

Technical Review Panel No. 24 Collecting GRS Data for Part-Time Students and Pell Grant Recipients

Final Actions

Each year, postsecondary education institutions report graduation rates for cohorts of students enrolled at their institution based on methods outlined in federal laws and regulations. The Graduation Rates (GR) survey component of the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) helps satisfy institutional reporting requirements of the *Student Right to Know and Campus Security Act* of 1990 (SRK). Under the provisions of the SRK, institutions must disclose to current and prospective students the rate at which full-time, first-time degree/certificate-seeking undergraduate students complete their academic programs.

On July 9 and 10, 2008, RTI International, the contractor for the IPEDS web-based data collection system, convened a meeting of the IPEDS Technical Review Panel (TRP)¹ in Arlington, Virginia to discuss collecting graduation rates for part-time students and Pell Grant recipients. The panel consisted of 54 individuals representing institutions, researchers and other data users, state governments, the federal government, higher education associations, and other experts. This TRP recommended adding a subcohort of Pell Grant recipients to the GR component. The Pell Grant rates would be calculated based on a subcohort of first-time, full-time degree/certificate-seeking undergraduates. It was also recommended that, should other cohorts be added, then the Pell subcohort should also be required for those cohorts. The report and suggestions from TRP 24 were not posted for public comment following the meeting because the National Center for Education Statistics' (NCES) resources were dedicated to implementing requirements of the *Higher Education Opportunity Act* of 2008, which was passed soon after TRP 24 was held. However, TRP 24 summary was eventually posted at

https://edsurveys.rti.org/IPEDS_TRP_DOCS/prod/documents/TRP_24_Summary_final.pdf

Graduation Rates Component. Starting with the 2016-17 data collection, a new section was added to the GR component to collect the data necessary to calculate the 150% graduation rates for Pell Grant recipients and recipients of a subsidized Direct Loan who did not receive a Pell Grant. Specifically, the GR component collects the number of students, exclusions, and completers within 150 percent of normal time to completion for full-time, first-time (FTFT) cohorts of Pell Grant recipients and subsidized Direct Loan recipients who did not receive a Pell Grant. Institutions are currently required to disclose this information on their websites;² the addition of these cohorts allows for these rates to be publicly available in a centralized location.

Outcome Measures Component. NCES has taken steps to enhance outcome information for part-time and transfer reporting in IPEDS. The IPEDS Outcome Measures (OM) component, first collected in the IPEDS 2015-16 collection year, was developed in response to recommendations from the 2012 Committee on Measures of Student Success report to the Secretary of the Department of Education and was informed by the outcome and public comments from TRPs 37 and 40. With the

¹ Meetings of the IPEDS TRP are conducted by RTI to solicit expert discussion and suggestions on a broad range of issues related to postsecondary education and the conduct of IPEDS. The TRP is designed to allow the public to advise and work with RTI to improve IPEDS data collection and products, data quality, and user-friendliness. The TRP does not report to or advise the Department of Education.

² Higher Education Opportunity Act of 2008, Sec. 488(a)(3).

addition of the Outcome Measures component, implemented in 2015-16, Pell subcohorts can be created for four cohorts that are more representative of higher education.

Proposed Changes to the Outcome Measures Component, 2017-18

NCES has received thoughtful public comments and expert suggestions for improving the OM survey to collect more information on Pell Grant recipients, as several TRPs (TRPs 24, 37, 40, 45, and 50) have encouraged NCES to collect information on this vulnerable population.

In February 2016, NCES requested clearance from the Office of Management and Budget for the 2016-17, 2017-18, and 2018-19 IPEDS data collections. The clearance package included several proposed changes, including a proposal to begin collecting outcome information on Pell Grant recipients in the OM component starting with the 2017-18 data collection. The initial proposed change for the 2016-17, 2017-18, and 2018-19 collections was the addition of a fifth cohort, Pell Grant recipients; however, after reviewing feedback in response to the request for comments³ on proposed changes, NCES determined the expansion of the OM component to collect data on Pell Grant recipients would benefit from broader industry input. RTI convened TRP 50 in August 2016 to discuss the potential for further changes to this component and the impact of the changes to institutions, researchers, and the Department of Education. The proposed changes were originally suggested during the 60-day and 30-day public comment periods and were further discussed and formulated during TRP 50. NCES submitted a subsequent IPEDS clearance request to OMB in November 2016 for proposed amendments to the OM component for the 2017-18, 2018-19, and 2019-20 data collections. NCES received clearance from OMB to implement the proposed changes to the OM component, starting with the 2017-18 data collection for entering cohort year 2009-10. (See Final Actions from TRP 50

https://edsurveys.rti.org/IPEDS_TRP_DOCS/prod/documents/TRP50_FinalAction.pdf for approved changes to the OM component for the 2017-18, 2018-19, 2019-20 data collections).

³ (Federal Register, Vol. 81, No. 32, pp. 8181- 8182, February 18, 2016)