

## Transfer Student Guide

Nonimmigrant students are permitted to transfer from one SEVP certified school to another, provided they maintain their F-1 status throughout the process. This overview provides a description of both the role of the DSO in facilitating student transfer as well as the responsibilities of the student in preventing any violations of status.

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When an F-1 student decides to transfer to another SEVP certified school, there are two parties which are primarily involved in making the transfer happen: 1.) the transfer-out school (the school which the student is leaving) and  
2.) the transfer-in school (the school receiving the student).

### **Transfer Release Date:**

One of the most critical factors in the transfer process is the **transfer-release date**, or the date on which the responsibility for the student's SEVIS record shifts from the transfer-out school to the transfer-in school. On this date, the student's SEVIS record is made available to the transfer-in school and subsequently, the transfer-out school is no longer able to make changes to the SEVIS record. Upon the transfer-release date the transfer-in school is then able to access the student's record in *Draft* status and from there create an initial, transfer Form I-20.

An F-1 student is allowed to remain in the U.S. when transferring between schools or programs as long as the student begins classes at the transfer-in school in the next available term or within 5 months of the last day of classes at the transfer-out school (whichever is sooner), or within 5 months of the program end date on their current Form I-20 or EAD granted for post-completion OPT.

In most cases the transfer-release date is at the end of the current term; however the student can transfer outside of the normal academic cycle. Specific factors which could affect setting the transfer-release date include travel, employment, practical training, and the SEVIS status of the student's record.

### **Travel:**

In order to leave and re-enter the US, a student must have a Form I-20 from whichever school holds their current, Active SEVIS record. To do so the student can either travel and return before the transfer-release date with an Active Form I-20 from the transfer-out school, or travel and return after the transfer-release date with a *Transfer Pending* Form I-20 from the transfer-in school.

(If a student wishes to transfer to a third school after the transfer-release date, they must work with the original transfer-in school, as the former transfer-out school no longer has the ability to change the student's record within SEVIS.)

### **SEVIS Status:**

Students with an application **pending for reinstatement of status** by USCIS are **NOT** allowed to transfer schools until the reinstatement is adjudicated, or they depart the US and attempt to return with a new Initial Form I-20.

Students with a **Terminated SEVIS record** are allowed to transfer schools however they must file for reinstatement of status with USCIS immediately upon the transfer of their SEVIS record.

A student who has **completed their program of study** can transfer during the 60-day grace period after the program end date and any post-completion OPT, provided the transfer-release date is set before the end of the 60-day grace period. (Their record will still be in active status at this time.) If a student requests a transfer after the 60-day grace period has ended and after the record has gone into Completed status, the DSO must deny this request and inform the student that they must depart the US.

**New initial students** may transfer if the student first reports to the original school by the program start-date listed on the original Form I-20, and may begin classes within 30 day of their entry to the US. It is not necessary that these students report in person, and email, fax or phone notification is acceptable. However the student will need to provide a copy of their full I-94 card verifying date of entry, as well as a copy of their acceptance to the other school. In order to facilitate transfer, the DSO will need to register the student within SEVIS for the current term using the current date for the “Current Session End Date” and the following day’s date for the “Next Session Start Date”. The transfer-release date should be set as the following day’s date in order to facilitate immediate transfer of the SEVIS record.

### **Practical Training & Employment:**

Though a student approved for Curricular Practical Training (CPT) may continue to work at an approved job until the transfer-release date, **authorization for CPT is not transferable**. In order to participate in CPT at the transfer-in school the student must obtain authorization from the new DSO.

Likewise, **authorization to participate in Optional Practical Training (OPT) is also not transferable** and ends on the transfer-release date. If the student wished to complete OPT, the DSO can set the transfer-release date after the end date of OPT. A student will be able to transfer during the 60-day grace period following OPT (provided that the transfer-release date is set before the end of the grace period.)

Student authorized for on-campus employment may continue working at the transfer-out school until the transfer-release date and must request permission at the transfer-in school for on-campus work. Employment at the transfer-in school would then only begin after the transfer-release date.

Similarly, the authorization for off-campus employment ends when the student transfers, and must cease by the transfer-release date. In order to continue off-campus employment, a student must request DSO recommendation at the transfer-in school and apply to USCIS for authorization.

### **Transfer Process:**

| <b>Transfer-Out School:</b>   | <b>Transfer-In school:</b>  |
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| <p>The student must select another SEVP certified, apply for enrollment, and obtain the contact information for the DSO at the transfer-in school.</p> <p>The student must inform the DSO at the transfer-out school of their desire to transfer and provide proof of acceptance at the transfer-in school.</p> <p>The DSO must work with the student to set an acceptable transfer-release date and must communicate with the DSO at the transfer-in school. The DSO will then print a new Form I-20 Transfer Pending and supply this to the student.</p> <p>To facilitate the transfer within SEVIS the DSO will need the transfer-in school's SEVIS code, exact name within SEVIS, and verification of the student's acceptance.</p> | <p>Upon the transfer-release date, the DSO must create a new Form I-20, ensuring that all fields are current and accurate. The student will now be in Initial status.</p> <p>The student must report to the DSO within 15 days of the program start date and the DSO will register the record by filing the current session start/end date &amp; next session start date.</p> <p>If the student fails to report to the transfer-in school, the DSO must terminate the student record for “Transfer Student- No Show”.</p> |