



Batch Webinar FAQs (August 11, 2015)

September 14, 2015: Initial release of FAQs

- Support for Batch 1
- Batch Schema 1
- Error Codes 2
- Addresses 2
- Telephone Numbers and Emails 5
 - F/M Student Telephone and Email Addresses 5
 - J Exchange Visitor Telephone and Email Addresses 5
- J SEVIS-Specific 6
- Optional Practical Training (OPT) Changes (F/M SEVIS) 6
- Initial Session Start Date (F/M SEVIS) 8
- Miscellaneous F/M-related Questions 8

Support for Batch

Q: The SEVIS Help Desk does not offer any support for batch. How long will this continue?

A: There is a batch specialist that you should be able to reach through the Help Desk.

Q: Can SEVP be more proactive about things, such as security, (for example, implementing TLS over SSLv3) to be "ahead of the curve" on DHS requirements and avoid "last minute" outages?

A: the timing of many security updates, system patches, etc. are not controlled by SEVP. We can put in tickets to request these, but cannot implement them until given priority by Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE)/Department of Homeland Security (DHS).

Batch Schema

Q: Will there be new events in the November 2015 Release?

A: Yes. There will be new events for OPT employer information, as well as, F/M student telephone and email addresses.

Q: Is there a roadmap available to review the PDF documentation? I found misleading information in quite a few places, which impacted our ability to write proper code.



We learned about those problems when we received SXXXX error codes, yet followed the PDF documentation on the SEVIS batch documentation page.

- A: We are not sure what you are referring to. If you are writing code, you should become part of our monthly Batch Working Group. We need to hear from you about deficiencies in the documentation. Email SEVISTechnicalFeedback@ice.dhs.gov to become a member of the working group.

Error Codes

Q: We are receiving error codes indicating the XSD file not found, relating to the XML schema – USCIS files used to validate SEVIS XML can't be found. We were told this is due to SEVP constantly changing the location of files. Is this true?

- A: We have not heard of this issue recently. A few months ago we had a problem when the ICE.gov website upgrade broke the links to the XML schema, but this was resolved. Please email SEVISTechnicalFeedback@ice.dhs.gov with details of this issue.

Q: Since the June 2015 Release, we are unable to upload batches after 4:00 PM (8:00 PM, EST). We receive the XML files can't be found message. Do we need to have everything done by 8:00 PM, Eastern Time? Is SEVIS now taken down each night at 8:00?

- A: SEVIS does not go down after 8:00 PM. You should be able to upload batches. Email SEVIS.Batch@ice.dhs.gov with details and screen shots, if possible, so we can determine what is happening.

Addresses

Q: Why were schools not told quickly that AddressDoctor had problems validating addresses?

- A: We discussed address problems in both the SEVIS 6.21 Post-Release Webinar and in the SEVIS 6.22 Pre-Release Webinar. We are assessing the problems to understand the full scope of the problem. We are working on a solution.

Q: Can records be removed from the alert list for students with unvalidated addresses, if the address did not validate because of AddressDoctor's interaction with batch?

- A: Ignore this alert list until further notice. There is a problem with the way SEVIS filters records for this list. Some records appear on the list when they should not.

Q: If we updated with a valid address, how does it come off the alert list?

- A: Records should come off the alert list, if the associated U.S. address has an address code of Validated. If a record with a validated address is on the list, email SEVISTechnicalFeedback@ice.dhs.gov. We need to determine why it is on the list.

Q: What if we do not see an alert related to Address Validation in SEVIS?

- A: That seems like good news. However, if you think you have address that should be on the list and do not see it, email SEVISTechnicalFeedback@ice.dhs.gov.



Q: What does it mean in the alert list that an address is Not Validated, as the records appear to be "active?"

A: These are two separate indicators. An Active record means the student or exchange visitor is participating in the program. SEVIS requires the entry of a U.S. address before an official can do one of the following:

- Validate an exchange visitor
- Register a student

The Address Validation Status Code tells the user if the address has been checked against the United States Postal Service's address database.

Note: Registration or validation does not depend on the address status.

Q: If an address is accepted via the batch as valid, i.e., not rejected, is there any reason it would show up on the alert list?

A: It should not appear on the alert list. If it does, email SEVISTechnicalFeedback@ice.dhs.gov so we can find out why.

Q: What can I do to get a CSZ valid address off the alert list for a Student Without a Valid U.S. Addresses?

A: CSZ-valid code means SEVIS could not confirm the entered street address. Removal of a CSZ-valid record from the alert list requires entry of a street address recognized by the USPS database.

Q: The main problem with AddressDoctor appears to be that it is a tool to find mailing addresses. AddressDoctor is not validating physical addresses.

A: SEVP would agree with that, but Address Doctor is the tool that we have been given. We believe it is working fairly well within RTI. We do have some problems with how it was applied in batch, and we are working on that.

Q: Do addresses need to be validated within a registration event (currently or near future, i.e., fall semester)?

A: For registration, SEVIS looks to see if the record has a U.S. address, not that the address has been validated.

Q: In a previous SEVIS webinar, we believe we heard registrations/validations would not be impacted by an address not accepted by AddressDoctor. This does not appear to be true. However, there may be a difference between registration events for new students versus continuing. Did we understand this correctly or did we miss hear this one?

A: theoretically, Address Doctor should not affect registration because it should allow you to enter valid U.S. addresses. However, the overly high rejection rate means that it is affecting registration. It also slowed batch processing. Therefore, until November, we will not use Address Doctor to validate addressing in batch processing.



Q: Our institution's database does not have enough space for a long address. We must abbreviate the address. For example, 12345 W Lake Sammamish Parkway SE #B103 becomes 12345 W LK SAMM PKWY B123. The shortened address is rejected when submitted to SEVIS via batch. What can we do in this and other similar cases?

A: Send this to SEVISTechnicalFeedback@ice.dhs.gov, so we can test the address.

Q: Are there any plans to increase the size of the address box?

A: No. There are no plans to increase the size. It correlates to the Postal Service's maximum address size allowed for mailing addresses.

Q: During the Validate Exchange Visitor (EV) process, we have problems where SEVIS does not validate an address that we have found in the USPS database. Why are these addresses not being validated?

A: We are still trying to figure out what the problem is. Email these cases to SEVISTechnical/feedback@ice.dhs.gov.

One of the reasons we have not rushed to implement a solution is that we want to be sure we fully understand the problem, so when we fix it, we really fix it.

Q: Will the ZIP code extension still be required?

A: We do not require it now. We return the ZIP code extension to you.

Q: Can you clarify whether the 4-digit postal routing code is or is not part of an AddressDoctor validated address? We are getting batch errors, because we are not reporting a 4-digit code with the address.

A: We will look into that, as we are supposed to get the 4-digit code out of AddressDoctor.

Q: What is the Address Type field used for; for example, "S - Mailbox at a street address"? We have noticed other versions. Is this something we need to watch?

A: The Address Type field is received from AddressDoctor. It tells you what type of address it is – business, high-rise, etc. We display it for you, so you can decide if you want to do anything with it. It is primarily for government users. You are not required to do anything with it.

Q: What do the following address statuses mean: CSZ Valid and Address Type: U - Unvalidated, no override?

A: CSZ Valid means that the City, State and ZIP code agree. U means that the address has not been validated by AddressDoctor.

Q: Why do some Batch-accepted addresses return with Corrected Address info and others do not?

A: Hopefully, that is because those that were not corrected would not get a corrected address back, while those that were corrected do.



There is one type of address where we made a mistake and returned the address incorrectly. We fixed this problem on August 21, 2015 with Release 6.22.

Q: When I enter an address for a Canadian student, it comes back as a postal code error. Is it because it has numbers and letters?

A: Canadian addresses should not be entered into the U.S. Address field. If the student qualifies as a border commuter student, check the Border Commuter Student option. Border commuter students living in Canada or Mexico and attending schools within 75 miles of the border are not required to have a U.S. address. Otherwise, a U.S. address is required.

Q: In batch, if SEVIS only capitalizes an address, does that address appear on the list of students with unvalidated address?

A: A record should not appear on the list simply because SEVIS capitalized the address. Send examples of these to SEVISTechnicalFeedback@ice.dhs.gov so we can use these examples to fix Address Doctor.

Telephone Numbers and Emails

F/M Student Telephone and Email Addresses

Q: For F/M students, can the telephone number be an international telephone number or must it be a U.S. telephone number?

A: In both RTI and batch, DSOs will have three options for entering student telephone information:

- U.S. telephone
- International telephone number
- Checkbox indicating the student has provided information that he/she does not have a telephone number

NOTE: Sponsors must provide a U.S. telephone number when validating an exchange visitor.

Q: Will email addresses and telephone numbers be required when uploading a Create Student event in batch?

A: No.

J Exchange Visitor Telephone and Email Addresses

Q: Will email addresses and telephone numbers be required when uploading a Create EV event in batch?

A: For exchange visitors, the email address and telephone number are not required until time of validation. They are not required for record creation.

Q: For J-1s, if they choose not to buy a telephone, can we use our office number?



- A: If the J-1 does not have their own U.S. phone number, the phone number of the primary site of activity should be entered.
- Q: Can an exchange visitor's office telephone number be used for the U.S. telephone number? Often EVs do not have their own personal telephone numbers until a while after they arrive in the United States.**
- A: If the office is the EV's primary site of activity, than yes, it can be used if they do not have their own personal phone number.
- Q: For the J-1 telephone number, what if the J-1 visitor does not have a U.S. telephone number, can they use their Site of Activity department's telephone number, what does the Department of State suggest?**
- A: The office at the Department of State is issuing a Question and Answers document based on Subpart A, where this requirement came from. If an exchange visitor does not have a telephone number, use the telephone number for the primary site of activity. Please refer to the guidance that will be in that document.

J SEVIS-Specific

- Q: When should our organization stop using the End Program event? We use the End Program function to indicate a program that has effectively ended. Our batch system does not recognize the Shorten Program function as a substitute for the End Program. We need time to change the software.**
- A: The drop-dead date was effective with the date of the guidance from the Office of Program Designation. If your batch software has not been changed to reflect this, consider using SEVIS RTI to shorten programs instead of using the End Program Event in batch. End Program should only be used for the reason of death of the EV.
- Q: Are any enhancements or fixes planned for the Training/Internship Placement Plan (TIPP) batch functionality? We had some problems with it. Have you gotten any feedback from other sponsors or vendors?**
- A: Department of State has heard from some sponsors, mostly about the transaction log returned to them. We are looking into those to see how long the fixes will take and hope to get them into the November 2015 Release. If you have specific issues that you think need to be fixed, send an email to jsevis@state.gov.

Optional Practical Training (OPT) Changes (F/M SEVIS)

- Q: Since many of these new OPT fields/data elements are not regulatory, please do NOT require them until the regulations are updated.**
- A: Not all of the new data fields are required. DHS lawyers and the SEVP's Policy Unit decide which fields are required. They have told us that a regulatory change is not needed to collect the additional information.
- Q: Will there be new OPT-related events to send the employer information to SEVIS?**



A: Yes. There will be new events to add, update, and delete employer information. This will be separate from the add/edit employment authorization events for OPT.

Q: Why would deleting an employer via batch be different from deleting one in RTI?

A: We want to be sure that DSOs intend to delete the employer as opposed to editing the employer. We cannot build the validating questions into batch.

Also, we will terminate records for exceeding authorized periods of unemployment. With batch, we cannot control the sequence in which events are processed. This could result in negative consequences for the student.

Q: Are the required employer elements for OPT going to show up only after OPT approval by USCIS? We won't have to enter that data when the student applies for OPT, correct?

A: There is no change in when you must report employer information. Employer information is not required when a student applies for OPT. Employer information can be entered at one of the following times:

- At the time of the OPT request, if the student has an employer lined up
- Any time after the OPT recommendation, whenever the student reports the employer information to you

Q: Are there plans to create an alert list for students with blank OPT employment information (similar to the STEM OPT reporting list)?

A: Yes. If the student does not have any employer information, they will appear on an alert list after the start date of authorized OPT.

Q: Will we be able to update the OPT employer end date through batch? How will SEVIS identify the correct employer's record to update?

A: You will be able to update this via batch. SEVIS will identify it based on the Employer Name and Start date.

Q: Under what circumstances will students be terminated due to lack of OPT employment on their record?

A: SEVIS will terminate records if the student has 90 consecutive days of unemployment on their record. You have an additional 21 days to report any new employment. This will begin after the November 2015 Release. We will discuss this in an upcoming webinar.

Q: When will the terminations for under employment for OPT start happening?

A: We have not yet decided when we will turn that job on. We want to allow a reasonable amount of time for schools to revise their advising practices and work with students to get the information into SEVIS. We will provide more information about this in future webinars.

Q: Will SEVIS only terminate a record after 90 *consecutive* days of unemployment or are the days cumulative?

A: SEVIS will only auto-terminate for 90 consecutive days of unemployment.



Note: SEVP will be able to run reports to see if a student has 90 total days of unemployment. SEVP can manually terminate students for 90 or more days of *cumulative* unemployment.

Initial Session Start Date (F/M SEVIS)

Q: What is the Initial Session Start Date?

A: This is the start date for classes. It is similar to the Next Session Start Date, only it is for the first session.

Q: Please explain a bit more about the Add Initial Session Start Date. How does it differ from what we have now?

A: Detailed information about the Add Initial Session Start Date field will be provided in upcoming webinars.

Q: Students can enter the United States 30 days before the program starts. Can they enter the United States after the Program Start Date?

A: Yes. They can enter the United States for a limited time after the Program Start Date. The Initial Session Start Date will help us be more definitive about what that means.

Miscellaneous F/M-related Questions

Q: Will SEVIS be modified to print the fourth page (this page was intentionally left blank page) of the Form I-20 to all forms generated in SEVIS? This would be very helpful when printing forms returned through batch. When would this enhancement be available?

A: No. SEVIS creates individual files for each form.

Q: What do you mean by business rule changes?

A: A business rule change refers to system checks to ensure that the data you enter is acceptable. For example, if an official is creating a SEVIS record in June, the DSO can enter a birth date in January of the current year, but not a birth date that is in the future.

Q: Do the Form I-20 changes planned for June 2016 remove the need for current students to have the new Form I-20 by July 1, 2016?

A: No. The June 2016, changes planned for the form are cosmetic with minor rearrangements of authorization information on page two. Any student who has received a Form I-20 issued since June 26, 2015 will not need another updated form next year. However, all students will still need a Form I-20 issued since June 26, 2015 by July 1, 2016.