

DOCUMENTATION FOR THE GENERIC CLEARANCE OF CUSTOMER SERVICE SATISFACTION COLLECTIONS

TITLE OF INFORMATION COLLECTION:

Gainful Employment Focus Groups 2017

SURVEY FOCUS GROUP SOFTWARE USABILITY TESTING

DESCRIPTION OF THIS SPECIFIC COLLECTION

Specify all relevant information, including

1. intended purpose,
2. need for the collection,
3. planned use of the data,
4. date(s) and location(s),
5. collection procedures,
6. number of focus groups, surveys, usability testing sessions
7. description of respondents/participants.

I. Intended purpose, need for collection, and planned use of the data

Westat is working with the Department of Education to conduct two focus groups on activities related to the Gainful Employment (GE) regulations (34 CFR 668.6(b)) that take effect in 2017. The Department has established measures to determine whether certain programs at for-profit and vocational postsecondary education institutions are providing reliable consumer information on specific types of data, and to hold them accountable for these measures. These data include, but are not limited to: program information, cost, student debt (e.g., loan repayment rate, median loan debt), program completion (i.e., graduation and withdrawal rates), and program employment (e.g., job placement rate, primary occupation by name and Standard Occupational Classification code).

The stated purpose of the regulations is to address growing concerns that educational programs required by statute to provide training that prepares students for gainful employment in a recognized occupation (GE programs), are instead leaving students with unaffordable levels of loan debt in relation to their earnings, or leading to default. GE programs include nearly all educational programs at for-profit institutions of higher education, as well as non-degree programs at private nonprofit institutions and public institutions such as community colleges.

Under the regulations that were issued in October 2014, postsecondary institutions with GE programs are required to disclose to current and prospective students information about their institution's career and training certificate programs through a disclosure template developed by the Department. The Department has identified a series of data elements to be collected through a revised disclosure template beginning in 2017. Once

institutions enter their data into the GE template, they will be provided with a standardized electronic display of the data that they are required to post on their institution's website where prospective and current students can view it. Westat will conduct two focus groups to inform the presentation of the data elements in this display.

The two focus groups in the second year of the contract will test possible visual displays of the data elements to be required on schools' websites. The purpose of both focus groups is to determine (1) whether participants understand the wording used to present the data elements, (2) whether graphical depictions and additional explanatory text provided through optional "information buttons" help participants' understanding of the data elements, and (3) how and when participants would use the displayed information. These focus groups will also test participants' reaction to and understanding of the warning language provided to students if an institution's GE program should become ineligible based on its final debt-to-earnings rates measure for the next award year, as required by the GE regulations.

This information is needed in order for the Department to understand the most effective way of presenting the data so that it can be both understood and used by prospective and current students of these programs. This information will be used to aid in decision-making regarding the presentation of the data elements on schools' websites.

II. Date and location, collection procedures, and description of participants

The Department has contracted with Westat to conduct a total of two (2) focus groups at our offices in Rockville, MD. Westat's state of the art focus group facilities allow for members from the Department to observe from behind two-way mirrors and for recording of participants. Both focus groups will be conducted by a trained moderator and will be held in January 2017.

The first focus group will test the visual displays with individuals planning to enroll in GE programs in 2017 (prospective students). The second focus group will test the visual displays with current students in GE programs. Each focus group will have nine (9) participants.

Under Westat's direction and supervision, Shugoll Research in Bethesda will recruit students who meet the following criteria, which we will provide to them:

- Focus Group #1: Individuals (ages 19-43) planning to enroll part-time or full-time in 2017 in a pre-baccalaureate career, training or vocational program located in a DC metropolitan area for-profit or public institution of higher education who will be first-generation college students. We plan to recruit only first-generation college students (parents did not attend or graduate from college) from

diverse backgrounds (race/ethnicity and gender) with a focus on those from low-moderate income families.

- Focus Group #2: First generation college students (ages 19-43) currently enrolled part time or full time in a pre-baccalaureate career, training or vocational program located at a DC metropolitan area for-profit or public institution of higher education. We plan to recruit students from diverse backgrounds (race/ethnicity and gender) with a focus on those from low-moderate income families.

Prior to participating in the focus groups, participants will be informed that the discussion will be audiotaped and they will be asked to sign an informed consent form agreeing to participate in the discussion and to being audio recorded. Focus groups will be recorded, transcribed, and analyzed. The report will analyze data in the aggregate and not permit the identification of individuals or the institutions with which they are associated.

Each focus group will be completed one time only.

Attachments include the two (2) focus group screeners/recruitment scripts (Attachment A- Screener for Current Students; Attachment B-Screener for Prospective Students); two (2) moderator guides (Attachment C- Moderator Guide for Current Students; Attachment D-Moderator Guide for Prospective Students); and one (1) set of PowerPoint slides to be used in both focus groups (Attachment E-Slides for Current and Prospective Students).

AMOUNT OF ANY PROPOSED STIPEND OR INCENTIVE

Each of the two focus groups (one for students enrolled in gainful enrollment programs, and one for students planning to enroll in gainful enrollment programs) will offer a \$75.00 incentive per participant who shows up to participate in the focus group. We will recruit 12 in each group to ensure that 9 will show up to participate. Each person who shows up will receive an incentive. We are offering an incentive to adult students since they often do not show up for focus groups due to busy work and school schedules.

BURDEN HOUR COMPUTATION (*Number of responses (X) estimated response or participation time in minutes (/60) = annual burden hours*):

Category of Respondent	No. of Possible Recruits Screened	Time to Answer Screener Questions	Respondents	Participation Time in the Focus Group	Burden
Students currently enrolled in colleges offering gainful employment (GE) programs	36	10 minutes	9	120 minutes	24 hours

Students planning to enroll in colleges offering gainful employment (GE) programs	45	12 minutes	9	120 minutes	27 hours
Totals	81 possible recruits		18 respondents		51 hours

BURDEN COST COMPUTATION

Category of Respondent	No. of Respondents	Hourly Rate	Response Time	Total
Students currently enrolled in colleges offering gainful employment (GE) programs	9	\$37.5	2 hours	\$675
Students planning to enroll in colleges offering gainful employment (GE) programs	9	\$37.50	2 hours	\$675
Totals	18 respondents			\$1350

STATISTICAL INFORMATION

No statistical methods are being used to recruit focus group participants or analyze the data.

REQUESTED APPROVAL DATE: December 2, 2016

NAME OF CONTACT PERSON: Amy E. Wilson

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ED DEPARTMENT, OFFICE: Policy, Planning, and Innovation