



**USAID**  
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# COMPLETE GUIDE TO USAID VISA COMPLIANCE

APPENDIX I – THE INITIATOR

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## **APPENDIX I: RI-INITIATOR (TRAINET OPERATOR)**

The Initiator is the first person involved in the J-1 visa application process. This person is responsible for entering required information for the Exchange Visitor into TraiNet and transmitting it to Visa Compliance System (VCS) for review by the Verifier and Approver. For each Exchange Visitor, the Initiator is responsible for both the initial input of data for the J-1 visa application as well as any required status changes and updates to information related to the Exchange Visitor during the program duration.

A summary of the roles and responsibilities for the R1: Initiator (TraiNet Operator) is as follows:

### **ROLE**

The employee responsible for data entry in TraiNet performs the role of R1 Initiator. All Exchange Visitors nominated for training in the U.S. must be entered in TraiNet and transmitted to the VCS. This person does not have to be a U.S. citizen.

### **RESPONSIBILITIES**

Uses TraiNet system to:

- Do data entry in TraiNet to create new Exchange Visitors and programs.
- Transmit TraiNet data to the data repository and the VCS.
- Update data in TraiNet during the course of a program.
- Correct data in TraiNet to resolve data errors.

### **HOW TO GET HELP**

Inquiries regarding system access, password resets, VCS user issues and DS-219s should be directed to Linda Walker at [lwalker@usaid.gov](mailto:lwalker@usaid.gov). Inquiries regarding ADS-252 policy may be directed to James Nindel at [jnindel@usaid.gov](mailto:jnindel@usaid.gov). Inquiries regarding visa and immigration issues may be directed to Ms. Marina Gelles, Esq. at [mgelles@devis.com](mailto:mgelles@devis.com).

The TraiNet/VCS Help Desk is available to answer technical and usability questions:

Email: [jvisa@devis.com](mailto:jvisa@devis.com)

Phone: +1.703.527.4340

Website: <http://trainet.usaid.gov>

Website references:

USAID Visa Compliance System: <https://vcs.usaid.gov>

TraiNet/Web: <http://trainetweb.usaid.gov>

USAID ADS Chapters 252 and 253: <http://www.usaid.gov/policy/ads/200>.

## **USING TRAINET**

All Exchange Visitors requiring a J-1 visa must be initially entered into TraiNet by the Initiator. TraiNet provides the only access for initial data entry in the J-1 visa approval process (see the Complete Guide for more details). TraiNet must be used for USAID visa compliance.

### **Cycle of the Process**

For every Exchange Visitor coming to the U.S. on a J visa, you must perform certain steps in TraiNet to ensure compliance with USAID and other U.S. federal government regulations. The rest of this appendix discusses the steps you must take.

In general, for every Exchange Visitor, you must create, validate and end the program, in that order by entering a visitor in TraiNet, updating his or her status to in-training once the program begins, and then updating his or her status to Achieved and noting his or her departure at the conclusion of the program. In addition, you might need to cancel or terminate, postpone, or extend Exchange Visitors as well as update their address over the life of the program. Timelines for these required updates are contained in ADS 252. After each of these changes, the information must be transmitted from TraiNet to VCS for further review.

### **Initial Steps**

Before you can enter data about your programs and Exchange Visitors into TraiNet, you must get access to the top tier of the USAID Mission or office that sponsors the contract, grant, or cooperative agreement funding the training. Top tier refers to the Activities (your USAID project/contract), Strategic Objectives (SOs) and Intermediate Results (IRs). Depending on whether you're using TraiNet Web or TraiNet Desktop, the way in which you go about getting access to this top tier data is different. Contact your TraiNet/VCS technical support staff at [jvisa@devis.com](mailto:jvisa@devis.com) if you have any questions. This information is provided in the initial emails that are sent out when setting up your TraiNet site.

### **Required Data**

The following information is required for U.S. Exchange Visitors before data can be submitted to the Department of Homeland Security's SEVIS system to request a DS-2019 certificate of eligibility. TraiNet will require that you enter other information as well, but only the fields below are used as part of the visa compliance process.

### **Trainee Information:**

- Last Name (first and last name *must* match the first and last name as they appear on the passport)
- Gender
- Birth Date
- Birth City
- Birth Country
- Residence Country
- Citizenship Country

- Address (for TraiNet Desktop, this would be the U.S. School Address )
  - Line 1
  - City
  - State
  - Zip Code (must be at least five digits)
  - Country
- Position Code
- Visa Type
- Visa Category (category selection is based on professional background, education level and purpose of visit)
- Passport Number

### **Program Information**

- Field of Study
- U.S. Training Component Start and End Dates
- Training Provider (facility) name
- Training Provider (facility) address
  - Line 1
  - City
  - State
  - Zip Code (must be five digits)
  - Country
- Status (For new visitors the status must be Planned, Candidate or Alternate)
- (For TraiNet Desktop users only) In U.S. Component, visitor's name must have a check next to it to indicate they are attending the portion of the program held in the U.S.

### **Funding Information:**

- Budgeted Funding amount (must be greater than zero), showing USAID's contribution to the instruction, trainee and travel expenses.
- Non-USAID contributions, if entered, must be greater than zero, however this is not a required field.
- These amounts will be divided equally among the Exchange Visitors on the program. Cancelled Exchange Visitors are ignored.

### **Required Updates during the Program**

During the course of an Exchange Visitor's program, the following information must be updated if there are changes or if errors are discovered:

- Address (for TraiNet Desktop, this would be the U.S. School Address<sup>\*</sup>)
- Last Name
- Birth Date
- Gender
- Country of Birth
- City of Birth
- Country of Residence
- Position Code
- Current Site of Activity [current training provider's name and address]<sup>†</sup>
- Field of Study
- Program Start and End Dates
- USAID or Other Funding contributions
- Participant Status – Update Exchange Visitor status to In Training and then Completed
- Termination Status – Update Exchange Visitor status to Terminated and update Termination Reason
- Return Status

### **USING TRAINET: CREATING A U.S. TRAINING**

TraiNet organizes information into programs that contain information on Exchange Visitors, what they will study, where and with whom they will study it and how much it will cost.

#### **What constitutes a Program?**

A program can be long-term degree programs (MBA, PhD, Bachelor's degree), or non-degree technical training like seminars, conferences or workshops to name just a few types.

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<sup>\*</sup> For short-term programs with multiple site visits, where the Exchange Visitor's current address will change frequently, the U.S. address of the implementer administering the training program may be used. (Also see "Tracking Exchange visitors")

<sup>†</sup> If the training provider has not yet been identified at the time of initial data entry, the implementer's name and U.S. address may be used until such time as the training provider is known. Once known, training provider information should be provided as a site of activity update via TraiNet.

Programs can be delivered traditionally, with all parties in the same location, or by distance learning methods. A program has defined start and end dates. There are very few, if any, gaps between its components. Hint – if you have a program where there are long gaps between components you should probably break the program apart into a number of individual programs.

Further, a program can take place in the U.S. a third country or in an individual's home country (some programs take place in several venues).

Individuals do not need J-1 visas from the U.S. Consulate for in-country or third-country programs, so you do not need to request a DS-2019 form for these programs. You do still need to enter data in TraiNet, however.

Any time an individual will come to the United States under the partial or full sponsorship of USAID, directly or indirectly funded by USAID, you must enter his or her information and information about the program into Trainet and submit it to the VCS.

If you have a number of students attending academic programs (MBA, PhD, or Bachelor's degrees), create a separate training program for each student

A program is **not** a project or an activity that has a training component. Projects and Activities may, however, provide funding for programs.

Projects and Activities are entered in TraiNet under the Activities screen.

Data entry guides for TraiNet Desktop and Web are available on the technical support web site at <http://trainet.usaid.gov/Documents>. If you are unable to download either of these documents, email the Help Desk for assistance at [jvisa@devis.com](mailto:jvisa@devis.com).

#### **Common Errors and Resolutions**

**Error:** Program Start Date can only be updated when the participant is in Request Status

**Cause:** Once the visitor has arrived and has been validated, SEVIS does not allow an update to the program start date.

**Resolution:** Change the start date to the original date and resubmit data from TraiNet.

**Error:** Verifier receives a message that a required field is missing (this error will only occur with TraiNet Desktop users. TraiNet Web will not transmit data to the VCS unless all fields required by the system are populated).

**Cause:** Information that is required to proceed has not been entered in TraiNet

**Resolution:** Most often, this error is caused by missing information in one of the required addresses. Check the address of the training provider and the address of the participant in the US (called the US School address in TraiNet/Desktop) and resubmit data from TraiNet.

**Error:** Trainee in SEVIS but not validated; trainee must have a status of In-Training and validated in SEVIS before this update can be processed.

**Cause:** Most likely the visitor's status in TraiNet was changed directly from Pending to Achieved, skipping In-Training. There was no confirmation that the visitor arrived and began training.

**Resolution:** Contact the Help Desk ([jvisa@devis.com](mailto:jvisa@devis.com)) for guidance.

## **VALIDATION OF EXCHANGE VISITORS**

Once an Exchange Visitor has arrived in the U.S. and has begun his or her program, TraiNet must be updated to reflect this. Doing so results in an update to the Exchange Visitor's information in VCS that must be sent to SEVIS and is called "Validating" the Exchange Visitor. If this is not done in a timely manner as specified in the ADS policies, the Department of Homeland Security and the State Department will automatically assume that the Exchange Visitor has violated terms of his or her program and will consider the Exchange Visitor a No-Show. This could severely jeopardize current and future programs and lead to difficulty when entering the U.S.

Shortly after the training program has begun the TraiNet operator should update the visitor's status in TraiNet to "In-Training" and transmit this update for processing in the VCS to be verified for submission.

## **OTHER UPDATES AND EVENTS FOR EXCHANGE VISITORS**

Descriptions of the most common other updates follows.

### **Correcting or Changing Information**

Sometimes information about a visitor changes or an error needs to be corrected. In these cases you do not need to recreate the program and other information you have entered. Simply edit the existing information, making any changes or corrections that are necessary, and transmit the data. VCS will import the changes to be reviewed.

### **Extending or Shortening the Program**

If the end date of the program changes, either due to an extension or an early completion, simply change the end date in TraiNet and transmit this new information to the VCS.

### **Cancellation**

An Exchange Visitor who drops out of a program or is removed from a program *before it begins* is a cancelled Exchange Visitor. If an Exchange Visitor has been validated (see above) then you cannot cancel the Exchange Visitor, he or she must be terminated.

If the Exchange Visitor has not been submitted to SEVIS to request a DS-2019, the cancellation will be processed automatically by the VCS and no action will be required by your Verifier *for this person*. If there is more than one visitor on this program, you should consider modifying the budget so as to not force a re-verification of the other visitors – please see the paragraph below about budgets and cancellations.

### **Termination**

An Exchange Visitor who drops out of a program or is removed from a program *before it begins* is a cancelled Exchange Visitor. If an Exchange Visitor has been validated (see above) then you cannot cancel the Exchange Visitor, he or she must be terminated.

Update the appropriate status type in TraiNet.

### **Cancellations, Terminations and Budgets**

If you terminate or cancel an Exchange Visitor and there is more than one visitor on the training program, VCS will automatically redistribute the total budget of the training program across the remaining Exchange Visitors and present this new budget amount to the Verifier and Approver

for review. This may mean that Exchange Visitors that were verified once will have to be re-verified with a different budget amount. Please review them and take appropriate action. You can prevent this by reducing or increasing the budget in TraiNet (depending on whether you're adding an Exchange Visitor to the group, or terminating or cancelling one) so that the per-person amount stays constant.

## **RETURN STATUS MONITORING**

When an EV's program end date passes, the VCS will begin monitoring TraiNet for confirmation that the visitor has completed his or her program and returned home. Verifiers will be notified via email if this return status confirmation has not been entered into TraiNet in a timely fashion. TraiNet operators should update Return Status immediately upon receiving confirmation the Exchange Visitor has departed the United States. Submit or transfer this update to the VCS immediately.