Commission on English Language Program Accreditation

Statement on SEVP Elimination of Duration of Status

On July 17, 2026, the Student Exchange and Visitor Program (SEVP) published a final rule to eliminate duration of status (D/S). This new rule takes effect on September 15, 2026. Some accredited programs and institutions use accreditation by CEA to be eligible for certification with SEVP.

All US-based sites accredited by CEA that hold SEVP certification are required to comply with the new rule. For information about the regulations, see the FAQ page on the SEVP website. The new rule has two changes which primarily impact ESL students: 1) a lifetime limit of 24 months (2 years) of ESL study for nonimmigrant students, and 2) limiting transfers of students in the same education level.

Many programs and institutions have been actively preparing for this new rule since it was introduced earlier this year. Prior to the implementation of the rule, sites are expected to follow existing laws and regulations related to admission and enrollment of nonimmigrant students. Because CEA accredits a wide variety of types of English language programs and institutions with different missions, objectives, and student populations, no changes to existing standards or review procedures are proposed in response to the new rule. On Tuesday, August 18, 2026, NAFSA and the Presidents' Alliance on Higher Education and Immigration led a coalition of six other organizations in filing a complaint and a motion for preliminary injunction that challenges the Department of Homeland Security's (DHS) final rule ending the Duration of Status framework for international students, exchange visitors, and representatives of foreign media. Despite this development, all sites are expected to comply with the requirements of the rule as published with the expectation that it will be implemented as scheduled on September 15, 2026.

> **UPDATE**: On September 14, 2026, a U.S. District Judge granted nationwide preliminary relief. This act blocks the rule from taking effect and prohibits DHS and U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement from implementing it while the case continues. As a result, the longstanding Duration of Status framework remains in place. More about the litigation is available on the Presidents' Alliance litigation page and NAFSA's website.

As an accrediting agency, CEA requires all sites to be in compliance with standards for accreditation, including Administrative and Fiscal Capacity Standard 8, which requires adherence to all applicable local, state, and national laws, including those applicable regulations set forth by the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and the Student Exchange and Visitor Program (SEVP) for enrollment of nonimmigrant students.

Certain notifications and substantive changes are required to be reported to CEA as set forth in the *CEA Policies and Procedures* (Section 8: Maintaining Accredited Status, Section 9: Substantive Change, Section 19: Constituent Council Governing Rules).

Accredited programs and institutions should review their existing policies, procedures, and approaches to compliance with the standards, and consult CEA staff prior to implementation of changes to determine whether reporting is necessary.

Some programs may be exploring various changes to their existing curriculum in terms of its overall length and structure in order to comply with the requirements of the new rule. CEA does not require sites to have a curricular length and structure aligned with the requirements of the new rule, and does not prescribe a maximum program length. However, any changes to the overall curricular length and structure may represent a substantive change, which requires pre-implementation notification. For more information on reportable substantive changes, please see the Resources page on the CEA website.

Any change to mission or changes to the type of students served are also reportable substantive changes. Other changes that are not considered reportable substantive changes relate to standards listed below. This list is not exhaustive, and other standards may be affected. The full text of the *CEA Standards for English Language Programs and Institutions* is available on the CEA website.

Administrative and Fiscal Capacity

Administrative and Fiscal Capacity Standard 6: Administrators ensure that policies and procedures relating to program or language institution operations are in place, accessible to all who are affected by them, reviewed regularly, and implemented in a timely, fair, systematic, and ethical manner.

- Does the new rule mean changes to existing policies and procedures?
- How are new policies and procedures communicated and implemented in an ethical manner?

Administrative and Fiscal Capacity Standard 7: Administrators ensure that there are means for the exchange of information among those who need it.

- How have administrators, staff, faculty, students, and other stakeholders been informed of changes that affect them?

Administrative and Fiscal Capacity Standard 8: The program or language institution documents that it is in compliance with all local, state, and national laws, as well as with any applicable institutional regulations.

- How does the site document that it is in compliance with the new rule?

Administrative and Fiscal Capacity Standard 9: Financial, student, personnel, program, governmental, and contractual records are maintained and kept current, accessible, complete, accurate and, when appropriate, secure. Reporting is done ethically and in compliance with the law.

- Does the new rule have additional requirements for recordkeeping?

Student Services

Student Services Standard 1: Admissions policies are consistent with program objectives and with the mission of the program or language institution (and with the host institution if applicable), and are implemented by properly trained and authorized individuals. The admissions process ensures that the student is qualified to enroll in and benefit from the instructional program. Both the policies and the personnel who implement them adhere to ethical practices.

- How will the site ensure admissions policies are consistent with the new rule?
- How has the site ensured that admissions policies are implemented by properly trained and authorized individuals?

Student Services Standard 2: The program or language institution provides academic and personal advising and counseling, as well as assistance in understanding immigration regulations. Such advice and assistance are provided in a timely and accurate manner by qualified individuals.

- What new information must be provided to students with respect to understanding immigration regulations?
- How are staff and administrators trained to provide advice and assistance regarding immigration regulations?

Student Services Standard 3: The program or language institution provides pre-arrival and ongoing orientation (1) to support students in their adjustment to the program or institution (and to the host institution if applicable) and to the surrounding culture and community and (2) to help them understand immigration regulations and procedures, as well as health and safety issues.

- What changes must be made to orientation materials for F-1 students to help them understand immigration regulations and procedures?

Student Services Standard 4: The program or language institution seeks to ensure that students understand policies regarding enrollment, registration, attendance, repeating levels or courses, and progression through the program of study.

- How does the site ensure students understand policies regarding enrollment?
- Do policies related to maximum time in program need to be amended for F-1 students impacted by the new rule?
- How does the site define program completion or determine when the student is able to exit the program(s) of study?

Student Services Standard 8: The program or language institution clearly states and consistently provides the extent of student services described in any written, electronic, or oral promotional information or in agreements.

- Does the description of student services provided with respect to immigration advising and counseling need to be amended?

Recruiting

Recruiting Standard 1: All program or language institution personnel follow ethical practices for recruiting students and promoting programs, and they ensure that the program or language institution's policies and procedures are made clear to prospective students and/or student sponsors. In any recruitment transaction, the students' interests and well-being are paramount.

- How does the site ensure that ethical practices in student recruitment are adhered to?
- How have personnel been trained on the impact of the new rule on recruitment practices?
- What changes may need to be made to policies related to students transferring in or out?

Recruiting Standard 2: All written, electronic, and oral information used to describe or promote the program or language institution to students and other relevant parties is accurate and complete.

- How does the site ensure that all promotional materials are accurate and complete with respect to describing the new rule?

Recruiting Standard 3: If a program or language institution has recruiting agreements or contracts with a third party, the program or institution ensures that it has complete information about the third party, assumes responsibility for monitoring the third party, and terminates the agreement if necessary.

- How does the site ensure that third-party agents are representing the new rule correctly?