

Volume I:

Postsecondary Education Quick Information System (PEQIS) 19: Services and Support Programs for Military Service Members and Veterans-Feasibility Calls

OMB# 1850-0803 v. 68

July 30, 2012
National Center for Education Statistics
U.S. Department of Education

Justification

The National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), U.S. Department of Education (ED), requests OMB approval under the NCES system clearance for Cognitive, Pilot and Field Test studies (OMB #1850-0803) to conduct feasibility calls for a Postsecondary Education Quick Information System (PEQIS) survey #19 on services and support programs available to veteran and military students at postsecondary institutions. The survey will provide nationally representative data about the prevalence and types of services and programs available to veteran and military students.

The purpose of the feasibility calls is to explore topics for potential new survey items, identify and correct any potential issues with the content and format of the survey before conducting pretests, and to ensure that the survey captures the intended meaning of the questions and minimizes the burden imposed on respondents. A request to conduct pretest activities will follow completion of the feasibility calls. Feasibility calls will involve asking members of the target populations to *review*, but not complete, a draft questionnaire and participate in a telephone discussion. Pretests will involve asking respondents to *complete* the survey and participate in a telephone debriefing. Feasibility calls will be done before pretests to minimize the burden on respondents. Pretests will be done as a final test prior to OMB clearance submission to conduct the full-scale survey. The request to conduct the full-scale survey will be submitted at a later date under OMB generic clearance for quick response surveys (OMB#1850-0733), which are authorized under the Education Science Reform Act of 2002. NCES has contracted Westat for all stages of this survey.

Design

Overview of Survey Development

The PEQIS system has established procedures for developing short surveys on a wide variety of topics. The techniques being used to shape the survey design for PEQIS 19 include literature reviews on veteran and military student services and support programs (already completed), several rounds of feasibility calls, and up to two pretests. The specific ways we plan to use feasibility calls are discussed below.

We anticipate conducting up to three rounds of feasibility calls, each with ten or fewer respondents, who will review the questionnaire without completing it. Conducting multiple rounds of feasibility calls will systematically inform us of respondents' perceptions of the survey and response burden, and will result in several iterations of the questionnaire. The first round of calls will focus on (1) the current draft questionnaire that contains new survey questions based on the literature review and (2) several topics for exploration with respondents. For the next round of feasibility calls, we may add new survey questions and make changes to the existing survey questions and instructions, based on the initial round of feasibility calls. In the second round, we will ask respondents about any modifications made to the survey. Based on feedback, we will make any necessary changes to the survey and test those changes in the third round (if necessary). The resulting draft of the survey will be reviewed by the NCES Quality Review Board (QRB) and revised as necessary to prepare it for pretesting.

NCES Review and Consultations Outside of Agency

The NCES QRB members, which include two members from the NCES Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS), reviewed a draft questionnaire prior to this submission for the feasibility calls. The questionnaire was also reviewed by the Office of Innovation and Improvement (OII) in the U.S. Department of Education. Revisions were made to the instrument based on input from the reviewers. The Office of Veterans Affairs (VA) has been asked to review the version of the questionnaire attached to this clearance request, and their input will be incorporated for the second round of feasibility calls.

Sample, Burden, and Cost

In this submission, we are requesting approval for feasibility calls with members of the target population. We will conduct up to three rounds of feasibility calls for the survey, with 10 or fewer respondents per round. Postsecondary institutions will be recruited to participate in feasibility calls based on various institution characteristics including type, size, and geographic region. Respondents will be recruited by telephone and will be identified as the person at the institution who is most familiar with the programs and services available to veteran and military students.

Telephone interviewers will recruit participants for the feasibility calls using the recruitment script in attachment 1. Following telephone recruitment, interviewers will email a cover letter and draft questionnaire to the participating institutions (as discussed below in the Data Collection Instrument section). In order to recruit 10 respondents per round, we anticipate contacting 30 postsecondary institutions (Table 1). On average, recruitment calls with respondents who agree to participate in the feasibility calls are expected to take about 10 minutes to explain the purpose of the call and set up an appointment to discuss the survey; all other recruitment calls are expected to take about 3 minutes. Prior to the feasibility calls, respondents will be asked to review (but not complete) a draft survey, which should take approximately 10 minutes. The feasibility call should take approximately 30 minutes to complete. The estimated burden for one round of feasibility calls is approximately 10 hours, and total estimated burden time for all three rounds of feasibility calls is approximately 30 hours. We anticipate that the estimated cost to the federal government will be approximately \$4,000 for each round of feasibility calls.

Table 1. Estimated maximum burden time for up to three rounds of feasibility calls for PEQIS 19

Respondents	Number of Respondents	Number of Responses ¹	Burden Hours per Respondent	Total Burden Hours
Each Round				
Recruitment – Institutions not participating in the feasibility call	20	20	0.05	1
Recruitment – Institutions participating in the feasibility call	10	10	0.17	2
Survey review and feasibility call	10	10	0.67	7
Total per round	30	40	-	10
Total for three rounds	90	120	-	30

¹ Counts each contact (e.g., recruitment and feasibility call are counted separately even when they are with the same respondents).

Data Collection Instrument

For each round of feasibility calls, a cover letter and draft questionnaire will be emailed to each participating postsecondary institution. The cover letter and questionnaire for the first round of feasibility calls are included in this document as attachments 2 and 3. The cover letter thanks the respondent for agreeing to participate in the feasibility call, introduces the purpose and content of the survey, indicates that participation is voluntary, indicates that respondents should review the questionnaire without providing responses, includes questions for respondents to consider while reviewing the survey to help in providing feedback about the survey, and provides contact information should any questions arise before the scheduled discussion with the survey manager. On the cover letter, respondents are assured that their participation is voluntary and their answers may only be used for statistical purposes and may not be disclosed or used in identifiable form for any other purpose unless compelled by law. The public law is cited on the cover letter. The materials for subsequent rounds of calls will be similar, except the survey instrument for each round will include the modifications that resulted from the previous rounds. The current instrument is discussed below.

Questionnaire

The survey is designed to collect information on the programs and support services available to veteran and military students at the institution during the 2012-13 academic year, except for question 2 which asks for enrollment information about the 2011-12 financial aid year (July 1, 2011-June 30, 2012). The current draft survey also includes a list of topics related to military service members and veterans that will be explored with respondents. A definition is provided prior to question 1 to clarify the types of students respondents should report about. This definition is based on Executive Order 13607 which refers to support for, “active-duty service members, reservists, members of the National Guard, veterans, and military families.” Military families have been excluded from the PEQIS survey definition because the survey focuses on programs and services available to military service members and veterans only.

Question 1 asks if the institution uses specific methods to identify military service members and veterans. This question is included in the draft survey because the literature indicates tracking these types of students can be challenging for postsecondary institutions. This question seeks to gather information about how postsecondary institutions are identifying these students. Question 2 asks for the total number of military service members and veterans enrolled in the institution during the 2011-12 financial aid year. The question asks for undergraduate and graduate student counts. The financial aid year is used because this is the basis for unduplicated head counts that institutions report to IPEDS.

Question 3 asks if the institution has a designated space (e.g., student lounge) reserved specifically for military service members and veterans. During the feasibility calls we will probe to ensure respondents are reporting about spaces reserved specifically for veteran and military students. This question is included in the survey because the literature suggests some institutions are designating separate space(s) for military service members and veterans to gather to help with transition and provide a place where they feel comfortable.

Question 4 asks if the institution reserves university owned or operated (on or off-campus) housing specifically for military service members and veterans. During the feasibility calls we will probe to ensure respondents are reporting about housing space reserved for students who are military service members or veterans only. This question is included in the draft survey because the literature suggests reserving sections of housing for military service members and veterans is beneficial because these students are typically older and with different life experiences than other students in university owned or operated housing, and they may not feel comfortable sharing housing with many students in the general student population.

Question 5 asks if the institution provides financial education counseling to military service members and veterans on the financial education benefits available to them. Question 6 asks where military service members and veterans receive financial education counseling at the institution. These questions are included in the draft survey because the literature suggests military service members and veterans often have difficulty navigating the complex financial education benefits process.

Question 7 asks if the institution has a staff member who is the designated point of contact for military service members and veterans seeking information on the programs and services available to them. Question 8 asks where the designated point of contact for military service member and veterans’ programs and services is located. This question is included in the draft survey because the literature suggests establishing a central point of contact eases the burden upon military service members and veterans seeking information about programs and services available to them.

Question 9 asks if the institution has an office or department that is exclusively dedicated to providing services to students who are military service members or veterans. During feasibility calls we will ask respondents answering “yes” to question 9 to describe the types of information available to military service members and veterans in this office. This question is included in the draft survey because the literature indicates military service

members and veterans often have difficulty identifying the resources available to them at postsecondary institutions.

Question 10 asks if the institution offers any courses designed to address issues specific to military service members or veterans, such as transition or learning strategies courses. This question is included in the draft survey because the literature indicates military service members and veterans sometimes require additional assistance in honing the skills critical for success at the postsecondary level.

Question 11 asks if any sections of courses geared for the general student population are reserved specifically for military service members or veterans. This question is included in the draft survey because the literature indicates there is some conflict over whether or not military service members and veterans should be immediately integrated in the general student population, or if some courses should be reserved specifically for these types of students.

Question 12 asks if the institution provides student orientation customized for military service members or veterans. This question is included in the draft survey because the literature indicates some postsecondary institutions customize their orientation programs for military service members and veterans since their needs may be different than other populations of students entering the institution.

Question 13 asks about whether mentoring programs, support groups, and student military or veterans organizations are available for students who are military service members or veterans. During feasibility testing we will probe for other types of programs available to military service members or veterans at the institution. Question 14 asks if the institution has a mentoring or advising program in which faculty or staff members who are current or former members of the military mentor students who are military service members or veterans. These questions are included in the draft survey because literature indicates mentoring programs, support groups and other student military organizations assist in the integration of military service member and veterans into the postsecondary institution.

Question 15 asks if the institution offers Veterans Affairs (VA) work-study opportunities. Question 16 asks if the institution reserves federal (non-VA) work study opportunities for military service members or veterans. These questions are included in the draft survey to gather information about the types of work-study opportunities available to students who are military service members and veterans.

Question 17 asks if the institution offers specific types of extra support services to military service members or veterans. During the feasibility calls we will ask respondents if there were any other support services offered to these students. We will confirm respondents are reporting about extra support services beyond those offered to all students taking courses through the institution. This question is included in the draft survey because the literature indicates military service members and veterans may require additional support services to be successful at the postsecondary level.

Question 18 asks if the institution helps students who are military service members or veterans access off-campus medical/health and counseling/mental health services. This question is included in the draft survey because the literature indicates students who are military service members or veterans often require services that are unavailable at the postsecondary institution. During the feasibility calls, we will ask respondents if there are other types of off-campus services that should be included in this question.

Question 19 asks if the institution offers staff training or professional development in areas related to military service member and veteran issues. This question is included in the draft survey because the literature indicates more training and professional development is needed for staff members on issues related to military service.

Question 20 asks if the institution awards academic credit for training students receive during military service. This question is included in the draft survey because the literature indicates many students who are military

service members or veterans receive training during military service but little is known about the extent to which that training may be converted into academic credit at postsecondary institutions.

Question 21 asks if the institution has an expedited process for re-enrolling military service members or veterans returning from service who were previously enrolled at the institution. This question is included in the draft survey because literature indicates some institutions are implementing an expedited re-enrollment process for these types of students because re-enrollment process can be burdensome for military service members and veterans returning from service.

Question 22 asks if the institution has a policy in place to reimburse military service members for tuition expenses in the case of military activations or deployments. This question is included in the draft survey because the literature indicates military service members who are activated or deployed after paying tuition expenses may be subject to financial hardships related to these expenses.

Question 23 asks if the institution waives residency requirements for in-state tuition rates for veteran or military students. This question is included in the draft survey because the literature indicates some postsecondary institutions are waiving in-state tuition residency requirements for military service members and veterans because these types of students are often relocated as a result of their service, and may not meet the residency requirements for in-state tuition rates.

Timeline

Feasibility call activities are expected to begin in August 2012, as soon as approval is received from OMB. Feasibility call activities are anticipated to take about three months to complete, including up to three rounds of feasibility calls and revisions to the survey between each round.

Attachment 1: PEQIS 19 Feasibility Call Recruitment Script

PEQIS 19 Services and Support Programs for Military Service Members and Veterans Feasibility Call Recruitment Script

Hello, my name is _____.

I am calling from Westat on behalf of the U.S. Department of Education regarding a survey on services and support programs available to military service members and veterans. I would like to ask the person at your institution who is most familiar with programs and services available to military service members and veterans to review a draft questionnaire and provide feedback.

Who is the person in your institution who is most knowledgeable about services and support programs available to veteran and military students?

(This may be a staff member in the office of institutional research.)

May I please speak to that person?

CONNECTED TO PERSON MOST FAMILIAR WITH SERVICES AND SUPPORT PROGRAMS AVAILABLE TO VETERAN AND MILITARY STUDENTS AT THE INSTITUTION

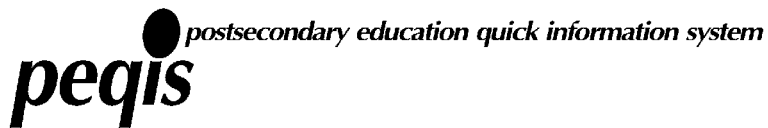
Hello, my name is _____.

I'm calling from Westat on behalf of the U.S. Department of Education regarding a survey on services and support programs available to veteran and military students. We would like your help in reviewing our draft questionnaire to ensure that it is clear and easy to complete. Specifically, we would like you to review the draft questionnaire and some topics of interest, and then obtain your comments by telephone. You will not need to complete the questionnaire. [The call will take about 30 minutes.]

1. May I have your email address to send you the survey materials?
2. We ask that you review the questionnaire before you talk to the survey manager. When would be a good time for the survey manager, Stephanie Marken, to call you to discuss the survey and obtain your comments? How about [SUGGEST A TIME]. [*Just to be sure, you are in the [Eastern, Central, Mountain, Pacific] time zone?*]
3. What is the best telephone number for the survey manager to reach you on?

Thank you. Your insights will be very helpful.

Attachment 2: PEQIS 19 Cover letter



U.S. Department of Education • Institute of Education Sciences • National Center for Education Statistics

August 2012

Dear Participant,

Thank you for agreeing to give us feedback on the draft survey on services and support programs for veteran and military students. Westat, a research company located in Rockville, Maryland, is conducting this survey for the National Center for Education Statistics, U. S. Department of Education. As part of our survey development, we are looking for feedback from institution personnel about the draft questionnaire and topics that might be included in the survey. Your input will be essential in ultimately developing a questionnaire that is clear and relevant and not overly burdensome to respondents. All information you provide may be used only for statistical purposes and may not be disclosed, or used, in identifiable form for any other purpose unless otherwise compelled by law (Education Sciences Reform Act of 2002, 20 U.S.C. § 9573).

We ask that you *review* the enclosed/attached draft questionnaire, prior to our telephone conversation. It is not necessary to provide answers to the questionnaire items at this stage. Feel free, however, to offer any relevant feedback. It may be helpful to keep the following questions in mind as you review the materials:

- 1) Are the survey questions clear and easy to interpret?
- 2) Are we missing any questions that you feel are important to include in the survey? Are there any questions that should be deleted?
- 3) Would you be able to obtain the information necessary for answering these questions?

My colleague and I will call you at the scheduled time to get your feedback on the materials and to discuss any comments or suggestions you may have. In the meantime, feel free to call me at Westat's toll-free number, 800-937-8281, ext. 4447, if you have any questions. You may also reach me by email at StephanieMarken@westat.com.

Thank you for your much needed assistance!

Sincerely,

Stephanie Marken
Westat Survey Manager

