



# VE-135 Follow-up on 2017-18 Academic Year Completers

Submission Deadline March 31, 2019 **CSI Deadline: March 15, 2019**

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## What is Follow-up?

- **This is when you gather and report placement information (e.g., employment, continuing education) on your students who were marked as program completers in your enrollment from the previous year.** A **completer** is a student who has completed the required minimum credits within a CTE program.
  - *Only students marked in the VE 135 enrollment as "completers" will appear in the VE 135 follow-up the next school year. For the 2018-2019 reporting year, the students that you will see listed in your VE 135 follow-up report are the students who were marked as "Completers" in the VE 135 enrollment in the 2017-2018 school year.*
- **Knowing student outcomes is critical in advocating for and improving programs. Fulfilling these reporting obligations is also important in order to continue eligibility for program approvals and funding.**

## How do I do Follow-up?

- **First, review this Follow-up document to understand the fields on which you are reporting.** Determine the best protocol for your organization in collecting this information from your 2017-2018 program completers (e.g., online survey, phone call, in-person, etc.). We also provide [examples of survey questions](#) in this document in case it is helpful.
- Log on to the [CTE Data Collection](https://ve135.cccs.edu) website (https://ve135.cccs.edu) and go to the "VE-135 Student Follow-up" section to download the full list or individual by program lists of your previous year program completers.
- To report the data, you can **either upload a completed spreadsheet or use the manual entry method** on the website. We recommend the manual entry method if there are only a few completers in a program, otherwise we recommend the file upload method.

## What else do I need to know about Follow-up?

- **You should not start surveying students until December 2018.**
- **Phrase all questions, excluding technical skills assessment, relative to what the student was doing during the specific survey window of October 1, 2018 through December 31, 2018.** We have included example survey questions later in this document for your use.
- **Try to collect survey information on all students in the follow-up.** You should try to contact students at least 3 times before giving up. We recommend that you get at least a 50% response rate for each approved program.
- **The follow-up process is for all previous year CTE program completers regardless of grade or high school graduation.**

- **Even if a program closed or was made inactive** in the current school year, the US DOE requires you to conduct surveys on students who completed the previous year and report it in the follow-up.
- If a student is a completer in multiple programs you should try to contact them only once, gather placement information relative to each program they completed, and submit placement for every completion record in the VE-135 for that student. You may also find that the Follow-up survey relates to another survey you need to conduct. You are welcome to combine surveys; however, you must still meet the requirements of CTE Follow-up reporting.
- **You must provide an answer in the Placement, Cont Ed, Military, Apprenticeship, and Certification Exam Completed fields for every student in Follow-up (even if your response may be a selection for “unknown”).** All of these fields are extremely important for telling the story of student outcomes and program renewals.
- Please review the **“Special Rules”** sections below for help in determining special circumstances you may encounter with student responses.
- You can report your data back to CCCS via the CTE data collection website by **single record data entry or by uploading a data file. The deadline for follow-up submission is March 31, 2019.** If you report by single record entry, you will pick answers from a dropdown list for each student. **If you provide a data file, then you will use the codes listed in the first column in the table below.**
- Before you create your data file, you need to log-in to the CTE Data Collection website, go to the follow-up section and **retrieve a list of students at your institution who are on record as having completed programs in 17-18.** This is the easiest way for you to begin building your data file.
- **CCCS always creates new file format documents each and every reporting year. Do not use file format documents from previous reporting years or you will likely not be reporting data correctly.** Check the reporting year listed at the top of this document to make sure you are using the correct documentation. Current reporting year file formats are always posted in the Documents section of the Help page on the VE-135 website. For security reasons, you will need to login into the VE-135 website to get to the Help page.
- You may use this file format documentation for creating a follow-up data file for upload onto the [CTE Data Collection website](http://ve135.cccs.edu) (ve135.cccs.edu) for students who completed CTE programs in the 2017-2018 school year. Either secondary or postsecondary institutions may use this data file format. Your data file can be in either Excel 97-2003 format (.xls extension) or Excel 2007 format (.xlsx extension). **At the end of this document you will find a list of frequently asked questions regarding the Excel format files and the follow-up upload, validation, and import processes.**
- Fields in the table below can be in any order in the follow-up file, but must contain the designated header in row 1 of the file.
- You must use the same RITS ID (secondary level programs), or Banner ID (postsecondary level programs) in your data file that displays with each student completer record. The reason that we need the same ID number is so that we can match the records in your data file to those in our database.
- **Do not try to add any extra student records in your data file** that were not already in the VE-135 enrollment in the 17-18 school year as program completers. Extra student records in your data file that are not found in our database will trigger an error during the file validation process and you will need to remove them from your file.
- Incorrect formatting or inaccurate student records will trigger an error during the upload process and you will have to correct the file.
- You may submit a separate file of follow-up records for each program at a single school or you may submit a single file of follow-up records for all programs at a single school. **Do not submit separate files of follow-up records for a single program. If you do, then you will overwrite the previous file records with the next file.** We recommend that you submit a single file per school of all follow-up records to avoid confusion, and it is more time efficient to format and validate one file per school rather than multiple files per school. You may resubmit files until the submission deadline. Each new file will overwrite previously imported data.

- There are no specific requirements for the file name but it is suggested that you name the file in such a way that it can be clearly distinguished from any other files that you upload, e.g. <followup>\_<schoolname>\_<year>, or, if submitting one file per program per school, include something to distinguish each file.
- To validate and upload your completed data file, log into the CTE Data Collection website, go to the VE-135 Student Follow-up link on the left. Then click on the “Upload Follow-up File” button and follow the onscreen instructions.
- All Follow-up data reported is subject to verification for completeness and accuracy during scheduled audits, monitoring visits, and technical assistance visits by CCCS and by state and federal level agencies.
- For questions on the VE-135 please contact Lauren Victor at [Lauren.Victor@cccs.edu](mailto:Lauren.Victor@cccs.edu)

## Follow-up File Format and Codes

Remember to phrase all questions, excluding technical skills assessment, relative to what the student was doing during the specific survey window of *October 1, 2018 through December 31, 2018*.

The codes below are those used in the follow-up file upload process. They are provided here for your convenience if you are going to build a data file, but the definitions also apply for data submitted by manual entry on the website.

**Changes for the Follow-up on 2017-18 academic year completers are highlighted in yellow**

Column Header (Row 1 of your Excel file must match exactly)	Field Name	Field Coding	Field Length (number of characters)
Level	Program Level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1 = secondary</li> <li>• 2 = postsecondary</li> </ul>	1
Year	School Year	Should be <b>18</b> in all cells	2
CDE ID	CDE School Code	The 4-digit CDE school code where the CTE program is approved at. Go to the <a href="#">reports page on the Program Approval website</a> for a list of 4-digit CDE codes.	4
RITS ID	RITS ID (Secondary Only)	The 10-digit Colorado Department of Education RITS (also called SASID) student ID. Use the same RITS that displays with each student record in the follow-up list.	10
BANNER ID	Banner ID (Postsecondary Only)	The 9-digit CCCS Banner ID (for non-system colleges and other postsecondary schools the “alternate id” will be shown in this field). Use the same Banner ID that displays with each student record in the follow-up list. Leave blank if there is not a Banner ID in the completer records.	9
Program ID	Program ID	5-digit Program ID ( <b>not</b> program request ID)	5
CIP	CIP ID	6-digit CIP code. No dots or dashes.	6

Column Header (Row 1 of your Excel file must match exactly)	Field Name	Field Coding	Field Length (number of characters)
Placement	Placement Status  <b>Provide a code for every record</b>	<b>At any time between October 1st and December 31st, 2018, were you:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1 = Employed full or part time in an occupation <b>related</b> to the CTE program completed last year</li> <li>• 2 = Employed full or part time in an occupation <b>not related</b> to the CTE program completed last year</li> <li>• 3 = Unemployed and actively seeking employment</li> <li>• 4 = Unemployed and <b>not actively seeking</b> employment (use this status if the student is not seeking employment for any reason such as by choice, volunteering, enrollment in school, illness, pregnancy, etc.)</li> <li>• 5 = Unable to contact student. No follow-up information was collected on this student</li> <li>• 7 = Student is deceased</li> </ul>	1
		<b>Special Rules for Placement:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ACE Special Needs (998000), ACE Combined (998002), ACE Severe Needs (998003), the new ACE CTE (998005) or Multi-Occupational (998100) program completers—<b>mark all students that have any type of employment with a placement status code “1” (employed related to training). Do not use status code “2” (employed not related to training).</b> This does <b>not</b> apply to ACE At Risk (998001) programs.</li> <li>• If a completer is involved in a supervised agricultural experience program (paid or unpaid) after completion of their CTE program, then you should use placement status code “1” (employed related to training).</li> <li>• A respondent may be unsure at times whether they should be considered employed. You may explain that they are considered employed even if they are on paid leave, vacation or sick leave.</li> <li>• Placement status code 4 (unemployed and <b>not</b> actively seeking employment) can be used when the student chooses not to seek employment for any reason. The student may be ill, continuing education (secondary or postsecondary), retired, pregnant, or simply chooses not to seek employment. If the student is continuing education and is not employed, use this placement code and then choose one of the continuing education categories (1, 3, or 4). If you know the student is continuing education, but don't know their employment status, you should still use placement code 4 and choose one of the continuing education categories (1, 3, or 4—see information on the field below).</li> <li>• <b>You should only use the placement status code 5 (Unknown or unable to contact) when you know nothing about the status of the student or only technical skills assessment/certification exam information is known. In other words, if you mark '5' (Unknown or unable to contact) for placement, also mark unknown for Continuing Education(5), Military Service(3) and Apprenticeship(3).</b></li> </ul>	

Column Header (Row 1 of your Excel file must match exactly)	Field Name	Field Coding	Field Length (number of characters)
<p>Cont Educ</p> <p><i>*Note changes for this year in how to code educational outcomes—what was formerly 1 category “continuing at postsecondary level” is now split into 2 options.</i></p>	<p>Continuing Education</p> <p><b>Provide a code for every record</b></p>	<p><b>At any time between October 1st and December 31st, 2018, were you:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 0 = Not continuing education</li> <li>• 1 = Continuing at high school level (secondary)</li> <li>• 3 = Continuing at community or technical college or similar (i.e. certificate or associate degree program or similar)</li> <li>• 4 = Continuing at four-year college or university (i.e. bachelor’s degree)</li> <li>• 5 = Unknown</li> </ul>	<p>1</p>
<p><b>Special Rules for Continuing Education:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This question pertains to where the student was primarily enrolled during the survey window (October 1-December 31) following program completion. It is <b>not</b> asking if the student plans to pursue a postsecondary education in the future.</li> <li>• If the student is in a <b>concurrent enrollment</b> program during the survey window, then they are still primarily enrolled at the <b>secondary level</b>. Thus, do not answer that they were continuing education at the postsecondary level.</li> <li>• If a completer is in an apprenticeship program, then mark them as continuing education = ‘3’ (continuing at community or technical college level).</li> <li>• If a completer is in the military full-time (see field below), mark them as continuing education = ‘3’ (continuing at community or technical college level), unless you know that they are enrolled at a four-year institution (and in that case enter ‘4’ in the continuing education field).</li> </ul>			
<p>Military Service</p> <p><i>*Note changes for this year in how to code “unknown” and placement status</i></p>	<p>Military Service</p> <p><b>Provide a code for every record</b></p>	<p><b>At any time between October 1st and December 31st, 2018, were you:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 0 = Not in the military</li> <li>• 1 = In the Military Full Time (≥35 hours/week)</li> <li>• 2 = In the Military Part Time (&lt; 35 hours/week)</li> <li>• 3 = Unknown</li> </ul>	<p>1</p>
<p><b>Special Rules for Military Service:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This includes active enlistment in a branch of the United States armed forces (Army, Navy, Marines, Air Force, Coast Guard, as well as Army National Guard, Air National Guard, or Active Reserves).</li> <li>• If a completer is in the military full time (35 or more hours per week), you should use placement status code ‘1’ (employed related to training), mark them as continuing their education as code ‘3’ (continuing at community or technical college level), unless you know that they are enrolled at a four-year institution (and in that case enter “4” in the continuing education field), and for the military service category, mark them ‘1’ (military full time category).</li> </ul>			

Column Header (Row 1 of your Excel file must match exactly)	Field Name	Field Coding	Field Length (number of characters)
Apprenticeship  <i>*Note changes for this year in how to code "unknown" and placement status</i>	Apprenticeship  <b>Provide a code for every record</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 0 = Not in an apprenticeship</li> <li>• 1 = Participating in an apprenticeship <b>related</b> to the CTE program completed last year</li> <li>• 2 = Participating in an apprenticeship <b>not related</b> to the CTE program completed last year</li> <li>• 3 = Unknown</li> </ul>	1
<b>Special Rules for Apprenticeship:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Definition of apprenticeship is as follows: Apprenticeship is a work-based training model that integrates all of the following components:               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Apprentices earn wages from their employers during training;</li> <li>2) Programs provide on-the-job learning and job-related technical instruction;</li> <li>3) On-the-job learning is conducted in the work setting under the direction of one or more of the employer's personnel;</li> <li>4) Training results in an industry-recognized credential.</li> </ol> </li> <li>• If a completer is in an apprenticeship program (related or unrelated to CTE program), <b>then mark them for Continuing education as '3'</b> (Continuing at community or technical college level).</li> </ul>			
<b>Certification Exam Completed</b>  <i>*Note changes for this year in column name and how to code "unknown"</i>	Industry Certification or License Exam <b>(Part 1)</b>  <b>Provide a code for every record</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 0 = Unknown</li> <li>• Y = During the program completion year or since leaving school student has taken a state licensing test or an industry certification test related to the program completed</li> <li>• N = During the program completion year or since leaving school student <b>has not</b> taken a state licensing test or an industry certification test related to the program completed</li> </ul>	1
<b>Certification Exam Passed</b>  <i>*Note changes for this year in column name and how to code "unknown"</i>	Industry Certification or License Exam <b>(Part 2)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 0 = Unknown</li> <li>• Y = If yes to Part 1, and student did meet the requirements for licensure/certification.</li> <li>• N = If yes to Part 1, and student <b>did not</b> meet the requirements for licensure/certification.</li> </ul>	1
<b>Special Rules for Industry Certification or License Exam:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If certification exam completed is 'unknown' then fill in certification exam passed as 'unknown.'</li> </ul>			

End of Follow-Up File Format

## Survey Question Examples Available for Your Use

Many schools opt to issue an online survey (using SurveyMonkey, Qualtrics or Google forms, for example) as one way to reach respondents. Some schools integrate follow-up related questions within broader surveys. The following survey question examples are provided to help you phrase your questions if you find you need inspiration.

First, of course, determine the best way that works for you to gather individual student information (i.e. identifying information for individual student, identifying the program, etc., though it may also be an automated option with your survey tool to track respondents). [See below for comparison of different contact methods.](#)

Consider including phrasing or text around why we conduct these surveys. As in: *Student outcomes trends are important for us to understand so we are able to advocate that Career & Technical Education is a valuable and worthwhile use of government funds. Your answers will be confidential and will be used in fulfilling reporting requirements in order to help us continue to fund these programs.*

### At any time between October 1st and December 31st, 2018:

*Were you employed?*

- Employed full or part time in an occupation related to the program I completed last year
- Employed full or part time in an occupation **not related** to the program I completed last year
- Unemployed and actively seeking employment
- Unemployed and not actively seeking employment (this may be for any reason such as by choice, enrollment in school, volunteering, illness, pregnancy, etc.)

*Were you enrolled in an educational program?*

- Attended high school
- Attended community or technical college or similar (i.e. enrolled in a certificate or associate degree program or similar)
- Attended a four-year college or university (i.e. enrolled in a bachelor's degree program)
- Not enrolled in any education

*Were you in the military?*

- In the military full time (greater or equal to 35 hours/week)
- In the military part time (less than 35 hours/week)
- Not in the military

*Were you in an apprenticeship?*

- Participated in an apprenticeship related to the program I completed last year
- Participated in an apprenticeship, but it is **not related** to the program I completed last year
- Not in an apprenticeship

*Have you completed an industry certification or licensure exam during or after you completed your program?*

- Yes
- No

*If you answered "yes" to the previous question, did you meet the requirements for licensure or certification?*

- Yes, I passed the exam/met the requirements for licensure and/or certification.
- No, I did not meet the requirements for licensure and/or certification.

## Suggested Follow-up Best Practices

- All institutions are welcome to collect additional data for their own internal purposes as part of the VE-135 follow-up survey.
- If you have more than one person conducting the surveys, then you should hold a training session in order to achieve accurate, consistent results.
- If you have delegated the responsibility of contacting students to teachers, you may wish to spot check a random sample of the students to confirm that the information was gathered correctly. This will help to identify any needs to retrain and to raise the level of the completeness, accuracy and reliability of your data.
- In order to gather accurate, consistent and reliable data, survey data should be gathered at the same time and in the same way.
- It is important to begin and end your data collection on time and submit your data by the deadline. The closer you come to achieving this goal, the more reliable the data will be.
- More on response rates:
  - The value of the data collected through the Follow-up Survey depends on an accurate representation of the status of all completers. For this reason, the survey response rate is of major importance. You need a good response rate to accurately portray all completers in the state. If interviewers do not make a strong effort to reach completers (evenings before 9 pm and on weekends), employed students may go underrepresented because they can be more difficult to reach during the day. Interviewers must make every effort to ensure that the survey data represents all students. A good response rate helps to ensure a fair portrayal of all student groups. The State feels that the close connection between districts and completers is good reason to expect high response.
  - Overall placement rate shows the percentage of survey respondents who reported that they were employed or continuing their education. The calculation does not count students who do not respond to the survey. Hence, the greater the response rate, the more accurate the placement rate will be.
- **In order to improve response rates for the follow-up data collection process, it is often effective to gather some initial information before completers actually complete a CTE program.**
  - You may wish to gather general contact information for the VE135 follow-up data collection process from completers in their last class before they complete their program. A suggested contact form template is provided below. You may modify the template to fit your needs.



## CTE Completer Contact Form Example

Career and Technical Education programs like the one you are about to complete are a vital component of our educational offering and, we feel, an important part of your education. In order to continue to fund and offer this program we are required by the U.S. Department of Education Office of Career, Technical and Adult Education to gather and provide data that shows its value in terms of leading to high-skill, high-wage jobs. As such, we will be contacting you at the end of the calendar year to complete a very short survey mainly regarding your employment, continued education, or service in the military. We would very much appreciate it if you could provide as much of the below information as possible in order to contact you for the survey. Thank you!

### Information about you:

Your name:

Name of CTE program you are about to complete:

Email:

Phone:

Mailing address:

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### Information about someone whom you designate to complete the survey for you (someone who will always know you, e.g., a spouse, parent, grandparent, etc.):

Relationship to You:

Name:

Email:

Phone:

Mailing address:

## Comparison of Different Contact Methods

It is often effective to use a variety of different contact methods. For example, your educational institution may choose to contact students in the follow-up initially via email, a second time by mail with a post card, a third time on the phone. Each method has distinct advantages and disadvantages with these listed in the table below.

Method	Advantages	Disadvantages	Best Practices
Mail	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Less intrusive than other methods, allows student to respond at a time convenient for them.</li> <li>• Easier to implement at large educational institutions than other methods.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Typically results in lower response rate than phone.</li> <li>• Costlier than other methods.</li> <li>• May be difficult to gather current mailing addresses.</li> <li>• Less opportunity to clarify potential confusion about survey questions than phone or personal contact.</li> <li>• May result in lower response rate than phone or personal contact due to less "pressure to respond."</li> <li>• May be difficult to conduct mailing within timeframe.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide a postage-paid, addressed envelope along with the survey.</li> <li>• Offer a prize, with all students responding by a given date eligible to win. Include a coupon for free or discounted merchandise redeemable at a local business.</li> <li>• Send a reminder postcard to non-responders two weeks after initial mailing.</li> <li>• Mail a second survey, with a letter explaining its importance.</li> <li>• Call non-responders.</li> <li>• Use standardized procedures for data entry.</li> </ul>
Phone	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Typically results in one of the highest response rates.</li> <li>• Lower cost than other methods.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• May be difficult to gather current phone numbers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create and use a detailed script.</li> <li>• Request convenient call back time if student unavailable.</li> <li>• Request forwarding information from person answering phone.</li> <li>• Call from school phone.</li> <li>• Leave messages on answering machine.</li> <li>• Call in evenings or on weekends.</li> <li>• Make multiple attempts.</li> <li>• Use contact information from parents, relatives, or friends to locate students who have not responded.</li> <li>• Collect and use cell phone numbers.</li> <li>• (The Telephone Consumer Protection Act states that telephone solicitation cannot occur before 8 am or after 9 pm. Schools technically are not solicitors, but it is highly recommended keeping within the 8 am – 9 pm time frame.)</li> </ul>
Email	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Very cost effective.</li> <li>• Easier than other methods to collect data consistently</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• May produce lower response rates than other methods.</li> <li>• Some students may not have personal email addresses.</li> <li>• Less opportunity to clarify potential confusion about survey questions than phone or personal contact.</li> <li>• May result in lower response rate than phone or personal contact due to less "pressure to respond."</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Make the email as personal as possible by including the students full name, degrees awarded, courses completed, etc.</li> <li>• Inform students that they will be receiving an email around a certain date and it may unintentionally go to their junk or spam folder.</li> </ul>

Method	Advantages	Disadvantages	Best Practices
Web-based survey	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Very cost effective.</li> <li>• Easier than other methods to collect data consistently.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Less opportunity to clarify potential confusion about survey questions than phone or personal contact.</li> <li>• May result in lower response rate than phone or personal contact due to less "pressure to respond."</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Send an initial letter or e-mail indicating the purpose of the survey and the location of the survey on the web.</li> <li>• Send an e-mail reminder to non-responders approximately two weeks after the initial mailing.</li> <li>• Mail postcard reminders if e-mail address unavailable.</li> <li>• Call non-responders.</li> </ul>
Personal contact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Typically results in one of the highest response rates.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Difficult to implement at larger educational institutions.</li> <li>• More time consuming than other methods.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Please think about FERPA and privacy rules if this will be done in a non-private location.</li> </ul>

## Follow-Up Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

1. Why are there **bold** and *italics* in the column headers in the file when I "Download All Follow-Up Students" or a "Follow-up Student List"?

a. The follow-up student file column headers are encoded as follows:

- i. **Bold** fields are required during the upload process.
- ii. *Italic* fields are optional and will be reported where available.

2. What is the difference between the "Validate and Import" button and the "Validate Only" button and which one should I use?

- a. The "Validate Only" button does all the validity checking on your file but will not accept the file for import. Thus if there are no errors in your file, you will be notified that there are no errors but you would then need to upload the file again and click on the "Validate and Import" button to finish the process.
- b. The "Validate and Import" button does all the validity checking on your file and if and when no errors are found, it will then prompt you for your email address and accept the file for import. The import process runs later in the day and when your file is imported, an automatic email is then generated and sent to the email address you put in earlier, indicating that the import is complete.
- c. Each time you run the "Validate and Import", if any errors are detected an email is sent to the technical support person indicating the current status of the validation. This way the technical support person can monitor your progress and contact you to help you if you are having problems cleaning up errors. The "Validate Only" process does not send any emails to the technical support person. Typically, you would use the "Validate Only" button until your file is error free unless you are working with technical support or want technical support to be aware of your progress.

3. Why is there a little green triangle in the upper left corner of some of the cells in my Excel spreadsheet?

1	09	0640	19
1	09	0640	19
1	09	0640	19
1	09	0640	19
1	09	0640	19
1	09	0640	19
1	09	0640	19
1	09	0640	19
1	09	0640	19
1	09	0640	19

- a. The little green triangle (see picture) indicates that there is text data in a numeric field. Excel automatically determines what type of data is in a column by looking at the first few lines of data. If the data is all numbers, then Excel assumes that the entire column is numeric. If the first few lines contain dates, then Excel assumes that the entire column contains dates. If the first few cells

contain non-numeric text, then Excel assumes that the entire column contains text data. You can override this behavior by formatting the cells as text or by preceding the data in the cell with a single apostrophe ('). If you do this, then the green triangle appears.

4. Why do leading zeros disappear in the Excel spreadsheet?

- a. This is related to the discussion in 3 above. In numeric fields, leading zeros are always removed by Excel. To get the leading zero to appear you have to either format the cell as text or prepend a single apostrophe to the number in the cell, e.g. enter '09 in a cell instead of just 09.

**If you do not wish to retype values in cells manually in order to retain leading zeros, follow the directions on the [TechWalla website](#) to convert entire columns in just a few quick steps to the correct, consistent text format.**

5. Why does the error report say that various fields have no value found but when I look in the spreadsheet there is a value there?

- a. This is closely related to items 3 and 4 above. If you, for instance, download the active teacher report in order to add more records to it, the data in the downloaded Excel file will generally be formatted as text. Hence numeric fields such as Program ID will be numbers formatted as text and will appear with the green triangle in the upper left corner of each cell. If you add more records and put numeric data in (no green triangle in the cell, no apostrophe preceding the value in the cell) then the validator cannot read that data. Excel looks at the first few lines, determines that the column contains text and then cannot read the numeric data you added in later rows. This works (or fails to work as the case may be) conversely as well. If you download the starter file, there is no data in it. If you put numeric values in the first few rows of data then add rows with text data in the numeric columns, the validator will be unable to read the differently formatted data. The main point of this is that all the fields in any given column must be the same type – either text or numeric.

6. Do I have to put leading zeros into fields such as CDE ID and Program ID?

- a. That depends. The data file format above shows leading zeros required in CDE ID, CIP, and Program ID. If you are modifying or adding records in a file that already has data in it with leading zeros (see the discussion in 3, 4, and 5 above) then you must format your new data to match what is already in the file. So if you download the Follow-up Student list and it has, for example, 01122 for program ID, then any rows you add or modify should have the leading zeros or you will get the error described in 5 above. If you are starting with an empty file, then it is not necessary to put leading zeros in any of the fields – the validation process will put them in for you.

7. Why can't I use a normal date in the DOB field?

- a. You can if *all* the dates are normal dates. The validator will accept dates in the format such as 1/5/1993 **if all the dates in the column are done the same way**. All dates should either be the eight-character string such as 03302014, or all should be normal dates such as 3/30/2014.