



SEVP Policy Guidance S13: Form I-20 – Student and Dependent Personal Information Fields in SEVIS

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Applicable to: 8 CFR 214.3(k), 8 CFR 214.3(g)

Purpose/Background: This guidance interprets aspects of the regulations and process for designated school official (DSO) issuance of Forms I-20, “Certificate of Eligibility for Nonimmigrant Student Status,” to F and M nonimmigrants. This guidance also interprets associated DSO recordkeeping and reporting requirements to guide Student and Exchange Visitor Program (SEVP) adjudicators.

DSOs must comply with relevant federal regulations and should comply with the guidance interpretation of them to fulfill their responsibilities to the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS). Where more restrictive, adjudicators should ensure that DSOs comply with school policies.

Attachments: None.

Definitions: None.

Acronyms:

1. **DHS.** Department of Homeland Security
2. **DSO.** Designated school official
3. **SEVIS.** Student and Exchange Visitor Information System
4. **SEVP.** Student and Exchange Visitor Program

Policy:

1. **Basic guidelines.** After determining that a prospective F-1 or M-1 student has met the conditions for issuance of the Form I-20,¹ the DSO must sign and issue the form to each prospective F-1 and M-1 student and to each of their prospective accompanying or joining dependents (collectively “F or M nonimmigrants”). Issuance of a Form I-20 enables the following:

- Payment of the I-901 Student and Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS) Fee (as applicable),

¹ 8 CFR 214.3(k)

- Application for an F or M visa,² and
- Application for admission to the United States.³

A DSO must complete all required Form I-20 fields accurately in SEVIS both for initial and any subsequent Forms I-20. By signing the Form I-20, a DSO attests that all information on the Form I-20 is correct.⁴

2. Passport and equivalent documents. A DSO should collect a copy of the prospective F or M nonimmigrant's passport prior to issuing a Form I-20. This enables the DSO to enter student and dependent information accurately in SEVIS.

- The passport should be valid. However, a DSO may use an expired passport if the prospective F or M nonimmigrant is in the process of renewing a passport.
- If a passport is not available, a DSO should request copies of other, equivalent government-issued travel documents or a certificate of birth. The DSO should retain these copies in the student's file⁵ at the school.
- If a valid passport was not used for information entry during initial Form I-20 issuance, the DSO should crosscheck the valid passport and correct SEVIS information, as necessary, when the nonimmigrant reports to the school and is made *Active* in SEVIS.

3. Inputting initial student and dependent biographical information in SEVIS. A DSO should use information contained in a prospective F or M nonimmigrant's passport (or its equivalent documents as described in [section 2](#)) to enter biographical data into the "Class of Admission and Personal Information" and "Add Dependent" pages in SEVIS.

3.1 Name fields in SEVIS. When entering names in SEVIS, a DSO should use the information entered in the machine-readable zone of a passport as a guide. A DSO should refer to detailed SEVIS Help Hub instructions, "[SEVIS Name Standards](#)" to enter student or dependent names into SEVIS.

3.2. Gender field in SEVIS.

- The student and dependent gender field includes the following options:
 - Female
 - Male
 - Unknown/Other

² If the prospective student and/or his or her dependent (s) is required to obtain a visa. See 22 CFR 41.2.

³ 8 CFR 214.2(f)(1)(i)(A), 8 CFR 214.2(f)(3), 8 CFR 214.2(m)(1)(i)(A), 8 CFR 214.2(m)(3), 8 CFR 214.3(k)

⁴ See Form I-20 School Attestation section.

⁵ 8 CFR 214.3(g)

- A DSO should only select the “unknown/other” option if the passport (or its equivalent documents as described in [section 2](#)) contains no information related to the gender of the prospective student or dependent. Upon the arrival of the student or dependent at the school, the DSO must update the field in accordance with passport or U.S. visa information.
- 4. Changes to student and dependent biographical information in SEVIS.** A DSO should request a copy of a continuing F or M nonimmigrant’s passport to validate any change to biographical information fields within “Class of Admission and Personal Information” and “Add Dependent” pages in SEVIS.
- The DSO should not change these fields without first receiving passport confirmation of the change.
 - The DSO should retain copies of these documents in the student’s file.⁶

References:

1. *8 CFR 214.2(f)(1)(i)(A)*
2. *8 CFR 214.2(f)(3)*
3. *8 CFR 214.3(g)*
4. *8 CFR 214.3(k)*
5. *8 CFR 214.2(m)(1)(i)(A)*
6. *8 CFR 214.2(m)(3)*

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⁶ See footnote 5.