day notification period only, institutions may send information by e-mail. On October 11, 2002, entry of information on the ISEAS Web-based system will become mandatory. Institutions that accept international students or exchange visitors will still need to be certified to participate in the SEVIS system by January 30, 2003.

Current Status

The State Department [announced](#) the ISEAS system to the public on September 10, 2002. It became active on September 11, 2002. Starting on that date, anyone applying for an F-1, J-1, or M-1 visa stamp at a US embassy or consulate must be listed in the Web-based ISEAS system (<http://www.iseas.state.gov/>). The procedures and process will be similar to the SEVIS system, and can be summarized as follows: Institutions that accept international students and exchange visitors must verify through ISEAS that the students who are eligible for F-1, J-1, or M-1 non-immigrant visas have been accepted for enrollment. The ISEAS will first verify that the institution is authorized to accept international students, and then return to the institution a confirmation number for each student, which is to be stored with the student's visitor records. The host institution will then issue and enter data for an I-20 form for students, or a DS-2019 form for exchange visitors. Consular officers will use the ISEAS system to verify the documentation and to issue the appropriate visa. Until the ISEAS system is fully operational, consular officials may contact the institution directly by e-mail for further information. After a

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visa has been issued, the Department of State will notify the INS and the INS will inform the host institution when the student or exchange visitor enters the country. If the student does not register for classes, the institution must notify INS no later than 30 days after the deadline for registration for classes.

The ISEAS will terminate when SEVIS is fully implemented (scheduled for January 30, 2003). Quoting from a State Department cable to consular officers, "it is likely that ISEAS will stand alone for its entire lifetime, and will not be able to share any data with SEVIS. As the date for mandatory SEVIS compliance grows near, and more and more education institutions and designated program sponsors become SEVIS-compliant, we will find ourselves in a situation where designated officials will have to report form I-20/IAP-66/DS-2019 issuances into two separate databases, (ISEAS and SEVIS) and consular officers will have to check both databases to confirm the provenance of those documents, until ISEAS sunsets on January 30, 2003."

All other visa processing requirements remain unchanged.

Standard Forms Covered by ISEAS.

- F-1, J-1, or M-1 class visas
- I-20 A-B, "Certificate of Eligibility for Nonimmigrant (F-1) Student Status" (academic or language schools)
- I-20 M-N, "Certificate of Eligibility for Nonimmigrant (M-1) Student Status" (vocational schools)
- DS-2019, "Certificate of Eligibility for Exchange Visitor (J-1) Status" (formerly IAP-66)

Implications for Institutions

Institutions need to make arrangements to comply immediately with the interim ISEAS requirements. The ISEAS applies to all aliens seeking student or exchange visitor visas after September 11, 2002, whether or not a visa was previously issued to that person for the same

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program. At the same time, institutions should be developing systems and procedures to efficiently implement the SEVIS. About 1000 institutions are already participating in SEVIS. Duplicate data entry will apparently be required, because the two systems will not exchange data with each other. Although a number of software vendors are preparing batch interfaces for SEVIS, no batch data entry system for ISEAS is currently available.

Although participation in ISEAS is mandatory for institutions that accept international students and exchange visitors, there are few public instructions or training materials available. Watch for further instructions and training materials at the ISEAS Web site (<http://www.iseas.state.gov/>) or at the Department of State (<http://www.state.gov/>).

Related information

There is conflicting testimony before Congress as to whether the INS will be able to meet the January 30, 2003, deadline for full implementation of the SEVIS program. The INS still has to prepare some of the technical requirements and computer infrastructure. It needs to develop a training system for college administrators who process international students. The INS also has to re-certify for SEVIS each institution that enrolls foreign students. To do that, INS plans site visits to approximately 6,500 campus by January 30, 2002, and it has hired 1,500 contract employees to conduct the visits. SEVIS requires that institutions report international students' major programs using the [2000 edition](#) of the Classification of Instructional Programs (CIP) codes. This means that institutions will have to use CIP 2000 codes for SEVIS while still reporting to IPEDS using CIP 1990. NCES has said that they will try to make CIP 2000 available before fall 2004 for optional IPEDS use.

SEVIS currently applies to full-time students only. The Department of Justice is considering ways to expand the system to track aliens who enter country under tourist visas, and who register for part-time courses or programs.

Timeline

September 11, 2002 - ISEAS system is activated

September 11, 2002 to October 11, 2002 - Thirty-day notification period; e-mail notification is permitted only during this time; Web participation is preferred

September 18, 2002 - ISEAS program announced in the Federal Register 22 CFR Part 41 [Public Notice 4121]

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October 11, 2002 - Full participation in ISEAS Web-based system is mandatory

January 30, 2003 - Participation in SEVIS Web-based system becomes mandatory

Additional Resources

SEVIS/ISEAS

SEVM/SEVIS Reporting on International Students and Exchange Visitors. AIR [Alert 13](#), July 2002.

ISEAS Web site: <http://www.iseas.state.gov/>

ISEAS help e-mail: ISEAShelpprogram@state.gov

State Department Press Release. "Implementation of the Interim Student and Exchange Authentication System" (September 10, 2002):
<http://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2002/13406pf.htm> (A brief announcement of ISEAS and the rationale behind the system.)

State Department cable to diplomatic and consular posts: <http://travel.state.gov/state174234.html>
(September 2, 2002) (Contains a section on "How ISEAS will work.")

Federal Register. (Volume 67, Number 181) September 18, 2002. 22 CFR Part 41 [Public Notice 4121]. "Visas: Documentation of Nonimmigrants Under the Immigration and Nationality Act, as Amended: Transitional Foreign Student Monitoring Program."
http://frwebgate.access.gpo.gov/cgi-bin/getdoc.cgi?dbname=2002_register&docid=02-23625-filed.pdf

Immigration and Naturalization SEVIS page:
<https://www.ins.usdoj.gov/graphics/services/tempbenefits/sevp.htm>

CIP Codes

NCES. Classification of Instructional Programs: 2000 Edition.
<http://nces.ed.gov/pubsearch/pubsinfo.asp?pubid=2002165>

State Council of Higher Education for Virginia (SCHEV). A variety of crosswalk and change tables for the 1990 and the 2000 CIP codes are available at: <http://research.schev.edu/cip2000/>

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