

# **Volume I:**

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

OMB# 1850-0803 v. 76

January 7, 2013  
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 approval under the NCES system clearance for Cognitive, Pilot and Field Test studies (OMB #1850-0803) to conduct two rounds of pretest 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. A First Look report on the results will be released in 2014.

The purpose of the pretest calls is to identify and correct any potential issues with the content and format of the survey before conducting full scale implementation, and to ensure that the survey captures the intended meaning of each question, and minimizes the burden imposed on respondents. The request to conduct the full survey will be submitted at a later date under OMB generic clearance for quick response surveys (OMB#1850-0733), the collection of which is authorized under the Education Science Reform Act of 2002. NCES 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 current survey reflects topics and issues identified through literature review, with modifications based on two rounds of review by the NCES Quality Review Board (QRB) and three rounds of feasibility calls with postsecondary institution personnel most knowledgeable about services and programs for military service members and veterans. The NCES QRB provided initial input to the survey in summer 2012, prior to the feasibility calls. The three rounds of feasibility calls were then conducted in August through November 2012 with nine or fewer respondents in each round (OMB# 1850-0803 v.68). The feasibility calls were used to explore potential new survey items, and identify and correct issues with the content and format of the survey before conducting the pretest. The resulting draft of the questionnaire was then reviewed by the NCES QRB and revised accordingly to prepare it for the pretest. During the pretest, we will test all questions on the survey and obtain estimates of the respondent time required to complete the survey.

### **NCES Review and Consultations Outside of Agency**

The NCES QRB, consisting of staff from the NCES Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS), the postsecondary cross-sectional and longitudinal studies (NPSAS, B&B, and BPS), the Office of Innovation and Improvement (OII) in the U.S. Department of Education, and the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) reviewed a draft questionnaire prior to the feasibility calls, and again prior to this submission for the pretest calls: Jessica Shedd (NCES), Tara Lawley (NCES), Matthew Soldner (NCES), Karen Gross (OII), Charles Boyer (OII), and Thomas Erickson (VA).

### **Sample, Burden, and Cost**

We are requesting approval to conduct up to two rounds of pretest calls with members of the target population, with 10 or fewer respondents per round. Postsecondary institutions will be recruited to participate in pretest calls based on a number of 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 pretest calls using the 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). Respondents will be asked to review, complete, and fax back the paper and pencil questionnaire. They will also be invited to participate in a telephone debriefing.

In order to recruit 10 respondents per round, we anticipate contacting 40 postsecondary institutions (Table 1). On average, recruitment calls with respondents who agree to participate in the pretest 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. The questionnaire is expected to take respondents approximately 30 minutes to complete. The pretest debriefing interview is expected to take approximately 30 minutes. The total estimated burden is 26.4 hours for two rounds of pretest calls. We anticipate that the estimated cost to the federal government will be approximately \$5,000 for each round of pretest calls.

Table 1. Estimated maximum burden time for up to two rounds of pretest calls for PEQIS 19

Respondents	Number of Respondents	Number of Responses <sup>1</sup>	Burden Hours per Respondent	Total Burden Hours
Each Round				
Recruitment – Institutions not participating in the pretest	30	30	0.05	2
Recruitment – Institutions participating in the pretest	10	10	0.17	2
Pretest questionnaire- complete and debrief	10	10	1	10
Total per round	40	50	-	14
Total for two rounds	80	100	-	28

<sup>1</sup> Counts each contact (e.g., recruitment and pretest call are counted separately even when they are with the same respondents).

### Data Collection Instrument

For each round of the pretest, a cover letter and draft questionnaire will be emailed to each participating postsecondary institution. The cover letter and questionnaire appear in attachments 2 and 3. The cover letter thanks the respondent for agreeing to participate in the pretest, introduces the purpose and content of the survey, indicates that participation is voluntary, states that respondents should fax the completed questionnaire back to Westat, includes questions for respondents to consider while completing 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 and the front page of the survey. The materials for the second pretest round (if necessary) will be similar, except the survey instrument will include the modifications that resulted from the previous round. The current instrument is discussed below.

### Questionnaire

The survey is designed to collect information on the services and support programs available to students who are military service members and veterans at the institution. The time frame for the survey is the 12-month 2012-13 academic year, except for questions 21 through 24 which ask about enrollment during the fall of 2012. A definition is provided prior to question 1 to clarify the types of students included in the survey. 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.”

Question 1 asks if the institution uses specific methods to identify students who are military service members or veterans. This question gathers information about how postsecondary institutions are identifying these students. Based on the feasibility calls, this is different than who is included in the enrollment counts.

Question 2 asks if the institution has a dedicated social space for gathering (e.g., a student lounge) reserved specifically for military service members and veterans. This question is included because some institutions are designating separate space(s) for military service members and veterans to gather to help with the transition to civilian life and to provide a place where they feel comfortable.

Question 3 asks if the institution reserves university owned or operated housing (on or off-campus) specifically for military service members and veterans. This question is included because one of the services an institution can provide to help with the transition to civilian life is to reserve sections of housing for military service members and veterans. These students are typically older and have 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 4 asks if the institution provides customized information to individual military service members and veterans about both the military and non-military financial education benefits available to them. This question is included to find out whether institutions are providing information specifically geared towards students who are active duty military or veterans and their dependents, with the information customized for those groups.

Question 5 asks if the institution has a staff member or office designated as the point of contact for military service members and veterans seeking information on the programs and services available to them.

Question 6 asks if any sections of courses geared for the general student population are reserved specifically for military service members or veterans. Question 7 asks if the institution offers any courses designed specifically for military service members or veterans. These questions provide information about the integration of military service members and veterans into courses for the general student population, and about special courses provided for them (e.g., to help them hone the skills critical for success at the postsecondary level, or to address issues specific to this population such as combat experiences).

Question 8 asks if the institution awards academic credit to students for military training received during active-duty service. This question provides information about the extent to which institutions provide at least some academic credit for military training.

Question 9 asks if the institution customizes the student orientation program for military service members or veterans. Question 10 asks if the institution provides admissions events or special information sessions customized for prospective students who are military service members or veterans. These questions are included because some postsecondary institutions customize their orientation programs and/or admissions events for military service members and veterans since their needs may be different than other populations of students entering the institution.

Question 11 asks if the institution has specific support programs or organizations (peer mentor, counseling/support groups, student military or veteran organization) available to military service members or veterans. Question 12 asks if the institution has a formal 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 items are included to find out about mentoring and support groups available to assist in the integration of military service members and veterans into the postsecondary institution.

Question 13 asks if the institution offers customized or additional support services specifically for military service members and veterans in certain areas, such as academic support/tutoring, financial aid counseling, and study skills workshops. This question provides information about additional support services beyond those provided to all students taking courses through the institution.

Question 14 asks if the institution provides information or referrals to students who are military service members or veterans regarding off-campus medical/health and/or counseling/mental health services.

Question 15 asks if the institution offers training for faculty or staff in areas such as mental and physical health issues associated with and resulting from military service, and student transition from military life to civilian life. For those areas in which the institution offers training, the question asks whether the training is mandatory for faculty or staff.

Question 16 asks if the institution provides information to current or prospective students about the programs and services available to military service members and veterans via various communication methods (mail, email, website, social media, brochures, bulletin boards, college fairs, and military fairs). This question gathers information about how institutions are communicating information about programs and services available to military service members and veterans.

Question 17 asks if the institution has assisted students in applying for VA tutorial benefits in the last 12 months. Question 18 asks if the institution offers VA work-study opportunities. These items are included because military service members and veterans and their dependents receiving education benefits may qualify for VA tutorial benefits and VA work-study.

Question 19 asks if the active-duty service members who are stationed in the state receive in-state tuition rates at the institution. Question 20 asks about the institution's policy for charging veterans in-state tuition rates. These questions will gather information about whether postsecondary institutions are waiving in-state tuition residency requirements for military service members and veterans.

Question 21 asks if the institution enrolled any military service members, veterans, or dependents of military service members and veterans in the fall of 2012. If an institution indicates in question 21 that they did enroll these types of students in fall 2012, then questions 22 through 24 will be completed. Question 22 asks how many military service members and veterans, and dependents of military service members and veterans were enrolled during the fall of 2012. The question asks for separate undergraduate and graduate/professional student counts. The fall of 2012 is used because it aligns with the unduplicated fall enrollment counts that institutions report to IPEDS.

Question 23 asks which types of students are included in the enrollment counts reported in Question 22. This question provides information about the types of students included in Question 22 and provides a way to collect information about how institutions keep their records.

Question 24 asks how many of the students reported in the enrollment counts at Question 22 are dependents of military service members or veterans who received military or veteran's financial education benefits. This question also asks for undergraduate and graduate/professional student counts. The respondent has the option of skipping the question if the institution cannot report these enrollments separately.

## **Timeline**

Pretest activities are expected to begin in early to mid January 2013, as soon as approval is received from OMB. It is anticipated that recruitment, debriefing, write up of the memorandum summarizing the results, and survey revisions will take approximately 6 weeks for each pretest round.

## Attachment 1: PEQIS 19 Pretest Call Recruitment Script

### PEQIS 19 Services and Support Programs for Military Service Members and Veterans Pretest 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. We would like your help in identifying the person at your institution who is most familiar with programs and services available to military service members and veterans.

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 \_\_\_\_\_.

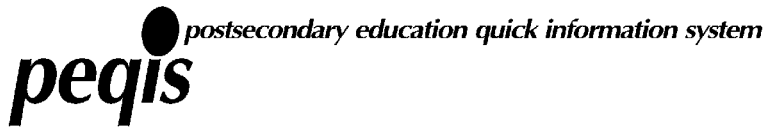
I'm calling from Westat on behalf of the U.S. Department of Education regarding a survey on services and support programs available to veteran and military students. We would like your help in reviewing our draft questionnaire to ensure that it is clear and easy to complete. Specifically, we would like you to complete the draft questionnaire, and then obtain your comments by telephone. [The call will take about 30 minutes.]

Your input, while voluntary, will be essential in developing a questionnaire that is relevant. All information you will 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.)

1. May I have your email address to send you the survey materials?
2. We ask that you complete the questionnaire and fax it back to us before you talk to the survey manager. When would be a good time for the survey manager, Barbara Queen, 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 Pretest Cover Letter**



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

January 2013

Dear Participant,

Thank you for agreeing to participate in the pretest of the survey on services and support programs for students who are military service members and veterans. Westat, a research company located in Rockville, Maryland, is conducting this survey for the National Center for Education Statistics, U. S. Department of Education. The survey is part of the Postsecondary Education Quick Information System (PEQIS), a system designed to conduct brief surveys of postsecondary institutions on topics of national importance. The purpose of the survey is to provide nationally representative data about programs and services available to military service members and veterans at postsecondary institutions. It is designed to be completed by the person(s) at your institution most knowledgeable about those programs and services.

We are currently conducting the pretest of the survey. Your input, while voluntary, will be essential in developing a survey that is relevant, clear, and not overly burdensome to respondents. Your participation is very important because your comments will improve the survey before the actual data collection begins. Your answers 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 (1) complete the questionnaire and fax it to Westat; (2) keep track of the time you spend filling out the questionnaire; (3) write down any comments about the questionnaire; and (4) discuss your comments with me by telephone at the time scheduled. Please keep the following questions in mind as you complete the questionnaire:

- 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?

**Please fax the completed questionnaire to me.** My toll-free fax number is 800-254-0984. My colleague and I will call you at the scheduled time to get your feedback on the questionnaire 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. 4476, if you have any questions. You may also reach me by email at [BarbaraQueen@westat.com](mailto:BarbaraQueen@westat.com).

Thank you for your much needed assistance!

Sincerely,

Barbara Queen  
Westat Survey Manager

