



WWHEPC J-1 Exchange Visitor Program

IMPORTANCE OF USING PROPER TERMINOLOGY

Like every specialized profession, exchange visitor advisement has a host of acronyms and terminology that is used on a daily basis. And we as professionals have an obligation to use the proper terminology during the course of our daily activities. It is equally critical that we know what terms do not exist in the regulations and resolve never to use them. Improper use of terms make precise communication between two advisors difficult and can confuse students, faculty, staff and the general public. Below is a discussion of some terms typically used in the field of international education, which do not have a legal basis. It is not an exhaustive list, just a good basic overview.

Department of Homeland Security-A Cabinet level department responsible for securing the nation's borders and managing the immigration process. DHS assumes responsibilities for activities and services previously handled by the Immigration and Naturalization Service. DHS has divided immigration services and border enforcement into separate agencies.

USCIS- U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services. An agency within the Department of Homeland Security that has jurisdiction over the status of non-immigrants within the boundaries of the U.S. This agency has direct oversight of immigration related benefits including changes of status, employment authorization, etc.

ICE- U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement. An agency within the Department of Homeland Security that is responsible for immigration enforcement issues. This is the agency with direct oversight of the SEVIS program.

CBP- U.S. Customs and Border Protection. An agency within the Department of Homeland Security responsible for inspections at U.S. ports of entry, for the border patrol, and for the Customs Service.

D/S- Stands for "Duration of Status" for J exchange visitors and dependents. This means the time a student is pursuing a full course of study, plus academic training, and a 30 day grace period.

DOS- The United States Department of State. The Department responsible for issuing U.S. visas and for oversight of the J-1 Exchange Visitor Program.

DS-2019- A certificate of eligibility for J-1 exchange visitor visa or immigration status.

EAD- Employment Authorization Document. An EAD is a laminated picture-ID card issued by the CIS authorizing the holder to accept employment.

F-1 Student: Students in colleges, universities, seminaries, conservatories, academic high schools, other academic or language institutions.

I-20 Form- A certificate of eligibility for an F-1 student visa or F-1 immigration status.

I-94- Arrival/Departure Record. A student's most important document--permission to enter and remain in the U.S.

J-1 Exchange Visitor: Visitors engaged in educational and cultural exchanges for the purpose of studying, teaching, conducting research or other activities that increase mutual understanding between people of the United States and other countries. J-1 students are typically sponsored by their home government of the U.S. government.

M-1 Student: Students in vocational or trade schools (technical colleges).

NAFSA- This once meant National Association of Foreign Student Advisors, then National Association for Foreign Student Affairs. Now, it is just five letters in the official name of NAFSA: Association of International Educators. NAFSA is the professional organization to which all foreign student advisors should belong.

Passport- A document issued by an authority of a particular country proving citizenship status.

Responsible Officer (RO)- The person designated by the president or chief executive officer of school to have oversight of other Responsible Officers and the institutions compliance with the J-1 SEVIS system. Each school can have one Responsible Officer. The Responsible Officer must be a U.S. citizen.

Alternate Responsible Officer (ARO)- A person designated by the president or chief executive officer of a school authorized by DOS to accept J-1 nonimmigrant students, to sign immigration documents and advise international students and scholars. Only an RO/ARO can sign a Form DS-2019 or put information into SEVIS. An ARO must be a U.S. citizen.

SEVIS- The Student and Exchange Visitor Information System is the electronic reporting and record-keeping system that is part of every nonimmigrant student office certified to enroll F, J, or M international students. SEVIS requires institutions to record, on an “events-based” schedule, I-20 issuance, work recommendations and authorizations, student violations, institutional changes, etc.

DS-7002- A training/internship placement plan that is required for J-1 exchange visitors participating in training or internship programs. The form is signed by the J-1 program sponsor, the exchange visitor and employer providing the internship/training opportunity. It is presented to the U.S. Consulate/Embassy as part of the visa application process.

SEVP- The Student and Exchange Visitor Program is the administrative unit in charge of the SEVIS system and acts as the bridge for varied government organizations that have an interest in information on foreign students.

Visa- A travel stamp issued by the US Department of State. It does not grant permission to enter or remain in the United States. It allows the holder of the visa to apply at a port of entry for admission to U.S. Customs and Border Protection.

Visa Status- This is the most improperly used term in the field. International student advisors and other international educators, in large part, use the term “visa status.” There is, of course, no such thing as “visa status.” After the CBP admits the person to the U.S., the visa no longer matters. Unless the alien travels again outside the U.S. and needs to reenter, the visa has no further purpose and can expire. In fact, most visas will likely expire during the course of a students’ program. In addition, a person’s immigration status can often be different from the visa stamp in the passport. Thousands of temporary nonimmigrant aliens change status within the U.S. each year, particularly from B-2 to F-1 or F-1 to H-1B. The change has no effect on the visa, which remains as it was. The proper use of the term then is “status” or “immigration status.”