

Memo

Date: January 8, 2013

To: Kashka Kubzdela
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From: Barbara Queen
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Subject: Services and Support Programs for Military Service Members and Veterans (PEQIS 19)
Questionnaire for OMB Review

An important issue that arose during initial survey development and feasibility calls was whether to include dependents who are receiving military or veterans financial education benefits in the survey. The initial draft of the survey did not include dependents. However, respondents to the first round of feasibility calls indicated that dependents receiving benefits were an important and growing population on their campuses. Background research for the survey indicates that the Principles of Excellence/EO 13607 includes dependents in the definition of those receiving military educational benefits. Following the first round of calls, NCES, in consultation with the VA, requested that the definition of who to include in the survey be expanded to include dependents of military service members and veterans who are receiving military or veterans financial education benefits. The inclusion of dependents applies to a number of questions on the survey relating to financial education benefits and programs and services funded by these benefits (e.g., VA tutorial benefits and work study opportunities), as well as to questions on enrollment counts.

Another important issue that arose was the best way to collect enrollment counts. The VA requested that a separate count of dependents be collected to the extent feasible. The second round of feasibility calls requested separate enrollment counts of military service members/veterans and dependents. Respondents, however, found it confusing and could not consistently distinguish counts of military service members/veterans and dependents. Institutions have different levels of recordkeeping, ranging from databases to index cards. In the third round of feasibility calls, questions similar to questions 22-24 were used to accommodate those institutions that could not report dependents separately. Question 23 provides information about the types of students included in question 22, since it was discovered during the second round of feasibility calls that institutions could not all report their counts in the same way. For example, some counted all recipients of VA benefits (without being able to distinguish dependents) but did not include DOD benefit recipients; some institutions also included students who self-identified but were not receiving benefits while many did not include these students. The current structure of questions 22-24 provides a way to collect enrollments counts along with information about how institutions keep their records.