

**Ronald E. McNair Postbaccalaureate Achievement (McNair) Program
Summary of Public Comments on Proposed Changes to the
2018-19 McNair Annual Performance Report (APR)
Following 60-Day Review Period**

On August 2, 2019, the Department of Education (Department) published a Notice of Proposed Information Collection Request (Notice) in the Federal Register inviting comments by October 1, 2019, on the proposed annual performance report (APR) for the Ronald E. McNair Postbaccalaureate Achievement (McNair) Program. The Department received eight (8) comments, six (6) of which were determined to be “substantive” in nature. The majority of the comments were related to specific fields regarding participants’ demographic, academic and degree status information and related instructions. The Department reviewed each of the comments and concerns and provided responses as well as made revisions to the APR, where applicable.

A summary and discussion of the comments on the proposed McNair APR as well as information on the actions taken follows. Some minor changes to the APR that are of a technical nature (e.g., typographical errors) are not discussed below but have been made to the revised form and instructions.

SECTION II.C. PARTICIPANTS’ DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

Field 8 – Gender

Comments: One commenter recommended an addition to the term “Gender” that is used in Field 8 to include a code for program participants who identify as trans-gendered.

Discussion: The Department acknowledges fully the commenter’s recommendation. We are in the process of seeking guidance on the appropriate terminology and options regarding a participant’s gender/sex; therefore, until the Department receives guidance, the use of the term “Gender” and its accompanying options will remain on all of the APRs.

Action Taken: None

Field 10 – Race

Comments: One commenter recommended the addition of a new field for the term “Race” that is used first in field 10. Specifically, a "Field 15, “Two or More Races,”" option for program participants who self-select as “Bi-racial/Interracial” is suggested.

Discussion: Bi-racial, or multi-racial, status can be reported using the existing set of options. Since status with respect to each racial category is an independent field, multi-racial status can be reported by the selection of “yes” for multiple categories. The set of categories is established with the OMB guidance that was established in the Federal Register in 1997 and has remained

consistent since that time. The Department issued guidance in 2007 consistent with the OMB guidance from 1997:

<https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2007/10/19/E7-20613/final-guidance-on-maintaining-collecting-and-reporting-racial-and-ethnic-data-to-the-us-department>.

Therefore, we cannot deviate from set guidance.

Action Taken: None

SECTION II.F. PARTICIPANTS' ACADEMIC AND DEGREE STATUS INFORMATION

Field 26 – STEM Major

Comments: Three commenters noted that, while the APR instruction for this field has been changed from “You may update” to “You should not have to update,” the note in the “Valid Field Content” box in the APR form appears contradictory to this change. Therefore, they requested clarification regarding whether or not they are to leave the major field of study as what is indicated when the student entered the project or update the field if a student changes their major over the course of their project participation.

Discussion: Duly noted.

Action Taken: The Department has deleted the following language from the “NOTE” section of the “Valid Field Content” box in the APR form for Field 26:

Because a student’s major may change, you may need to update this field to reflect the current status.

In addition, the Department has revised the following language in the “NOTE” section of the “Valid Field Content” box in the APR form for Field 30, “Main Field of Study (Bachelor’s Degree Earned):”

Once you report the main field of study, do not update it in subsequent reporting periods.

Field 42 - Graduate Assistantships (For 1st year graduate students only)

Comments: Three commenters noted that there is currently only one option available for students who are not required to hold any kind of assistantship: Option 4, “No assistantship.” As a result, all students who are fully funded by their fellowship, but are not required to hold any kind of assistantship, are currently recorded as having “No assistantship” and appear to have no financial support. Therefore, they recommended the addition of another option to Field 42 that captures fellowship support.

Discussion: Duly noted.

Action Taken: The Department has revised Field 42, Option 3, “Other,” as follows:

3 = Other, such as fellowship support