

## Guidelines for Agents

The following document contains the guidelines which govern the collaborative recruitment relationship between Southeast Missouri State University (SEMO) and all recruitment agencies who represent the institution. All agencies who wish to represent SEMO are required to complete an online application. The application will require either proof of professional certification (for example AIRC, ICEF, etc.) or a list of references, preferably from U.S.-based institutions.

### SEMO International Admissions staff

Kevin Timlin ([kjtimlin@semo.edu](mailto:kjtimlin@semo.edu)), Executive Director, International Education and Services: Dr. Timlin Kevin is your primary contact for all matters pertaining to recruitment and business matters related to the agency relationship.

Paliza Shrestha ([pshrestha@semo.edu](mailto:pshrestha@semo.edu)), Assistant Director of International Admissions: Dr. Shrestha is the leader of the international admissions team at SEMO, and responsible for some recruitment regions.

Neda Lotfi ([nlotfi@semo.edu](mailto:nlotfi@semo.edu)), International Admissions Coordinator: Ms. Lotfi is responsible for communication, Service Fee payments, and some recruitment regions.

The following guidelines must be followed by all recruitment agencies representing Southeast Missouri State University. These guidelines apply equally to all approved agents. With very few exceptions, agents cannot negotiate changes to these guidelines, nor will special exceptions be made for agents.

### 1. Expectations of SEMO

1.1. Code of conduct: SEMO will treat all approved agents as professional colleagues, and promises to work collaboratively with them to ensure the enrollment of quality students who are ultimately successful at SEMO. Approved agents can expect the following from SEMO:

1. SEMO promises to respond to agents' questions and requests as quickly as possible. SEMO recognizes that agents have demanding jobs and need accurate, timely information in order to do their job effectively.
2. SEMO will provide all approved agents with up-to-date and relevant promotional materials on an annual basis. The materials are all electronic resources, and they will include information on cost of attendance, application information, degree programs, university life, etc.
3. **Agencies with more than 20 submitted applications per year** will receive an annual report with information about the students they have represented with information pertaining to their applications and enrollment status.
4. SEMO will commit to a number of agency visits, recruitment fair participation, and/or webinar presentations each year. The degree to which SEMO will collaborate with agencies in this regard will depend on factors like strategic regional recruitment priorities and volume of applications and enrollments from agencies.

## **2. Expectations for agents**

2.1. Code of conduct: SEMO expects all approved agencies to conduct themselves in a professional manner, treat students fairly, and represent the institution honestly and accurately. SEMO will terminate its relationship with any agency that repeatedly violates any aspect of this Code of Conduct. Any of the following may be used as sufficient reason for terminating a relationship with agents:

1. Complaints from students about agent's dishonest business practices.
2. Complaints from students about agents who are not transparent about fees the student may be responsible for paying the agent. SEMO requires all agents to disclose to their students any and all fees that are due to them.
3. Agents who habitually submit applications for students who use a SEMO I-20 to enter the U.S. but immediately transfer to another institution or fail to enroll.
4. Agents who submit applications with fraudulent transcripts or falsified bank statements.
5. Agents who regularly send students who cannot afford to pay their educational and living expenses.
6. Agents who tell students that they can guarantee admission, employment, or exemption from university policies on behalf of SEMO.

## **3. Communication**

3.1. All communication regarding admissions and students' applications will be conducted between the agent and SEMO's International Admissions team. Such emails should be sent to [international@semo.edu](mailto:international@semo.edu) and they will be answered by international admissions staff on a daily basis.

3.2. Communication regarding an agency's relationship with SEMO and payment for services will be conducted between agent and Kevin Timlin, SEMO's Executive Director of International Education and Services. His email address is [kjtimlin@semo.edu](mailto:kjtimlin@semo.edu).

1. SEMO maintains a database of its agency partners with a single, designated point of contact with the agency. All communication from SEMO regarding updates, changes, etc., will be sent to the single point of contact. It is expected for that person to share such information with colleagues and subagents.

3.3. SEMO international admission policies are posted at [semo.edu/international/admissions/policies](http://semo.edu/international/admissions/policies)

3.4. An FAQ page for international admission can be found at [semo.edu/international/faq](http://semo.edu/international/faq)

## **4. International admissions process**

4.1. To ensure efficient and accurate application and admission processing, SEMO reserves the right to make changes to the admission process as they see fit. Agents will be notified of any changes to the process or policies through monthly newsletters and direct email. The most up-to-date information on application process, policies, costs, and scholarships can be found at <https://semo.edu/international/admissions/index.html>.

4.2.1. SEMO application system is completely online. Steps on how to apply, along with training videos, can be found at:

[IEP Pathway](#)

[International Freshmen](#)

[International Transfer Students](#)

[International Graduate Students](#)

[International English Programs](#)

[IEP Conditional Admission](#)

[IEP Graduate Conditional Admission](#)

4.2.2. The online application features a dashboard that allows applicants (or anyone with access to their application portal) to track their admission progress. Because of this feature, SEMO no longer has an agency portal.

4.3. Delivery of I-20: We provide admitted students with a .pdf version of their Form I-20. The current process is as follows:

1. When a student is accepted for admission, they will receive an acceptance email to the email address on file in the application. Upon receiving the acceptance email, the student must use the information provided in the email to activate their Southeast online account (SE Key) as soon as possible. This will give them access to the SEMO student portal and their email account (mail.semo.edu). Southeast uses a "single sign on" system which means they will access all the SEMO resources with their SE Key and the password they create. Please emphasize to your student the importance of remembering the password they create, as they will use it frequently.

**PLEASE NOTE: Only the students themselves should activate their SE Key. Agents, parents, friends, etc., are forbidden from activating an admitted student's SE Key without their knowledge or cooperation.**

2. An electronic copy of the student's I-20 will be emailed to the student's SEMO email account approximately 5-10 business days after the acceptance email is sent, depending on the application volume at the time. I-20s can only be sent to the student's SEMO email address.
3. We do not create and ship physical copies of the I-20s.

4.4. The general application deadline for Fall is July 1, and the deadline for Spring is November 1. Please note, however, some graduate programs - including MS Applied Computer Science and Cybersecurity - have earlier deadlines. See the following webpage for more details -

<https://semo.edu/admissions/requirements/graduate.html>. The online application with all required application materials must be submitted before the application deadline. IEP applicants, students with a visa who are transferring from U.S. institutions, and Web Only applicants can still apply up to 15 days after the deadline. This extended period does not include applicants to programs with earlier deadlines. For complete details, see "Application Deadlines" at [semo.edu/international/admissions/policies](https://semo.edu/international/admissions/policies).

4.5. IEP Pathway Program: The deadline and application process for the IEP Pathway program is the same as New First Time Freshman or Transfer applicants. IEP Pathway admits will receive a 3-year Pathway level I-20 (not an 18-month Language Training level I-20). IEP Pathway students must have a qualifying English proficiency test score, and will pay the same tuition and receive the same merit-based scholarships as fully admitted UG students.

4.6. Conditional admission: Conditional admission is available for students who meet all academic admission requirements except English language proficiency. Conditionally admitted students are issued an I-20 for SEMO's Intensive English Program (IEP), not the student's academic major. A statement confirming conditional admission will be included in the "Remarks" section of the student's I-20. As a reminder, conditional admission requirements can be met through IEP's Online program.

4.7. Preliminary evaluations: Due to the high volume of applications we receive, SEMO does not provide preliminary evaluations of transcripts sent to us by email. Students should formally apply for admission and submit all required application materials in order for us to make a determination of their admissibility.

4.8. Southeast can make admission decisions for non-transfer applicants based on unofficial documents, but official copies of the documents are required to be submitted before the student will be allowed to register for courses in their second semester. Also, scholarships will not be posted to a student's account until all officials have been received and verified. Once all officials have been received, the scholarship will be posted.

## 5. Service fee information

5.1. Service Fee: In most cases, SEMO will pay approved agents a Service Fee for each represented student who enrolls at Southeast Missouri State University (SEMO) as a new student. More detailed information about the Service Fee can be found at the end of this document. In exchange for the Service Fee, the agent is expected to assist the student with all aspects of the application process, visa interviews, and preparation to matriculate to SEMO.

5.2.1. Service Fee amount: The Service Fee SEMO will pay for each student is \$2,200 per student enrolled in courses at Southeast's Main Campus in Cape Girardeau.

5.2.2. Service Fee amount for students who begin their program online. Agent will receive \$1,000 for each recruited student enrolled full time in online courses.

5.2.2.1. If the student matriculates to Southeast's Main Campus the following semester, the agent will be paid an additional \$1000. If the student matriculates to Southeast's Main Campus one year after beginning their program online, the agent will be paid an additional \$750.

5.2.2.2. If the student does not matriculate to Main Campus within one year of beginning their program online, no additional fee will be paid to agent

5.2.3. SEMO's Intensive English Program runs on 8-week sessions. The Service Fee for Conditionally Admitted students who are enrolled full-time in IEP is \$2,200. The payment will be made after the student's enrollment is confirmed in the next term following their first 8-week IEP session.

5.2.3.1. The Service Fee for a conditionally admitted IEP student who only completes one 8-week session is \$500.

5.2.3.2. SEMO's Intensive English Program runs on 8-week sessions. The Service Fee for non-Conditionally Admitted IEP students is \$1,000. The payment will be made after the student's enrollment is confirmed in the next term following their first 8-week IEP session.

5.2.3.3. The Service Fee for IEP Only admitted students who complete only one 8-week session is \$500.

5.3. Academic year: The "academic year" at SEMO begins in mid-August with the Fall Semester and ends in late July of the following year. For example, Fall Semester 2023, Spring Semester 2024, and Summer Session 2024 are the terms in the 2024 academic year.

5.4. Payment method: Overseas agents will receive Service Fee payment through wire transfer to their bank account. Agents in the U.S. or those with a bank account in the U.S. will receive the payment by bank transfer or check.

5.5. Payment process: The Service Fee payment process is as follows:

1. SEMO will send an email to each agency's point of contact in the first month of the semester with a list of all commission eligible students we have tagged to that agency. An invoice for these students will be requested.
2. Agency will email invoice printed on company letterhead to [nlotfi@semo.edu](mailto:nlotfi@semo.edu) with the following information:
  - Date of invoice and invoice number
  - Current physical and email addresses for the agency
  - List of all represented students who enrolled in that semester (including students' Southeast ID number)
  - Total amount of Service Fees requested
  - **Invoice must include one of the following statements:**
    - **The work done for this payment was done entirely outside the U.S.**
    - **The work done for this payment was done both inside and outside the U.S.**
    - **The work done for this payment was done entirely inside the U.S.**
  - Specific payment instructions, including wire (for international payments) or bank (for payments made in the U.S.) transfer details information
  - For any invoice requesting an international (wire transfer) payment:
    - Instructions must include information for any intermediary banks
    - A signed and completed W-8BEN (<https://www.irs.gov/pub/irs-pdf/fw8ben.pdf>)
    - In order to ensure efficient processing, please include a copy of the W-8BEN every term.
  - For any invoice requesting a bank transfer:
    - A completed W-9 (<https://www.irs.gov/pub/irs-pdf/fw9.pdf>)
    - In order to ensure efficient processing, please include a copy of the W-8BEN every term.
3. Once SEMO receives the invoice, they will verify the official enrollment status of all listed students according to the date listed in the "Service Fee Payment Initiated" table found in item 5.6. See Conditions for Service Fee below for information on verification. If any discrepancies are found, SEMO will contact the agent as soon as possible asking them to correct the invoice and submit a new one. Failure to rectify any discrepancies within one year of SEMO's request for a corrected invoice may forfeit any claim to the Service Fee in question.
4. Once invoices are received and enrollment is verified, SEMO will process the Service Fee payment. Please note that the payment process may take 2-4 weeks depending on the agency's location.

5.6. Payment schedule: For students who enroll at SEMO, the agency Service Fee will be processed according to the following schedule:

Semester or Session of Enrollment	Service Fee Payment Initiated
Fall Semester and October Session	October 1
Spring Semester and March Session	March 1
Summer Session	July 1

5.7. Service Fee expiration: Agents have up to one calendar year from the start date of the enrolled student’s first semester to submit an invoice (and any required supporting documents). After one year, any claims for a Service Fee will be forfeited.

5.8. Service Fee conditions: To be eligible for a Service Fee, the following conditions must be met:

1. Agency must be an authorized representative of SEMO.
2. Student must have full-time enrollment at SEMO on the date listed in the "Service Fee Payment Initiated" listed in item 5.6. Full-time enrollment is defined as a minimum 12 credit hours for undergraduate students, and 9 hours for graduate students.
3. Unless a special agreement has been made, Service Fee payments will be paid for only NEW students during the first semester they enroll at Southeast Missouri State University. No Service Fee will be paid for any subsequent semesters the students enroll at the University (except for Nepalese undergraduates – please see “NOTE ON UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS FROM NEPAL” above for more information), nor for any subsequent degree programs a student enrolls in.
4. In order for an agent to be paid the Service Fee, agents must include the agency name and contact information on the student's online application.
5. Only an agent who assisted the student during the application process is eligible for a Service Fee. If the student changes agents before receiving admission, or if there is no evidence that an agent was involved during the application process, no Service Fee will be paid.
6. If an agent claims a student on an invoice who did not enter the agency information on the application, SEMO will require first-hand communication with the student to verify their collaboration with agent. This will either be done in-person with the student, or will be done through the student’s semo.edu email account.
7. The U.S. Department of Education forbids the payment of commissions for the recruitment of American students, so SEMO cannot pay any agents who send students who are U.S. citizens or permanent residents.

5.9. Negotiated fee payment amounts: There will be very few exceptions regarding the Service Fee amounts and/or the dates of payment as described in these guidelines. The amount of our Service Fees is fixed and only in rare circumstances will it be negotiated.

5.10. Taxes: Agents will be responsible for paying any taxes that might be owed. Depending on a country's tax treaty with the United States, taxes may be withheld from Service Fee payments.

5.11. Notes on undergraduate students from Nepal

Unless other arrangements have been made, Service Fee paid to agents for the recruitment of Nepalese new first-time undergraduate students will be distributed over the course of their first two semesters at SEMO. Agents will be paid 50% of the Service Fee in accordance with the Payment Schedule above. Payment of the other 50% is contingent upon the recruited student enrolling in a second, consecutive semester at SEMO. When the recruited student enrolls in a second semester, the remainder of the Service Fee will be paid in the second semester according to the Payment Schedule above. Again, this policy only applies to this specific population, and the commission for undergraduate transfer and graduate applicants from Nepal will be one-time payments of \$2,200.

## **6. Additional information for agents**

6.1. Exclusive arrangements: With very few exceptions, SEMO will not appoint any agency as our "exclusive" representative for a particular city, country, or region.

6.1.1. Current, exclusivity arrangements are in place for:

- Zimbabwe

All applications and leads from a location where we have an exclusivity agreement will be tagged to our exclusive partner and they will be expected to follow up.

6.2. Sub-agents: Southeast Missouri State University does not work with sub-agents. Agencies who work with sub-agents are responsible for their sub-agent's record keeping, code of conduct, and payment.

6.3. Expiration of agency authorization: SEMO's agreements with agencies will be 2-5 years in duration. Factors which may be considered when SEMO determines the length of the agreement are strategic priorities, volume of applications, percentage of accepted, enrolled, and retained students, etc.

6.4. Changes to guidelines: We review our Guidelines for Agents at least once a year at the end of the academic year. However, changes may be made at any point during the year. SEMO will notify agents whenever changes to the guidelines are made.