What MSU International Students Need to Know About SEVIS

For more information, contact:
Office for International Students and Scholars
103 International Center, Michigan State University
East Lansing, MI 48824-1035

Compliance Date
January 30, 2003 has been set as the date for universities to be fully compliant with SEVIS. Universities are required to electronically transfer all current international student data within 30 days after the deadline for class registration spring semester 2003.

Key Changes Students Need to Know:

1. Address
Students may no longer use a P.O. Box or an office address. Instead, they must use the address that describes their residence. In addition, students are required to notify the DSO within 10 days of any change in their name or address. The DSO has 21 days to notify the INS.

2. Reporting Cycle
Designated School Officials (DSOs) are required to report within 21 days of the occurrence the following events:
   A. Any student who has failed to maintain status or complete his or her program
   B. A change of the student or dependent’s legal name or U.S. address
   C. Any student who has graduated early or prior to the program end date listed on the SEVIS I-20 Form
   D. Any disciplinary action taken by the school against the student as a result of the student being convicted of a crime
   E. Any other notification request made by SEVIS to the DSO with regard to the current status of the student

In addition, every semester and no later than 30 days after the deadline for registering for classes, DSOs must report the following registration information to SEVIS:
   A. Whether the student has enrolled at the school, dropped below a full course of study without prior authorization by the DSO, or failed to enroll
   B. The current address of each enrolled student
   C. The start date of the student’s next semester

SEVIS is the Student and Exchange Visitor Information System. It is an internet-based system in which the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) maintains information on nonimmigrant students holding F, M and J visas. Under SEVIS, MSU will be required to provide regular electronic reports to the INS.
3. Reduced Course Load
According to the new INS regulations under SEVIS, a student who drops below a full course of study without the prior approval of the DSO will be considered out of status. There are still acceptable reasons for students to be authorized to take a reduced course load. These reasons include:

• students encountering academic difficulty can be authorized to reduce their course load for only one semester of a degree program.
• graduate students who have completed their coursework and who are pursuing their thesis or dissertation research can be authorized for reduced course load
• students who are in their final term of study and do not need a full course of study to complete the degree can be authorized for reduced course load
• students who have encountered a medical problem can be authorized for a reduced course load for a maximum of one year.

DSOs are required to report these events within 21 days. Based on recently passed legislation, the INS is required to audit higher education institutions compliance records every two years. If a school is not complying, they may face a one year suspension from admitting any international students.

4. Can a student who has been reported to the INS as out of status regain their legal student status? For instance, if a student dropped below a full course of study without getting prior approval from the DSO, he or she would be out of status and reported to the INS. What should the student do?

• If an international student violated his or her legal immigration status, they may apply to the INS for a reinstatement if the “violation of status resulted from circumstances beyond the student’s control” such as an illness, injury or natural disaster. If the institution was in error in reporting the student as out of status, this would be considered out of the student’s control and the student would be eligible to apply to the INS for reinstatement to student status.
• The student may not apply for reinstatement under any circumstances if he or she has been out of status for more than five months.

Check the INS website for more updates on SEVIS:
http://www.ins.usdoj.gov/graphics/services/tempbenefits/sevp.htm

Last updated 6/30/02