

Memorandum

United States Department of Education
Institute of Education Sciences
National Center for Education Statistics

DATE: November 15, 2017

TO: Robert Sivinski, OMB

THROUGH: Kashka Kubzdela, OMB Liaison, NCES

FROM: Tracy Hunt-White, Team Lead, Postsecondary Longitudinal and Sample Surveys, NCES;
David Richards, BPS:12/17 Project Officer, NCES

SUBJECT: 2012/17 Beginning Postsecondary Students Longitudinal Study (BPS:12/17) Contacting
Materials Change Request (OMB# 1850-0631 v.17)

The 2012/17 Beginning Postsecondary Students Longitudinal Study (BPS:12/17) is conducted by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), within the U.S. Department of Education (ED). BPS is designed to follow a cohort of students who enroll in postsecondary education for the first time during the same academic year, irrespective of the date of high school completion. Data from BPS are used to help researchers and policymakers better understand how financial aid influences persistence and completion, what percentages of students complete various degree programs, what are the early employment and wage outcomes for certificate and degree attainers, and why students leave school. The request to conduct the BPS:12/17 full-scale data collection was approved by OMB in December 2016 with the latest change request approved in August 2017 (OMB# 1850-0631 v.10-16).

This request is to modify institution contacting materials used for transcript collection, extend student interview data collection window, and add contacting materials for student interview nonrespondents. This request does not introduce changes to the estimated respondent burden or the costs to the federal government.

Attachment 1 of this memo summarizes revisions made to the approved BPS:12/17 Main Study clearance documents (OMB# 1850-0631 v. 11-16). Updated Supporting Statement Part A and Appendixes E and F are included with this submission.

Additional Transcript Contacting Material

The transcript contacting material changes are a result of the High School Longitudinal Study of 2009 (HSLs:09) extending its transcript collection, leading to an overlapping collection with BPS:12 transcripts. As a result, three institution contacting letters have been added to use language that accommodates a joint collection of HSLs:09 and BPS:12 transcripts. The following contacts were added to Appendix F:

- Transcript Collection – NCES Letter to Coordinator – HSLs:09 Transcripts Submitted – Joint Study Collection (page 24);
- Transcript Collection – NCES Letter to Coordinator – HSLs:09 Transcripts Not Received – Joint Study Collection (page 26); and
- Transcript Collection – Request Letter from RTI to Registrar or Designee – No Progress in 2017 Collection – Joint Study Collection (page 28).

Additional Student Interview Contacting Material

BPS:12/17 is near the end of its approved data collection. As of November 12, 2017, approximately 27 weeks into data collection with the main sample, the weighted fielded response rate was 60.8 percent. When nonfielded cases are included, the weighted response rate is reduced to approximately 57.5 percent. In an attempt to further encourage participation and reduce bias, we will extend the data collection period from the planned November 27, 2017, to January 8, 2018. In addition, we updated some of the existing contacting material and added communications for use during the remainder of data collection. These communications will be sent to all student interview nonrespondents and can be grouped into two main themes, specifically:

- Because we will continue data collection through Thanksgiving and over the winter holidays, we added a card, postcard, and email reminders that mention a positive holiday/new year sentiment (*Reminder emails 15, 17, and 18, Holiday Card, Last Chance Postcard – page numbers are listed below*); and
- To encourage completion near the end of data collection, we added several email reminders and text messages to convey this to the remaining nonrespondents (*Reminder emails 16 and 19, Last Chance Email/Postcard, text messages – page numbers are listed below*).

Attachment 1

Revisions to the Approved BPS:12/17 Clearance Package Documents

Part A:

In section 16, Publication Plans and Project Schedule, the end dates for self-administered web interviews and telephone interviews were changed to January 8, 2018, as highlighted below on **page 21**:

Table 6. Operational schedule for BPS:12/17

Activity	Start date	End date
Pilot Test		
Sample specifications	6/16/2015	8/11/2015
Data collection		
Self-administered web interviews	3/7/2016	4/18/2016
Process data, construct data files	2/29/2016	6/17/2016
Prepare data file documentation	3/8/2016	8/18/2017
Full-scale		
Update/deliver sample specifications	4/26/2016	6/28/2016
Conduct panel maintenance activities	10/1/2016	01/15/2017
Conduct locating and tracing activities (cleared under 1850-0631 v.8)	11/1/2016	10/17/2017
Conduct help desk and CATI training	12/19/2016	3/16/2017
Data collection		
Self-administered web interviews	3/1/2017	1/8/2018
Telephone interviews	3/21/2017	1/8/2018
Process data, construct data files	1/3/2017	7/19/2018
Prepare and publish reports	9/18/2017	6/27/2019

Appendix E:

We have added the following student contacting materials to the Table of Contents on **page E-2** and to the content of Appendix E:

Revised contacting material

- Reminder E-mail 15 – Example [Holiday] (page 59)
- Reminder E-mail 16 – Example (page 60)
- Last Chance Email (page 65)

New contacting material

- Last Chance Postcard (New Year’s Theme) – Example (page 35)
- Holiday Card (page 36)
- Reminder E-mail 17 – Example (NCES Email) [Holiday] (pages 61-62)
- Reminder E-mail 18 – Example [Holiday] (page 63)
- Reminder E-mail 19 – Example (page 64)
- Text Message Reminder (page 71)

Appendix F:

We updated the Table of Contents on **page F-2** and added three letters in Appendix F, on **pages 24 – 29** to refer to the joint collection of transcripts for both HSLs:09 and BPS:12. These are the new letters:

- Transcript Collection – NCES Letter to Coordinator – HSLs:09 Transcripts Submitted – Joint Study Collection (page 24);
- Transcript Collection – NCES Letter to Coordinator – HSLs:09 Transcripts Not Received – Joint Study Collection (page 26); and
- Transcript Collection – Request Letter from RTI to Registrar or Designee – No Progress in 2017 Collection – Joint Study Collection (page 28).