

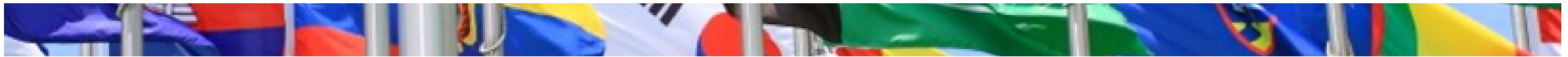


University of
New Haven

UIS Hot Topic

University Immigration Services

August 12, 2022



Today's Hot Topic: SEVIS Transfers

What happens to the SEVIS record and the corresponding visa status when an F-1/J-1 student transfers to a new University? The simple answer is that the SEVIS record gets transferred electronically between schools. This process is totally separate from the academic process of transferring credits from one school to another. See below for more about transferring credits. There are various scenarios in which the SEVIS record is transferred between schools and the process will vary by scenario.

Scenario One: Immediate Transfer Out

F-1 visa regulations require students enter the U.S. using the I-20 on which they paid the I-901 SEVIS fee and acquired the visa stamp. For their first entry to the U.S. in F-1 status, the school name on the visa and I-20 must match. If subsequent to getting the visa using the University of New Haven I-20 the student decides to attend a different university, the student must nonetheless travel on University of New Haven I-20 and report in to their admissions counselor at the University of New Haven. When reporting in, the student may request an immediate transfer out of their SEVIS record to the new school. The student can accomplish this in their Slate accepted student portal, but must do so prior to the start of classes. Then the Registrar will consider this a cancelled enrollment.

This also works in reverse for a student that enters on another school's I-20 and wants to transfer to the University of New Haven. Please note that in both cases, the student must be in class no later than 30 days after arriving to the U.S. The student may not be able to transfer if the transfer-to school starts more than 30 days after the student's arrival. This option may not be available to J-1 students, depending on the conditions of their program.

Scenario Two: Transfer Out Before Completing a Degree Program

Occasionally a student will start their academic program with the University of New Haven but later decide to transfer to another school for personal, financial, or academic reasons. Such a transfer usually takes place after the student completes the current semester and before the start of the subsequent semester. In this scenario, the student must pay off their student account and withdraw from the University via the Registrar's process. After gaining admission to the new school and completing the Registrar's withdrawal process, the student requests the SEVIS transfer from the UIS. This option may or may not be available to J-1 students, depending on the conditions of their program.

It is possible in some circumstances to transfer mid-semester (defined as any time after the first day of classes and before the end of the semester). However, transferring mid-semester has serious consequences and should be considered only in rare circumstances.

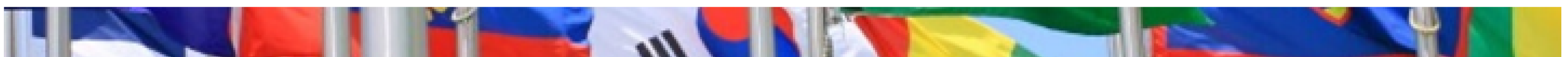
- The student must pay the enrollment deposit and register for courses by the start of classes.
- If transferring out after the start of classes, the student must first withdraw from the University, and will be responsible for any unpaid charges to their account.
- The Bursar's refund policy applies based on how many weeks of the semester have passed. There can be other serious financial implications related to losing scholarships and affecting bank loans.
- If transferring out after the start of classes, the student must remain enrolled and actively attend classes until the SEVIS transfer release date. The Registrar's withdrawal process generally takes at least one week.
- If transferring out after the start of classes, the student must be accepted to the new program before withdrawing from the University.
- The student must be able to start at the new school within one week of withdrawing from this University, enroll in and complete the minimum full-time load of credits by the end of the current term. If the student does not enroll at the new school until a future term, they will be out of status and must return home. If they depart the U.S. in a timely fashion, their visa (if not expired) will allow return for the subsequent semester if desired.
- SEVIS transfer to a new school after the start of classes only works out if the new school has a later start date for the same term.
- If an F-1 student withdraws from the University of New Haven without submitting a SEVIS transfer request including evidence of acceptance to a new school, the student has 15 days to depart the U.S.

We discourage SEVIS transfers midsemester because often students get themselves in trouble because they lose their visa status, lose money, or lose credits. It is better to complete the semester and then transfer out if it is necessary to do so.

Scenario Three: Transfer to a New School upon Completion of a Degree Program

When a student completes their academic program at the University of New Haven and continues directly to a new academic program at the same or higher educational level at a different school, the student must request that UIS transfer the SEVIS record to the new school prior to the end of the 60-day grace period. The new school will provide a transfer-pending I-20 for the interim period of no more than 5 months. If there are more than five months until the academic program begins at the new school, the student will have to depart the U.S. and return on the new school's I-20 in the future. The student should consult with the DSO at the new school.

This option may or may not be available to J-1 students, depending on the conditions of their program.



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Scenario Four: Transfer to a New School during OPT/STEM

Often, a student will decide to start a new academic program during or after OPT if they have used more than 90 days of unemployment or their EAD is expiring and they were unable to get the H1-B visa. Transferring to the new school prior to the end of OPT/STEM period will keep the F-1 visa status alive to allow the student to stay legally in the U.S.

Please note that if the student has already applied for OPT or the STEM extension and/or is currently employed on OPT/STEM, transferring the SEVIS record will terminate the employment authorization regardless of the date on the EAD. The student should choose the release date carefully. There can be no more than five months between the EAD expiration and the start of the new program. The student may not work during the interim when the record has been released and the transfer is pending.

This option does not apply to J-1 students because Academic Training, if awarded, is considered part of the program. See Scenario Three.

Find general information about SEVIS transfers and how to request one on the UIS myCharger pages.

A Note About Transferring Academic Credits

The decision to accept the transfer of credits from School A to School B is dependent on the admissions policies of School B. Just because both schools are accredited doesn't mean that credits will be transferred. School B will have specific policies regarding how many credits they will transfer, what grade must be attained in the course, and how to determine whether a course taken at School A is equivalent to a course offered at School B. You should not assume that your credits will automatically transfer. Be prepared to accept your losses if you transfer between schools.

School B will require an official copy of your academic transcripts to decide which, if any, credits they will accept. Request transcripts from the Registrar's office.

I hope this information will allow you to make better decisions and avoid troubles with your visa status. Contact the UIS if you have further questions.

Kathy Kautz de Arango

Disclaimer

What I share on my blog are my opinions and thoughts on particular issues relevant to international students. Please do not consider what I say to be actual legal advice because I am not an attorney and each case must be advised individually. If you have need of actual legal advice, you can find an immigration attorney near you at www.ailalawyer.com. Nonetheless, I have been a P/DSO for over 20 years, so at least I surmise from an experienced perspective. Each person has a unique situation, and I would likely advise one student differently than another, but hopefully, this blog will be helpful to you in some way.