

**Memorandum
of Education**

United States Department

**Institute of Education
Sciences**

National Center for Education

Statistics

DATE: June 6, 2011

TO: Kashka Kubzdela
Office of the Deputy Commissioner, NCES

FROM: Tracy Hunt White
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SUBJECT: Summary of changes to the NPSAS:12 full-scale institution contacting, enrollment list collection, and sampling submission for Office of Management and Budget (OMB) forms clearance

OMB forms clearance (No. 1850-0666) was received in May 2010 for the field test institution contacting, enrollment list collection, and sampling activities of the 2011-12 National Postsecondary Student Aid Study (NPSAS:12), and in March 2011 for the remaining activities – student contacting, administrative records matching, student records abstraction, and student interview. Because of the timing of the full-scale OMB submissions relative to the study schedule, some activities cleared in the second package for the field test have had to be moved to this first package for full-scale data collection. This memorandum serves to summarize changes between the field test and full-scale submissions.

Changes in This (the First Full Scale) Clearance Package as Compared to the Approved Second Field Test Package

This first full-scale OMB review package contains several components that were approved in March 2011 as part of the second field test package, specifically, student contacting materials (letters, brochures, and emails), procedures for matching enrollment lists with administrative records, and procedures for performing tracing activities to locate students. These additions do not reflect changes to the NPSAS:12 study design. Rather they are included here because they need to begin before we are expecting clearance of the second NPSAS:12 full-scale review package covering the student records abstraction, student interview, and file matching that occurs following data collection. The materials and activities described under this first submission include:

Student contacting materials. Copies of letters, emails, and brochures to be used to contact students to encourage their participation in NPSAS:12 are included in Appendix D. In order to be able to evaluate the effect of brand recognition on recruitment for the first follow up Beginning Postsecondary Students Longitudinal Study (BPS) field test in 2013, we are planning to continue the use of the informational video, which was part of an experiment described in the field test student data collection OMB package. The script is also included in this Appendix D.

Given the data collection schedule for NPSAS:12, student contacting letters are now included with this package, with the incentive amount fields left blank. The earlier submission is necessary to allow additional preparation of mailout materials and review of the OMB-approved letters by RTI's institutional review board. Recommendations for incentive amounts will be submitted for OMB review with the student interview clearance package in September 2011 and the approved amounts will be inserted into the approved letters prior to mailing.

Enrollment list matching. Enrollment lists will be matched to administrative databases including the Department of Education's Central Processing System, the National Student Loan Data System, and the National Student Clearinghouse. These matching activities are proving useful in identifying potential first time beginners in postsecondary education and for providing student locating information. These activities are described in greater detail in Part A.3, Use of Information Technology.

Tracing. The processes involved in identifying the best possible contact information (emailing and postal addresses for sample members and/or their parents) are described in Part B.2, Statistical Methodology.

Changes to Full-scale Methodology

No substantive changes to the NPSAS:12 methodology are proposed for full-scale. Minor changes are as follows:

- *Graduate student sampling:* to increase our capacity to draw inferences about a wider ranges of graduate fields of study, we anticipate that graduate students in business and education will be undersampled and those in STEM fields will be oversampled for the full-scale study. The CIP or major data collected from institutions on enrollment lists will be used for this purpose.
- *Oversampling of sub-baccalaureate-seeking first-time beginning students:* to strengthen our ability to describe the early labor market experience of first-time, beginning students seeking sub-baccalaureate credentials, we anticipate oversampling this

population for the full-scale study. Bachelor's degree-seeking students who are not first-time beginners will be undersampled. Class and degree level data collected from institutions on enrollment lists will be used for this purpose.

- *Parent consent letter*: the parent consent letter, sent to sample members under age 18, has been modified to a passive consent format. Only parents who desire their children not be included in the study will be required to complete and return the form.
- *Endorsing agencies*: an organization endorsing NPSAS:12, the Career College Association, has changed its name to the Association of Private Colleges and Universities. This change has been noted on all documents displaying endorsing organizations.

Field Test Results

As of May 2011, the institution contacting, enrollment list collection, and sampling field test is still underway. While no experiments were performed for these components of the study, preliminary field test results have led to the following decisions:

- *High school graduation dates will be requested from institutions.* This is the first time high school graduation dates have been requested from institutions on enrollment lists. Thus far, there have been no indications from institutions that providing these data is difficult; the majority of institutions have provided the dates.
- *Institutional Student Information Record (ISIR) will not be collected in the full scale study.* ISIR data were requested for the first time in the NPSAS:12 field test and, while there are no indications that it is difficult for institutions to provide the data, the field test did not show that the data are useful for identifying first time beginners. Therefore, ISIR data will not be requested in the full-scale study.
- *Statistical sampling of field test institutions has not greatly reduced institution response rates.* For the first time on NPSAS, statistical sampling was employed for the field test institution sample. It was considered likely that this would decrease response rates, possibly as low as 50 percent. However, with the field test still underway, the institutional response rate is approximately 80 percent.