Changes to NRS Implementation Guidelines
For Distance Education Learners

The following information represents changes made to the National Reporting System guidance to enable states to report student participation in distance education programs.

1. **Add the following to p. 45, under "Student Participation Measure #2: Program Enrollment Type":**

   Definition: Distance Education

   Distance education is formal learning activity where students and instructors are separated by geography, time or both for the majority of the instructional period. Distance learning materials are delivered through a variety of media including, but not limited to, print, audio recording, videotape, broadcasts, computer software, web-based programs and other online technology. Teachers support distance learners through communication via mail, telephone, e-mail or online technologies and software.

   Definition: Distance Learners

   Distance learners are students who receive distance education services, as defined above. For learners who receive both distance education and traditional classroom instruction during a program year (such as through a blended distance-classroom approach or concurrent enrollment in both types of instruction), the state must have a policy, consistent with the NRS definition, that defines how local programs are to classify the student. For NRS reporting, states can count a student only once, as either a distance education student or traditional classroom learner.

2. **Add the following to p. 45, under "Student Participation Measure #1: Contact Hours":**

   Measuring Contact Hours for Learners in Distance Education

   Students in distance education must have at least 12 hours of contact with the program before they can be counted for federal reporting purposes. Contact hours for distance learners can be a combination of actual contact and contact through telephone, video, teleconference or online communication, where student and program staff can interact and through which learner identity is verifiable.

   Optional Reporting of Proxy Contact Hours

States may, *but are not required,* to report proxy hours of time students spent on distance learning activities. States providing distance education that want to measure and report proxy contact hours for these students must develop a state distance education policy that describes the following.

- The curricula that local programs can use to provide distance education;

- The model or models used to assign proxy contact hours for each type of curriculum. States must develop proxy contact hours using one of the following models.[1]

  - o **Clock Time Model,** which assigns contact hours based on the elapsed time that a learner is connected to, or engaged in an online or stand alone software program that tracks time.

  - o **Teacher Verification Model**, which assigns a fixed number of hours of credit for each assignment based on teacher determination of the extent to which a learner engaged in, or completed, the assignment.

  - o **Learner Mastery Model**, which assigns a fixed number of hours of credit based on the learner passing a test on the content of each lesson. Learners work with the curriculum and materials and when they feel they have mastered the material, take a test. A high percentage of correct answers (typically 70%-80%) earns the credit hours attached to the material.

- The proxy contact hours assigned for completing requirements for each type of curriculum used (teacher verification model) or the proxy contact hours assigned for completion of units of material comprising the curriculum (learner mastery model). The state may use the clock time model with curricula that track time student spends interacting with instructional material and disconnects after a preset period of inactivity; and

- Describe the procedures the state used to develop proxy contact hours. The state must use the proxy contact hour model appropriate for the distance education curricula.

3. Add the following to the section beginning on p. 23 on "State Responsibilities for Measuring Educational Gain":

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[1] See Project Ideal (2005), *Working Paper No. 2 Measuring Contact Hours and Learner Progress in Distance Education Programs,* Institute for Social Research, University of Michigan, for further information on the use and development of these models.

Assessment of Students in Distance Learning

Students in distance education should be posttested after the same amount of instructional time as other students, according to the state's approved NRS assessment policy. States that choose to develop proxy contact hours using one of the approved models will use the proxy contact hours to measure the posttest time for distance education students. For example, if the state's assessment policy requires posttesting after 80 contact hours, programs must posttest distance education students after 80 proxy contact hours, as determined by the state model.

States that choose not to collect and report proxy contact hours must develop procedures for determining the appropriate time for posttesting students in distance education and may use one of the proxy contact hour models or another appropriate method, as long as the posttesting time is after the same amount of instructional time as other students. The state will describe the methodology it employed for determining posttest time and procedures for posttesting distance education students in its state assessment policy.

Programs must administer all pre- and post- assessments used to measure educational gain of distance education students for NRS reporting in person, at a proctored program site within the state that meets NRS assessment policy. Assessments not conducted through face-to-face interaction with a trained test administrator in a secure setting are not allowed for NRS reporting.

4. Add the following to p. 76, under "Federal Reporting Tables":

NRS Reporting for Students in Distance Education

States will report all required NRS data elements on distance education students in all NRS tables, according to current requirements. States electing to develop proxy contact hours for students in distance education will report both proxy and actual contact hours in Table 4.

> *New Required Tables*
>
> States must report data on students in distance education separately in a new Table 4c identical to NRS Table 4 and in Table 5a, identical to Table 5. Only students in distance education are to be reported in these new tables table and all contact hours (proxy and actual) are to be reported in Table 4c.

Table 4C
Educational Gains and Attendance for Participants in Distance Education

Enter number of distance education participants for each category listed, calculate percentage of participants completing each level, and enter total proxy and direct attendance hours.

Entering Educational Functioning Level (A)	Total Number Enrolled In Distance Education (B)	Total Estimated and Actual Attendance Hours (C)	Number Completed Level (D)	Number who Completed a Level and Advanced One or More Levels (E)	Number Separated Before Completed (F)	Number Remaining Within Level (G)	Percentage Completing Level (H)
ABE Beginning Literacy							
ABE Beginning Basic Education							
ABE Intermediate Low							
ABE Intermediate High							
ASE Low							
ASE High*							
ESL Beginning Literacy							
ESL Low Beginning							
ESL High Beginning							
ESL Intermediate Low							
ESL Intermediate High							
ESL Advanced							
Total							

Include in this table only students who are counted as distance education students.
Column *D* is the total number of learners who completed a level, including learners who left after completing and learners who remained enrolled and moved to one or more higher levels.
Column *E* represents a subset of Column *D* (Number Completed Level) and is learners who completed a level and enrolled in one or more higher levels.
Column *F* is students who left the program or received no services for 90 consecutive days and have no scheduled services.
Column *D* + *F* + *G* should equal the total in Column *B*.
Column *G* represents the number of learners still enrolled who are at the same educational level as when they entered.

Each row total in Column *H* is calculated using the following formula: $H = \dfrac{ColumnD}{ColumnB}$

Work-based project learners are not included in this table.
*Completion of ASE high level is attainment of a secondary credential or passing GED tests.

Table 5A
Core Followup Outcome Achievement for Participants in Distance Education

Core Followup Outcome Measures	Number of Participants With Main or Secondary Goal	Number of Participants Included in Survey Sample	Number of Participants Responding to Survey or Used for Data Matching	Response Rate or Percent Available for Match	Number of Participants Achieving Outcome	Percent Achieving Outcome
(A)	(B)	(C)	(D)	(E)	(F)	(G)
Entered Employment						
Retained Employment**						
Obtained a GED or Secondary School Diploma***						
Entered Postsecondary Education or Training****						

Include in this table only students who are counted as distance education students.

Follow the same instructions for Completing Table 5 to complete Table 5a, repeated below.

* Report in Column B the number of participants who were unemployed at entry and who had a main or secondary goal of obtaining employment and who exited during the program year. Do not exclude students because of missing Social Security numbers or other missing data.

** Report in Column B: (1) the number of participants who were unemployed at entry and who had a main or secondary goal of employment who exited and who entered employment by the end of the first quarter after program exit and (2) the number of participants employed at entry who had a main or secondary goal of improved or retained employment who exited in the first and second quarter

*** Report in Column B the number of participants with a main or secondary goal of passing GED tests or obtaining a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent who exited during the program year.

**** Report in Column B the number of participants with a main or secondary goal of placement in postsecondary education or training who exited during the program year.

If survey is used, then the number in Column C should equal the number in Column B *unless random sampling was used.* If one or more local programs used random sampling, then enter in Column C the total number of students included in the survey. *If data matching is used*, then Column C should be left blank.

If survey is used, then the number in Column D should be less than Column C, unless there was a 100-percent response rate to the survey. *If data matching is used*, then the number reported in Column D should be the total number of records available for the data match. That number is normally less than the number in Column B. (If the numbers in these two columns are equal, then it means that all Social Security numbers are valid and that there are no missing Social Security numbers.)

Column E $= \frac{ColumnD}{ColumnB}$, *unless one or more programs used random sampling*. If random sampling was used, see Appendix C of the *NRS Survey Guidelines* for further instructions on reporting.

In Column F, the number should be equal to or less than the number in Column D.

Column G is the number in Column F divided by the number in Column D. Column G should never be greater than 100 percent. If the response rate is less than 50 percent (Column E), then the percent reported in Column G is not considered valid.

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