



NEWS

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Introduction

On June 15 a substantial update to ADS 253 was released. The Automated Directive System (ADS) is the collection of documents that contain USAID's Agency-wide policy statements. Chapter 253 focuses exclusively on Training for Development and provides policies on all venues of training, whether in-country, third-country, or U.S.-based.

The policies regarding U.S.-based training are revised significantly, but a number of other policies were also updated. This newsletter will highlight some of the key updates, but this is not a comprehensive summary. I strongly encourage you to download a copy, review it closely and share it with partners, co-workers, SO team leaders and any other parties who should be aware of these changes. The new ADS 253 can be downloaded from USAID's website at <http://www.usaid.gov/policy/ads/200/>. The Complete Guide - USAID Visa Compliance is a companion document to ADS 253, focusing on procedures to follow for U.S. training programs, and can be downloaded from <http://usaidtraining.devis.com/Documents/>.

Section 1 Overview

It is now explicitly stated that the policies contained in this chapter apply to all training funded in full or in part by USAID, whether the training is funded through a contract, grant, cooperative agreement or other type of agreement.

Section 3 Policy Directives and Required Procedures
These policies are applicable to participant training only. Certain U.S.-based non-training development travel (i.e. invitational travel) is addressed in ADS 522.5.12.

Section 3.1.1 Participant Eligibility

A participant is defined as any host-country resident or national sponsored by USAID for a learning activity in any venue. Learning activities may be formally structured or more informal.

Citizens of USAID non-presence countries may receive training only with the justification of the Sponsoring Unit.

Section 3.1.2 Security Risk Inquiry

Sponsoring Units must establish a security risk inquiry process to identify possible threats that potential participants or their dependents may pose to the U.S. Because security concerns vary among different countries, it is left to the Sponsoring Unit to establish and formalize the security risk inquiry.

Section 3.1.3 Required Documentation, Information and Processes

In addition to the other required documentation, U.S. and third-country training programs require a stakeholder compact to document, among other things, expected outcomes, conditions of training, and limits of medical coverage.

Section 3.1.5 Tracking Participants & Dependents in the U.S.

The requirement placed upon the Agency to use SEVIS to manage and report information on participants holding J visas is acknowledged. The requirement for Sponsoring Units and implementers to use TraiNet and the VCS is contained in this section.

Sponsoring Units or implementers are responsible for knowing the whereabouts of participants and dependents at all times while they are in the U.S. under the sponsorship of USAID. If a participant cannot be located for any reason the Sponsoring Unit or implementer must follow certain steps contained in this section.

Sections 3.1.6 - 3.1.12 VCS and Visa Processes

The changes contained in these sections are a significant update from the previous ADS 253 and should be closely reviewed.

TraiNet and the VCS must be used to initiate, verify and approve requests for DS-2019 forms (received from the Department of Homeland Security) allowing participants to file at the Consulate to receive a J-1 visa sponsored by USAID. These same systems must be used throughout the course of a U.S. program to update information about participants in a timely manner. The procedures to follow to implement these policies are further described in The Complete Guide - USAID Visa Compliance.

Section 3.2 Third-Country Training

Third-country participants must have health insurance. Third-country training cannot take place in countries designated as terrorist countries by the Department of State.

Section 3.5 Program Monitoring

Section 3.5.b lists the minimum documents pertaining to participants, dependents and activities that Sponsoring Units or implementers must keep on file. Sponsoring units may required the retention of other documentation. It is not permitted to keep copies of the DS-2019 form.

Section 3.6.1 Tuition and Administrative Fee Caps

New undergraduate tuition cap of \$16,800. New graduate tuition cap of \$20,580. An inflation factor of 5% may be applied after the 2003-2004 academic year.

Section 3.7 Non-Returnees

When a participant is determined to be a non-returnee, actions must be taken to recover the training costs incurred by the Agency. This contains significant changes from previous versions of ADS 253 and should be reviewed.

Questions

The TraiNet/VCS helpdesk is not able to assist with interpretation of Agency policy or immigration questions. Any questions about the policies in ADS253, or any questions about interpreting the policies should be directed to James Nindel (jnindel@usaid.gov). Any questions about visas or immigration-related issues should be addressed to Marina Gelles (mgelles@istiinc.com).

Conclusion

As you can see, there have been updates to the majority of the sections of ADS 253. While many of the updates concern U.S. and third-country training, the scope of the policy changes is extensive and should be reviewed by all contractors and holders of grants, cooperative agreements or other agreements.

Best regards to all. -Chris