



# Northwestern State University

## International Student Resource Center

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## TRANSFERRING YOUR SEVIS RECORD FROM NSU TO A NEW UNIVERSITY

### OVERVIEW

- ❖ SEVIS stands for Student and Exchange Visitor Information System. It is a nationwide, Internet-based system that the U.S. Government uses to maintain accurate and current information on non-immigrant students (F and M visa), exchange visitors (J visa), and their dependents (F-2, M-2, and J-2).
- ❖ An electronic record is created in SEVIS for you after you are admitted and confirm enrollment at NSU. This allows us to issue an I-20, which you need to gain F-1 status.
- ❖ When you apply for a student visa and arrive at a U.S. port of entry, the consular officer or immigration official may consult SEVIS in addition to your supporting documents to verify eligibility for F-1 status.
- ❖ NSU updates in SEVIS electronic reports throughout your academic career, noting information such as registration, address changes, academic program changes, degree completion, and immigration status violations.

### WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW BEFORE YOU REQUEST NSU A TRANSFER OF YOUR SEVIS RECORD.

- ❖ The Admission to a new school does not by itself authorize an international student in F-1 status to begin studying full-time at the new school.
- ❖ You must first notify NSU of your intent to transfer. Request NSU to transfer/release your F-1 U.S. government SEVIS I-20 record to your new school before you can begin full-time studies there. The U.S. government calls this process a "SEVIS transfer."
- ❖ There are several benefits to a SEVIS transfer:
  - You do not pay the SEVIS fee again.
  - You can remain in the U.S. in between programs.
  - You maintain the same current SEVIS ID number (which may make you eligible for certain benefits at your new school earlier, such as CPT eligibility).
- ❖ The U.S. government considers all the following examples to be possible "SEVIS transfer" situations:
  - A. **Completing** a program at one school and **starting a new program** at a different school.
  - B. **Currently studying** at one school and deciding (before completing program) **to change to a new school**.
  - C. **Currently doing OPT** and **starting a new program** of study at a different school.

### ELIGIBILITY FOR A SEVIS RECORD TRANSFER

- ❖ You must currently be **maintaining F-1 status** at NSU.
- ❖ You must have an **offer of admission from a new school**.
- ❖ If you already graduated or completed OPT, you must still **be within your 60-day grace period**.
- ❖ The **start of classes at your new school must be within 5 months** of one of the following:
  - Academic program completion at NSU.
  - Last day of enrollment at NSU (if not graduating from NSU).
  - OPT authorization end date.
  - For students not completing OPT period, the requested SEVIS I-20 transfer/release date.

**Note:** If the period of time between F-1 activities is longer than 5 months, your SEVIS record is not eligible for transfer. Your new school must issue a new initial I-20 with a new SEVIS number and you MUST pay a new SEVIS fee. In this case you are not permitted to remain in the United States.

### WHAT IS THE SEVIS I-20 TRANSFER/RELEASE DATE?

- ❖ Only one school at a time can access your F-1 SEVIS record.
- ❖ The SEVIS transfer affects your F-1 benefits, including employment, travel, and I-20 validity.
- ❖ On the SEVIS transfer/release date:
  - The NSU Admissions Office and the ISRC lose access to your electronic SEVIS record.
  - Your new school gains access to your electronic SEVIS record; your new school can create your new I-20 only after the SEVIS transfer/release date.
  - OPT authorization is cancelled (regardless of end date printed on EAD). Authorization for OPT is not transferable.
  - On-campus work authorization is cancelled.
  - The NSU issued I-20 is no longer a valid document.

**Important:** You must attend classes and otherwise maintain status until the transfer release date. And contact the International Office at the transfer-in school as soon as possible after the transfer release date, no later than 15 days *before* of the program start date listed on your I-20 from the new school.

### HOW TO CHOOSE A SEVIS I-20 TRANSFER/RELEASE DATE?

- ❖ The chart below provides guidance for choosing your SEVIS I-20 transfer/release date. Also, remember:
  - Allow 7-10 business days for processing after you submit your completed SEVIS I-20 transfer/release request.
  - NSU cannot set a past date as the SEVIS I-20 transfer/release date. If NSU receives/processes your SEVIS I-20 transfer/release request after your requested transfer/release date, we will transfer/release the SEVIS record on the day of processing.
  - You cannot cancel a SEVIS I-20 transfer/release on or after the transfer/release date; you can only request to cancel the SEVIS transfer/release prior to the transfer/release date.

If you...	Recommended Transfer Date:
Are discontinuing studies at NSU without completing the degree.	One day after the end of finals week in your last semester at NSU.
Are temporarily leaving NSU to study full-time at another school (like a community college) and plan to return to NSU in the future.	One day after the end of finals week in your last semester at NSU.
Are graduating this current quarter and will not apply for OPT.	One day after the end of finals week in your last semester at NSU.
Recently graduated and are in your 60-day grace period (did not apply for OPT).	As soon as possible, and at least 10 business day before the end of your 60-day grace period.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Recently graduated;</li> <li>▪ Have a pending OPT application; but</li> <li>▪ You DO NOT plan to use any OPT.</li> </ul>	As soon as possible.
Have OPT approval but you DO NOT plan to start a job/practical training position.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ As soon as possible.</li> <li>▪ Request the transfer at least 10 business days before your 90-day-limit of unemployment ends.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ If you exceed 90 days of unemployment, your F-1 status is considered invalid.</li> </ul>
Have a pending or approved OPT application and plan to do some OPT before starting your new degree program.	<p>One day after your last date of employment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Discuss your final employment date with your supervisor.</li> <li>▪ Remember, OPT authorization is cancelled on the transfer/release date (regardless of end date printed on EAD).</li> </ul>

## INSTRUCTIONS: REQUEST YOUR SEVIS I-20 TRANSFER/RELEASE

- ❖ Gather the necessary information/documents to complete the SEVIS I-20 Transfer/Release:
  1. Cover sheet (link).
  2. Letter of admission from your new school (electronic letter accepted).
  3. Transfer-in form from your new school (If your new school does not use a transfer in form, please provide your SEVIS release date and the new school's SEVIS code in the cover sheet.)
  4. Most recent [I-94 record](#).
  5. EAD card if you are currently working on F-1 OPT.
  6. Requested release date. (Please note: If you are currently on OPT, be aware that you cannot continue to work after the release date).
  7. Allow 7-10 business days for processing.
  8. Once approved, we will release your SEVIS record to your new school on the agreed upon release date.
  
- ❖ Important to consider:
  - ✓ Please note that after the transfer out date NSU will no longer have access to your SEVIS record, so request a transfer only after your plans are certain.
  - ✓ You will receive an email confirmation of your SEVIS transfer/release from the ISRC.
  - ✓ If you are registered for a future semester at NSU, do not forget to withdraw and fulfill any financial obligations with the University before you transfer to your new school or leave the U.S.
  - ✓ Contact the new school's International Admissions Office to arrange when and how to receive your new I-20.

## ❖ FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1. **Can I stay in the U.S. between programs?** You may stay in the U.S. in between programs/F-1 activities if the SEVIS record transfer procedures are correctly followed. If the period between programs is longer than 5 months, your new school must issue a new initial I-20 with a new SEVIS number. You must leave the U.S. within your 60-day grace period and re-enter no earlier than 30 days before your new program start date.
  
2. **How does my SEVIS transfer affect my travel plans?** You can travel, but you must reenter the United States with a Form I-20 for the school that holds your active or initial record. Travel should meet the following requirements:
  - Started and completed before the transfer release date with a current Form I-20 from the transfer-out school

- Started and completed after the transfer release date with Form I-20 from the transfer-in school.

If you leave the country before the transfer release date, but cannot return until after, the transfer-in school must send you an updated Initial Form I-20 for reentry into the United States.

- 3. Can I use my current visa even though I am changing schools?** As long as you have followed the proper transfer procedures, you will be able to use your current, unexpired F-1 visa to reenter the U.S. even though it has your previous school name printed on it.
- 4. How does my SEVIS transfer affect my on-campus employment eligibility?** You may only work on campus at the school that has access to your SEVIS record. Check with the international student advisor at your new school to verify employment eligibility. Your NSU on-campus work authorization ends on the last day of your last enrolled semester at NSU or the transfer release date (if that is later).
- 5. Can I request to transfer my SEVIS record after I have graduated?** You are eligible to request a SEVIS record transfer during the 60-day grace period following your program completion. However, remember to allow for 7-10 business days to process it; contact the ISRC at least 10 days before the end of your 60-day grace period to request the SEVIS transfer. If you are authorized for OPT you can request a SEVIS record transfer during your OPT period and within the 60-day grace period following your OPT expiration date.
- 6. How does my SEVIS transfer affect my OPT authorization?** If you are currently authorized for OPT, choose carefully when deciding what date you would like your SEVIS record transferred to your new school. OPT authorization ends on the "transfer out" date, even if the EAD card is not yet expired. If you plan to work between programs while on OPT, coordinate with your international student advisor at both schools to determine an appropriate "transfer out" date.
- 7. Do I need to report to my new school's international office?** Yes. You must report to your new school's International Office at least 15 days before the program start date listed on your I-20.