

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

DATE: October 15, 2020

TO: Robert Sivinski, OMB

THROUGH: Carrie Clarady, OMB Liaison, IES

FROM: Tracy Hunt-White, Team Lead, Postsecondary Longitudinal and Sample Surveys, NCES

SUBJECT: 2019–20 National Postsecondary Student Aid Study (NPSAS:20) Nonresponse Follow-up Survey Change Request (OMB# 1850-0666 v.31)

The 2019-20 National Postsecondary Student Aid Study (NPSAS:20) is a nationally representative cross-sectional study of how students and their families finance education beyond high school in a given academic year. NPSAS is conducted by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) and was first implemented by NCES during the 1986–87 academic year and has been fielded every 3 to 4 years since. This request pertains to the 11th cycle in the NPSAS series conducted during the 2019–20 academic year. NPSAS:20 is both nationally and state-representative and will serve as the base year data collection for the 2020 cohort of the Beginning Postsecondary Students Longitudinal Study (BPS:20), a study of first-time beginning postsecondary students that will be conducted three years (BPS:20/22) and six years (BPS:20/25) after beginning their postsecondary education. NPSAS:20 will consist of a nationally representative sample of undergraduate and graduate students, and a nationally representative sample of first-time beginning students (FTBs). Subsets of questions in the NPSAS:20 student interview will focus on describing aspects of the experience of beginning students in their first year of postsecondary education, including student debt and education experiences.

The request is to conduct all activities related to NPSAS:20, including materials and procedures related to: the NPSAS:20 student data collection, consisting of abstraction of student data from institutions and a student survey; panel maintenance activities for a NPSAS:20 follow-up field test (for BPS:20/22); and carried over respondent burden, procedures, and materials related to the NPSAS:20 institution sampling, enrollment list collection, and matching to administrative data files was approved by OMB in December 2019 (OMB#1859-0666 v.25). The NPSAS:20 enrollment list collection from institutions takes place from October 2019 to October 2020, the student records collection takes place from March 2020 through February 2021, and the main student survey data collection takes place from February through early-January 2021.

This request is for a change to the data collection design of the nonresponse follow-up (NRFU) component of the NPSAS:20 study, plus to provide updates to the main data collection schedule. This request does not introduce significant changes to the estimated respondent burden or the costs to the federal government. The following revisions were made to Part A (Publication Plans and Time Schedule) on page 16 and Part B (NPSAS:20 Main Data Collection) on page 26.

Modifications to Part A, Section 16 (Publication Plans and Time Schedule).

- The following table on page 16 was updated to reflect changes to data collection end dates. The highlighted text was updated.

Table 5. Operational schedule for NPSAS:20

	Start date	End date
NPSAS:20 activity		
Full-scale study		
Contacts with institutions	Oct. 16, 2019	Nov. 20, 2020 Dec. 31, 2020
Calibration sample		
Enrollment list collection – calibration sample	Nov. 7, 2019	Dec. 31, 2019
Select student sample	Nov. 18, 2019	Feb. 23, 2020
Self-administered web-based data collection	Mar. 10, 2020* Mar. 3, 2020	May 19, 2020 Jan. 3, 2021
Conduct telephone surveys of students	Mar. 10, 2020* Mar. 3, 2020	May 19, 2020 Jan. 3, 2021
Main Sample		
Enrollment list collection – main sample	Jan. 10, 2020	Jul. 10, 2020 Oct. 21, 2020
Select student sample	Jan. 21, 2020	Jul. 20, 2020 Oct. 31, 2020
Collect student data from institutional records	Mar. 2, 2020	Nov. 13, 2020 Feb. 28, 2021
Self-administered web-based data collection	Apr. 13, 2020 Apr. 25, 2020	Dec. 4, 2020, Jan. 3, 2021
Conduct telephone surveys of students	Apr. 13, 2020 Apr. 25, 2020	Dec. 4, 2020 Jan 3, 2021
Process data, construct data files	Jan. 13, 2020	Dec. 10, 2020 Jan 10, 2021
Prepare/update data collection reports	Jan. 13, 2020	Dec. 18, 2020 Jan. 18, 2021
BPS:20/22 field test panel maintenance	Oct. 1, 2020	Feb. 1, 2021

~~*Dependent upon OMB review and approval.~~

Modifications to Part B, Section 3f (Institution Contacting).

- The following paragraph was changed on page 18 to reflect the new end data for enrollment list collection. The highlighted text was updated.

After the Registration Page is completed, the campus coordinator will be sent a letter requesting an electronic enrollment list of all students enrolled during the academic year. The NPSAS:20 data collection includes a calibration sample, described in Supporting Statement Part B, Section 2, and the main sample. The calibration sample institutions will be providing two enrollment lists, one in the fall and one in the spring, instead of one. The earliest enrollment lists will be due in November 2019 for the calibration sample. For the main sample, enrollment lists will be collected from January 2020 to ~~October~~ ~~July~~ 2020. As described above, the lists will serve as the frame from which the student samples will be

drawn. Follow-up contacts with institutions include telephone prompts, reminder emails and mailers, typically sent two weeks prior to a deadline, and touch-base emails typically sent when 3-4 weeks have passed with no outbound contact from study staff (see Appendix D1). After enrollment lists are received and validated by the contractor for completeness and quality, the campus coordinator will be sent a “thank you” email acknowledging appreciation for their time and effort.

Modifications to Part B, Section 4d (NPSAS:20 Main Data Collection).

The NRFU survey was originally designed to be conducted in the following modes: web survey mode and text message survey mode. We would like to forego the text survey mode and offer the survey in web mode only. The text message survey mode is not optimal to field for NPSAS given the extensive informed consent language that would need to be included in the first text message, and the additional quality control procedures and manual processing required for incentive payments for text message survey respondents.

- The following paragraph appears on page 26. The highlighted text was updated.

The purpose of Phase 4 is to enable nonresponse bias assessment and, depending on response rate, develop a nonresponse weighting adjustment. Phase 4 data collection will begin approximately a month after the main data collection ends: beginning January 2021 and lasting through the end of February 2021. Information collected in Phase 4 will not be used in any response rate calculations (Phase 4 cases will not be included in the final data files), but only for nonresponse bias assessment and, potentially, adjustment. The target time for completion of the nonresponse instrument is 5 minutes. This instrument will be offered to all remaining nonrespondents, with a promised incentive of \$5. The instrument will include a subset from the abbreviated instrument, specifically, mostly questions from the FAFSA section.

The invitation to complete the nonresponse bias instrument will be ~~send~~ sent to all remaining nonrespondents via mail, with a link to the web survey. The envelope will contain a sample questionnaire, just to demonstrate the minimal burden of the request. The email reminders will also contain a link to the website., ~~where respondents would be able to see a sample of the questions. Following two emails, one letter/postcard, and two text message reminders, we will offer a text message survey as a final effort to collect data on nonrespondents. We will remind nonrespondents to participate via two emails, one letter/postcard, and two text message reminders.~~