



SEVIS 6.27 Post-Release Webinar FAQs (July 22, 2016)

TBD – Initial release of FAQs

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General Questions and Unresolved Issues

Q: Is SEVIS’ real-time interface (RTI) the only place where DSOs can register a student for a session over 183 days?

A: Yes, RTI is currently the only place where DSOs can confirm the session length of students with sessions longer than six months.

Note: The Mass Registration function cannot be used for sessions longer than six months.

Q: Where would I find the latest guidance on English Proficiency?

A: Visit [Study in the States](#) for links to policy guidance on “The Form I-20 and the English Proficiency Field” and “Conditional Admission.”

Q: How does a DSO find the school code when transferring a student out?

A: As a best practice, F and M students should provide the DSO with the SEVIS school code for the transfer-in [transfer-to] school. To make it easier to select the correct school, we have added the School Code to the Transfer-To School search when schools initiate transfers.

Q: If students are in their last term, but as the DSO, I register them without checking “Student is in their last term” and enter a Next Session Start Date, will I need to go into their record to make corrections?

A: No, you do not have to make a change to the record.

Q: Many DSOs extend the Form I-20 each term for border commuter students rather than creating a new record, because this way the I-901 SEVIS Fee does not need to



be transferred. Do students need a new Form I-20 or a new SEVIS ID for each term?

A: A DSO may issue an updated Form I-20 each semester or term for a border commuter student, rather than issuing a new initial Form I-20. SEVP Policy is updating guidance reflecting this.

Q: Is there a preferred browser to use with SEVIS?

A: No, we do not have a preferred browser, but most of our testing is done using Internet Explorer and Chrome browsers. We recommend you use the web browser that makes you the most comfortable.

We know some organizations customize their browser; therefore, when users report technical issues, we ask which browser and version they use. There might be something an organization has done, which causes an issue with the browser's functionality in SEVIS. When reporting problems (especially if it is how something looks on screen) send:

- Screenshot
- Name of the browser
- Which version of the browser you are using

Q: What should schools do if their students do not use email or computers?

A: We are aware that some nonimmigrants do not use computers or the internet. We are considering such students as we continue moving toward a paperless system. We are awaiting an answer from SEVP Policy, and we will communicate it as soon as we can.

Q: When will Alpha be upgraded to Release 6.28?

A: The Alpha environment will be upgraded on August 1, 2016.

Q: Are we required to check the Thesis/Dissertation checkbox for all students that are enrolled in any thesis/dissertation hours, or for those that are ONLY enrolled in thesis/dissertation hours?

A: The Thesis/Dissertation checkbox is primarily intended for those students who are only enrolled in thesis/dissertation hours. This is an optional field.

Q: Do we still have 30 days from the Session Start Date to register students?

A: Yes, that rule has not changed.

Q: For almost a year now, we have had an issue with the alert List for Initial Students with POE Records only showing transfer students and not new students. We have to pull the I-94 on all students to see if they have entered before cancelling records. Has this release fixed this issue?

A: Thanks for reporting this issue. We will conduct analysis into the problem. If you have an issue with this alert list, or any alert list, email SEVISTechnicalFeedback@ice.dhs.gov with your name, institution, details of the problem, along with which internet browser you used; and we will contact you.



Q: Students within 45 days of cancellation/termination are disappearing off the alert lists. Is this problem being addressed?

A: Yes, these lists will be updated as a part of SEVIS release 6.28, scheduled for August 12th.

Current Session Start Date and Current Session End Date

Q: Will schools be able to edit the Current Session Start Date as of the August 2016 Release or the January 2017 Release?

A: The Current Session Start Date will be editable as a part of SEVIS Release 6.28 on August 12, 2016.

Q: Once the Current Session End date has passed, the Next Session Start Date automatically becomes the Current Session Start Date, even if it is still in the future. We cannot recommend optional practical training (OPT) for students applying during their 60-day grace period, because when we try to enter the end date and indicate they are in their last session, we get the error that the end date has to be on or after the Current Session Start Date. How can we recommend OPT for these students?

A: We have not received any reports of this occurring. Send any such instances to SEVISTechnicalFeedback@ice.dhs.gov for review. Please include specific information and screenshots.

Q: When the Current Session Start Date is made editable, will it also still auto-populate?

A: If the field is blank, you will have to fill it in. In most cases, the field will autopopulate and you can use that date or overwrite it.

Program Start Date and Program End Date

Q: Is it possible for two students from the same school to have different Program Start Dates?

A: Yes; for example, one student may need to arrive early to participate in sports activities, while another may need to attend an orientation on a different date.

Q: Is the Program Start Date or the Initial Start Date the determining date for when an Initial F-1 student must have entered the United States, unless they have permission from the university to enter the country late?

A: The Program Start Date determines when the student must have entered the United States. If the student will be entering more than 30 days after the Program Start Date, you need to defer attendance.

Q: Will a program auto-complete if the Next Session Start Date is after the Program End Date?



A: Yes.

Q: What is the difference between the Program Start Date and the Initial Session Start Date?

A: The Program Start Date is for when the student is required to attend any school related functions prior to the start of classes, such as an orientation. It can be as much as 30 days prior to the Initial Session Start Date (ISSD). The ISSD is the date that classes begin.

U.S. Address

Q: When going into an initial student record to make a correction, why is the DSO required to add a U.S. address?

A: A U.S. address is required when updating records. If the student is not yet in the United States, you can use the school address.

Q: Physical address and mailing address are almost always the same for our students. Is it necessary to check the box for “Same as Physical Address” when it is the same?

A: We anticipate Mailing Address will become a required field in the future, so it would be considered a best practice to check the box when they are the same.

Q: What should the DSO enter as the U.S. address for students transferring to a new school who are currently back in their home country and currently have no U.S. address?

A: The DSO may use the school address and make a notation in the Remarks about the Student field.

Note: As soon as the student is back in the United States and/or has a U.S. residence, contact the student for their U.S. address and enter it into SEVIS.

Batch Registration

Q: Will we be prevented from doing batch registration of students whom we have indicated are in their last term, because the Next Session Start Date is a required field?

A: No, although there is an asterisk there, the field is not required if you have indicated the student is in their final semester.

Q: Will we have trouble using batch to register if there are Current Session Start Date errors?

A: Yes, we discovered there were issues with registration, because of not being able to edit the Current Session Start Date field. It will be resolved on August 12, 2016 with SEVIS 6.28 Release.

Note: Implications of the Release 6.28 on Batch Users:



SEVP has repeatedly discussed the registration problems with the batch vendors, who for the most part have indicated they could make the change to support the August 12th release. After the August 12th release, submission of the Current Session Start Date will be required. Registration events submitted via batch will fail until the school is able to deploy the update to their batch software. Batch schools must use SEVIS real-time interface (RTI) to submit any registration events due before they are able to apply the upgrade to their batch software.

SEVP realizes that schools will not have immediate access to the functionality, even if their batch vendor delivers the software update on time. After delivery of the update, schools must still work with their information technology (IT) team to deploy and test the update at their campus. We recognize this is a strain on resources and comes at a highly inconvenient time – both for the developers of batch software and for the schools. Be assured that this was considered. It is critical to resolve the problems caused by the inability to change the Current Session Start Date, as the cost to schools of not correcting this problem now would be greater.

For more information on the August 12, 2016 Release, see Broadcast Message on SEVIS Release 6.28.

Major Course of Study (CIP Codes)

Q: How does a DSO find the major or program code since wildcards, like an asterisk, do not work anymore?

A: Wildcards are no longer necessary when searching for a CIP code. The search will filter the list as you type. For example, entering “engi” will bring up all Engineering programs. You can also enter the CIP Code family, such as ‘14.’ (the number fourteen followed by a period), to bring up all programs in the Engineering family.