2017–18 NATIONAL POSTSECONDARY STUDENT AID STUDY ADMINISTRATIVE COLLECTION (NPSAS:18-AC)

Appendices A-C
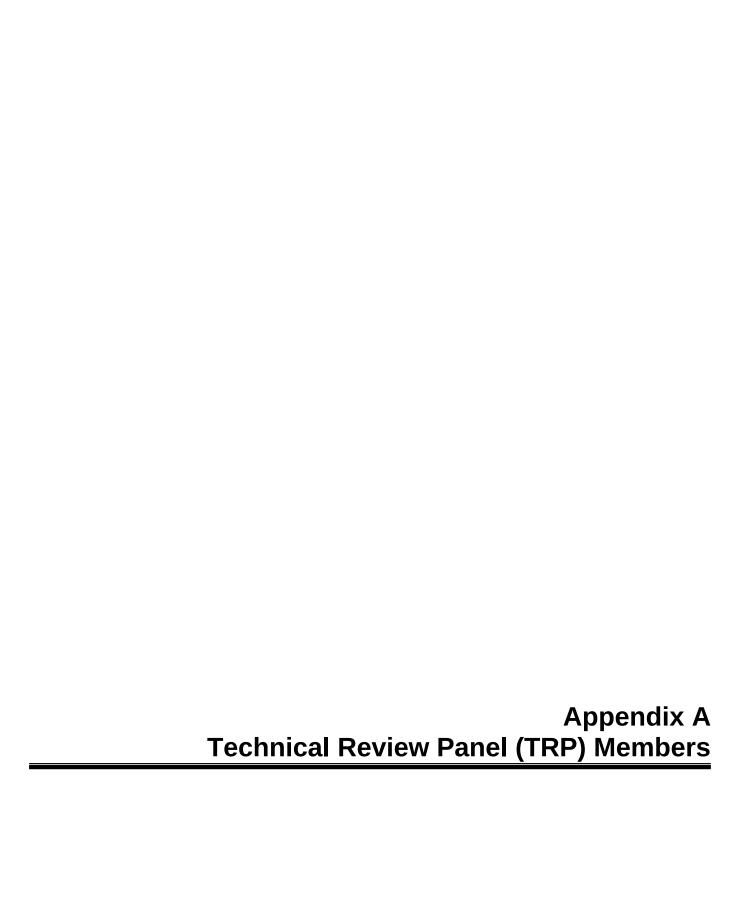
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National Center for Education Statistics
U.S. Department of Education

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Appendixes
  A. Technical Review Panel Members
  B. Endorsing Organizations for NPSAS:18-AC
  C. Confidentiality for Administrative Record Matching

Appendix A
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Appendix B
Endorsing Associations for NPSAS:18-AC

The following organizations have confirmed that they have endorsed NPSAS:18-AC:

American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers

American Association of Community Colleges

American Association of State Colleges and Universities

American Council on Education

Association for Institutional Research

Association of American Colleges & Universities

Association of Catholic Colleges and Universities

The College Board

Council of Independent Colleges

Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities

Midwestern Higher Education Compact

National Association of College and University Business Officers

National Association of Independent Colleges and Universities

National Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators

Southern Regional Education Board

State Higher Education Executive Officers Association

United Negro College Fund

Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education

[*If additional organizations confirm their endorsements, the final list will be submitted to OMB in a change memo by January 12, 2018.*]

Appendix C
Confidentiality for Administrative Record Matching

C.1 Develop Linkages with Administrative Data Sources

Linkages will be developed with existing data sources to supplement the 2017-18 National Postsecondary Student Aid Study, Administrative Collection (NPSAS:18-AC). NCES recognizes the great value added to the NPSAS:18-AC data file with the addition of data from specific administrative data sources as certain data, such as specific financial aid amounts and associated dates, can only be accurately obtained from sources other than the student or parent. Our postsecondary studies, including previous NPSAS studies, Beginning Postsecondary Student (BPS), and Baccalaureate and Beyond (B&B), have included file merges with many existing sources of valuable data, including Department of Education's (ED) Central Processing System (CPS) for Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) data, the National Student Loan Data System (NSLDS), National Student Clearinghouse (NSC), ACT, College Board (SAT), and the Veterans Benefits Administration's (VBA) data. For this study, we plan to perform file merges with the following datasets: CPS, NSLDS, NSC, ACT, SAT, and VBA.

As described in more detail in Section A.10 of the Supporting Statement Part A, which is a part of this request, the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) (34 CFR Part 99) allows the disclosure of information without prior consent for the purposes of NPSAS:18-AC according to 34 CFR §99.31.

As part of initial sampling activities, we will ask participating institutions to provide Social Security Numbers (SSNs) for all students on their enrollment list. Having an initial list of all student SSNs minimizes the time and burden on both the institutions and the data collection contractor. Institutions will only have to provide one enrollment list. If the SSNs were provided only for those students selected, the institutions would have to provide two separate enrollment lists. SSNs and all other sample member identifying information are protected using the security measures described in section A.10.

Secure Data Transfers. ED's Institute of Education Sciences (IES) has set up a secure data transfer system (https://transfer.ies.ed.gov/), which uses Secure Sockets Layer (SSL) technology. After validated encryption on the files is performed before upload, the contractor will use this electronic system for submitting data. The data may contain potentially personally identifiable information (PII) such as SSNs, names, and dates of birth of study sample members along with their survey ID (different from the ID used in the restricted-use data files).

Data will be received from the IES system as well. The system requires that both parties to the transfer be registered users of the NCES Members Site and that their Members Site privileges be set to allow use of the secure data transfer service as described above. This process will be used for file matching procedures described below, except in instances when the vendor already has a secure data transfer system in place.

C.2 File Merges with ED Central Processing System (CPS)

File merges will be performed by the data collection contractor with the CPS data containing federal student aid application information. The match to CPS will occur after enrollment list collection but prior to drawing the student sample. CPS contains data on federal financial aid applications, and conducting this match prior to

sampling will reduce the burden on the institutions for the student record abstractions. Most of the federal-aid applicants (about 95 percent) will match successfully to the CPS. This match will be conducted on a flow basis as enrollment lists are received.

The merge with CPS will only occur for cases with an apparently valid SSN. A file will be sent to CPS and, in return, a large data file containing all students who applied for federal aid will be received. The data collection contractor has programs and procedures in place to prepare and submit files according to rigorous CPS standards and to receive and process data obtained from CPS.

A file containing the SSN and the first two letters of the sample member's last name (but no other information) will be electronically uploaded to the FAFSA secure website for matching. Access to the FAFSA data site for the upload is restricted to authorized users, who are registered and provide identification/authentication information (ID and password). The file is retrieved by the CPS (the FAFSA contractor data system) for linkage. The linked file, containing student-aid applications for matched records, is then made available to the study contractor through a secure connection, which also requires ID and password. Files will be downloaded directly into the contractor's enhanced security network. All CPS files will be processed, edited, and documented for inclusion in the final restricted use file (RUF).

C.3   File Merge with National Student Loan Data System Disbursement (NSLDS)

A file merge will be conducted with the NSLDS to collect federal loan and Pell grant data. The resulting file will contain cumulative amounts for each student's entire postsecondary education enrollment. IES has set up a secure data transfer system (https://transfer.ies.ed.gov/), which uses Secure Sockets Layer (SSL) technology. The system requires that both parties to the transfer be registered users of the NCES Members Site and that their Members Site privileges be set to allow use of the secure data transfer service. These privileges are set up and carefully controlled by the IES's Chief Technology Officer (CTO), a service designed by IES specifically for the secure transfer of electronic files containing personally identifying information (i.e., data protected under the Privacy Act or otherwise posing risk of disclosure).This service can be used for NCES-to-Contractor; Contractor-to-Subcontractor; Subcontractor-to-Contractor; and Contractor-to-Other-Agency data transfers. The party uploading the information onto the secure server at NCES is responsible for deleting the file(s) after the successful transfer has been confirmed. Programs have been developed to create the files for the merge and also to read the data received. All matching processes are initiated by the data collection staff providing a file with one record per sample member to be merged.

C.4   File Merge with the National Student Clearinghouse (NSC)

The NSC will be used to obtain the *Student Tracker* data on institutions attended, enrollment dates, and degree completions for the NPSAS:18-AC sample. The data collection contractor will first set up an account with NSC which will enable sending and receiving of files securely over encrypted FTPS connections. The file containing PII will be encrypted and then submitted to the Clearinghouse using their secure FTP site. All files received by NSC will be securely stored using encryption, the US

federal encryption standard. Matched files, containing data on enrollment dates, institution names, and degrees completed, will be returned to the data collection contractor using the same encrypted FTPS site. NCES or the data collection contractor must establish a contract or agreement with the vendor prior to conducting this match. If NCES is unable to secure an agreement with NSC, a change memo will be submitted to OMB by December 17, 2018.

C.5   File Merge with American College Testing (ACT) Data

To obtain valuable admissions test data, a file merge will be performed with ACT data by the data collection contractor. NPSAS has collected and utilized ACT data since NPSAS:96. Matching of students to ACT data uses PII to assist the data vendor in performing confirmatory data quality checks. This process will be initiated by providing a file containing the sample member information then creating a password-protected, encrypted file; uploading the electronic file to the IES File Transfer system for pick-up by ACT. ACT will process the data on their database and provide the matched data on the IES File Transfer system for secure download. The data collection contractor must establish a data use agreement (DUA) with the vendor prior to conducting this match. If the data collection contractor is unable to secure an agreement with ACT, a change memo will be submitted to OMB by December 17, 2018.

C.6   File Merge with the College Board's SAT Data

To obtain SAT data, a file merge will be performed with the College Board by the data collection contractor. Matching of students to SAT data uses PII to assist the data vendor in performing confirmatory data quality checks. This process will be initiated by providing a file containing the sample member information. The same procedures will be used as described above for the ACT linkage: creating a password-protected, encrypted file; uploading the electronic file on IES File Transfer system for pick-up by the College Board. The College Board will process the data on their database and provide the matched data on the IES File Transfer system for secure download. The data collection contractor must establish a data use agreement (DUA) with the vendor prior to conducting this match. If the data collection contractor is unable to secure an agreement with the College Board, a change memo will be submitted to OMB by December 17, 2018.

C.7   File Merge with the Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA)

To identify veterans and their federal Veteran's education benefits, a file merge will be performed with the VBA data. These data from the VBA contain reliable military service records of all applicable sample members, so that variables pertaining to military service can be derived. The data obtained from VBA also contain detailed information on veterans federal education benefit amounts, and the enrollment information associated with those benefits. Matching of sample members to VBA data uses PII to assist the data vendor in performing confirmatory data quality checks. The data collection contractor will initiate this process by providing a file containing the sample member information. The same procedures will be used as described above for the ACT and SAT linkages: creating a password-protected, encrypted file, and uploading the electronic file on IES' File Transfer system for pick-up by the VBA. The VBA will process the data on their database and provide the

matched data on the IES File Transfer system for secure download. NCES must establish an agreement with the vendor prior to conducting this match. If NCES is unable to secure an agreement with the VBA, a change memo will be submitted to OMB by December 17, 2018.

C.8   Processing Administrative Data

NCES staff will send files for matching after the student record abstractions are completed to ensure the availability of the maximum number of verified SSNs and to facilitate the batch mode processing that is suitable to many of these resources. Data collection staff may need to match to a source (for example, CPS or NSLDS) more than once.

All of the collected information may be used only for statistical purposes and may not be disclosed, or used, in identifiable form for any other purpose except as required by law (20 U.S.C. §9573 and 6 U.S.C. §151). The data from all of these sources, as allowed by the vendor, and stripped of direct identifiers, will be delivered for inclusion on the RUF and will be useful for creating derived variables. The derived variables will be available on PowerStats, QuickStats, and TrendStats, and both direct-pull and derived variables will be documented thoroughly.