Preparing to Arrive at Texas A&M University-Commerce for Transfer Students

Sponsored by the International Student Services Office (ISSO) at A&M-Commerce. There are 38 slides in this presentation.
This presentation is *only* for transfer students to A&M-Commerce
What is a transfer student?

A transfer student is a student who is currently in the U.S. as an F-1 student who is either studying at another Student Exchange Visitor Program (SEVP) approved school or who is on approved Optional Practical Training (OPT) under another school’s I-20.
Why is this presentation important?

The purpose of this presentation is to provide information about the process to transfer the SEVIS record, orientation and check-in, and vaccination and health insurance information.
Pre-Arrival Information

All new international students will be subscribed to the newintlstudents@tamuc.edu list serve.

This list serve is how the ISSO will provide important pre-arrival and arrival information to new students. Your university email and personal email provided on the admission application will be added.

Be sure to read your emails!
Links in this Presentation

All website links mentioned in this presentation are provided on the previous ISSO page, the Online Orientation page.
Online Resources

You may also visit the ISSO website at www.tamuc.edu/isko and select New Students for important information for our new students.
How to transfer your SEVIS record

Before the International Student Services Office (ISSO) can issue any I-20 for a transfer student the student’s SEVIS record must first be transferred to Texas A&M University-Commerce.

A “Transfer Pending” I-20 may be issued for students who will travel outside the U.S. before they report to A&M-Commerce.
What is a SEVIS record?

The Student and Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS) is the web-based system that the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) uses to maintain information on Student and Exchange Visitor Program (SEVP)-certified schools and the F and M students who come to the United States to attend those schools.

Schools use SEVIS to create and maintain an F-1 student’s I-20 and record with DHS. Currently, only Designated School Officials (or DSO) may access a SEVIS record on behalf of an F-1 student and a DSO is generally either an international student advisor or international admission advisor at a school.
How to Transfer Your SEVIS Record

1. Complete the Transfer Release Form provided via email by the ISSO or located on our website at www.tamuc.edu/isso and select New Students.

2. Provide the Transfer Release Form to your current school’s international advisor to complete and email or fax to the ISSO.

3. Most school’s will also require a copy of an acceptance/admission letter before they will transfer a SEVIS record. Your A&M-Commerce acceptance/admission letter is emailed to your university/myLEO email by the admission office.

4. Report to the International Student Services Office (ISSO) within 15 days of the start date for your first semester at A&M-Commerce.
Transfer Release Date

Students will need to carefully consider their transfer release date when they are completing the transfer release form.

The **transfer release date** is the date that you will have your SEVIS record transferred or released from your current school to A&M-Commerce.

Some special considerations for the transfer release date include:

- When will you complete your studies at your current school?
- Are you on OPT? If yes, when does your OPT end?
- Will you travel outside the U.S. before you report to A&M-Commerce?
Transfer Deadline

Students who have completed their studies at their current school will need to be sure to have their SEVIS record transferred to A&M-Commerce no later than 60 days from the end date of their final semester at their current school.

Students who are on OPT will need to be sure to have their SEVIS record transferred to A&M-Commerce no later than 60 days from the end date of their OPT as stated on the EAD card.
Transfer Deadline

The ISSO at A&M-Commerce requires the SEVIS record to be released no later than the week prior to the start of a student’s first semester at A&M-Commerce.
Transfer for New Student

An initial (new) student may decide that they would like to study at a school other than the school whose I-20 and visa they entered the U.S.

A transfer may be possible for an initial (new) student to a different school but there are restrictions. It is very important for students to consult their current school’s international office for guidance.
Transfer for New Student

If the start date for the new school is *within 30 days of the student’s initial entry into the U.S.* (I-94 date or port of entry stamp on passport/visa) then the student may follow the steps below to request the transfer:

1. Report to their current school’s international office (may be by email, telephone, or fax)

2. Provide A&M-Commerce’s acceptance/admission letter and transfer release form

3. Once transferred report to A&M-Commerce with 15 days of the semester start date
Transfer for New Student

Please note that the **start date for the new school must be within 30 days of the initial date of entry into the U.S.** If it is not then the student will need to either:

- Report to and enroll in courses at their current school to maintain their visa status and request the SEVIS transfer closer to the semester start date for A&M-Commerce

- Withdraw from their current school, depart the U.S. within 15 days, and re-enter on A&M-Commerce’s I-20
Students on approved OPT will need to carefully consider when they have their SEVIS record transferred to A&M-Commerce. SEVP rules state that a student’s OPT authorization is terminated on the date that their SEVIS record is transferred or released to a new school.

We generally recommend students currently on OPT request their transfer release date to be the week before the start of their first semester at A&M-Commerce.
Students on OPT

If the OPT authorization has ended then students will need to have their SEVIS record transferred to A&M-Commerce within 60 days of the end date for the OPT as stated on the EAD card.
Students who travel outside the U.S.

Students who plan to travel outside the U.S. before they report to A&M-Commerce will need to discuss their plans with both their current school’s international office and the International Student Services Office (ISSO) at A&M-Commerce.

Once your SEVIS record has been released to A&M-Commerce a student will need a “Transfer Pending” I-20 from A&M-Commerce to re-enter the U.S.
5-month Gap Rule

An F-1 student is not permitted to remain in the United States when transferring between schools or programs unless the student will begin classes at the new school (A&M-Commerce) within 5 months of transferring out of the current school or within 5 months of the program completion date on his or her current Form I-20, whichever is earlier.

In the case of an F-1 student authorized to engage in post-completion optional practical training (OPT), the student must be able resume classes within 5 months of transferring out of the school that recommended OPT or the date the OPT authorization ends, whichever is earlier.
5-month Gap Rule

For example...

- A student’s classes ended on March 13 and they want to transfer to begin their studies at A&M-Commerce for the fall semester which begins on August 25. This student is not eligible to transfer or remain in the U.S. because this gap between March 13 and August 25 is greater than 5 months.

- Student concluded OPT on August 5 and has been accepted to begin a new academic program at a new school on January 15. This student is not eligible to transfer or remain in the U.S. because this gap between August 5 and January 15 is greater than 5 months.
As mentioned, the ISSO may print a transfer pending I-20 for transfer students who will travel outside the U.S. Otherwise, it is not required for students to have the transfer pending I-20 prior to their arrival at A&M-Commerce.
When will I receive my I-20 from A&M-Commerce?

The ISSO will register students in SEVIS to report their enrollment to U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) starting the 2nd week of classes.

SEVIS records may not be registered until the second week of classes to ensure compliance with USCIS regulations.
When will I receive my I-20 from A&M-Commerce?

Transfer students should receive an email from the ISSO that their I-20 is ready by the end of the second week of the semester.

Students will be required to pick this I-20 up in person at the ISSO. The I-20 will not be mailed and may not be picked up by friends or family.
When do I need to arrive in Commerce?

All new international students (initial and transfer) will be required to attend the international student orientation and check-in with an international advisor in person at the ISSO before they can register for classes.

Please review the presentation Orientation, Check-in and Course Registration for more information.
When do I need to arrive in Commerce?

As a reminder, transfer students are required to report (check-in) to the ISSO within 15 days of the start of their first semester at A&M-Commerce.
Orientation and Check-in

New transfer international students for the fall semester will have the option to attend the summer orientation offered the Thursday before the start of the summer semester or one of the orientations provided in August before the start of the fall semester.

Undergraduate transfer students will have other options during the summer and you may go to www.tamuc.edu/ isso and select New Students.
All students (under the age of 22) entering an institution of higher education in the State of Texas are required to either receive a vaccination against bacterial meningitis or meet certain criteria for declining the vaccination.

Information regarding the rules and the process are included with your I-20.

For more information please review our Bacterial Meningitis and Health Insurance Requirements presentation.
Health Insurance

The Texas A&M University System requires all international students to be enrolled in the System Student Health Insurance Plan (SSHIP).

There are very few exceptions to this requirement and non-SSHIP health insurance will only be accepted if the student meets one of the limited exceptions. Students DO NOT need to purchase health insurance prior to their arrival for their time at A&M-Commerce unless they meet one of the limited exceptions.

For more information visit our website or review our Bacterial Meningitis and Health Insurance Requirements presentation.
Health Insurance

Please note that non-SSHIP health insurance will not be accepted unless the student meets one of the System allowed exceptions.
How to Transfer Your SEVIS Record

1. Complete the Transfer Release Form provided via email by the ISSO or located on our website at www.tamuc.edu/isco and select New Students.

2. Provide the Transfer Release Form to your current school’s international advisor to complete and email or fax to the ISSO.

3. Most school’s will also require a copy of an acceptance/admission letter before they will transfer a SEVIS record. Your A&M-Commerce acceptance/admission letter is emailed to your university/myLEO email by the admission office.

4. Report to the International Student Services Office (ISSO) within 15 days of the start date for your first semester at A&M-Commerce.