



U.S. Immigration
and Customs
Enforcement

SEVP Policy Guidance: Use of Electronic Signatures and Transmission for the Form I-20

Regulatory and Statutory Background: *8 CFR 214.3(k)*

Date: October 12, 2021

Purpose: This guidance establishes the Student and Exchange Visitor Program's (SEVP) procedures for the use of electronic signatures on the Form I-20, "Certificate of Eligibility for Nonimmigrant Student Status," and electronic transmission of the form. School officials should use the following guidance when issuing the Form I-20 to initial and continuing nonimmigrant students and their dependents.

Background: Authorizing regulations require school officials to sign the Form I-20 before issuing the form to nonimmigrant students and their dependents (*8 CFR 214.3(k)*).

The COVID-19 pandemic disrupted international mail and courier services in 2020. When designated school officials (DSOs) and students were unable to physically meet on campus due to travel restrictions and closed campuses, SEVP allowed the Form I-20 to be signed and transmitted electronically. This reduced the burden on students, DSOs, and their respective institutions and avoided pandemic-related disruptions to the enrollment and education of nonimmigrant students. Allowing electronic signatures and transmission also expedited issuance of the Form I-20 and helped to avoid expenses and complications related to mailing documents.

In response to Executive Order 14012, "Restoring Faith in Our Legal Immigration Systems and Strengthening Integration and Inclusion Efforts for New Americans," SEVP identified recommendations to increase efficiency in the immigration system and reduce unnecessary burdens. Accordingly, SEVP has formally adopted the use of electronic signatures and transmission for the Form I-20.

Attachments: None

Acronyms:

1. **DSO.** Designated school official
2. **SEVP.** Student and Exchange Visitor Program

Policy:

- 1. Use and acceptance of electronic signatures.** DSOs may physically sign the Form I-20 or input their own electronic signature. SEVP accepts electronic signatures in the following forms.
 - 1.1. *Electronic signatures using software programs or applications.* School officials may sign all signature fields on the Form I-20 using electronic signatures produced with software programs or applications.
 - 1.2. *Electronically reproduced copies of a signature.* School officials may sign all signature fields on the Form I-20 using digitally reproduced copies of a signature. A digitally reproduced copy may be a scanned image of a physical signature.
- 2. Electronic transmission of the Form I-20.** School officials may scan and email an electronic version of a Form I-20 that has been signed using either a physical or electronic signature, as outlined in Section 1, to nonimmigrant students and their dependents. Alternatively, school officials may use a secure platform that students can access with individual account credentials to send an electronic version of a Form I-20. This may include a school portal or other secure site that students can access.

Upon receipt of the electronically transmitted Form I-20, students should print a copy to present at any required visa interview and upon arrival at a U.S. port of entry.

References:

8 CFR 214.3(k)

Limits of use—no private right of action:

This SEVP Policy Guidance applies to and is binding on all SEVP employees unless specifically exempt. Its intention is solely for the guidance of SEVP personnel in the performance of their official duties. Nothing in this guidance limits SEVP's authority or discretion to interpret, administer or enforce any statute, regulation, policy or guidance related to SEVP certification. This guidance may be modified, superseded or withdrawn at any time. It is not intended to, does not, and may not be relied upon to create or confer any right or benefit, substantive or procedural, enforceable at law or in equity by any person, individual or other party, public or private, in any administrative, civil or criminal matter.



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