

**Attention: Information No Longer Current
(Alert archived November 2011)**

Alert #2

Subject: Student Right-to-Know and IPEDS Graduation Rate Survey

Prepared: October 1997

Summary

The National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) of the U. S. Department of Education has developed a Graduation Rate Survey (GRS) within the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS), which will collect the data necessary to prepare reports required by the Student Right-to-Know Act (SRK) of 1990. Final SRK regulations, effective July 1, 1996, were published December 1, 1995. The SRK regulations have two major parts: one part that applies to all institutions participating in the federal student financial aid programs in Title IV of the Higher Education Act (HEA), and a second part that applies to those institutions that also award athletically-related student financial aid.

Submission of the GRS will satisfy the SRK requirement for annual reports to the Department of Education by institutions that award athletically-related aid. The National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) will use the GRS for its annual collection of graduation-rate data. The first GRS will be mailed in the fall of 1997, and will collect graduation, transfer-out, and persistence data for the undergraduates who entered two-year colleges in 1994 or four-year institutions in 1991. The survey is to be returned to the address designated by NCES by March 1, 1998. NCAA members also must provide a copy to the NCAA by March 1, 1998.

All institutions participating in the federal student financial assistance programs in Title IV of the HEA are required, by the 1992 amendments to the HEA, to complete all IPEDS surveys.

Current Status of Student Right-to-Know Act (SRK)

Required disclosure. All institutions are required to make available to current and prospective students reports containing the completion or graduation rate and, separately, the transfer-out rate (for the transfers-out that are known to the institution) for full-time, first-time, degree- or certificate- seeking undergraduates. Institutions are encouraged to provide additional information that could make the reports more useful. The first report, containing information for students who entered the institution in the 1996-97 academic year must be available by January 1, 2000 for institutions whose longest program is two years, and January 1, 2003 for institutions whose longest program is four years. Students are to be counted as graduates or as transfers-out if they completed or graduated or if they transferred-out within 150 percent of the normal time for

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completion or graduation from their programs: by August 31, 1999 for two-year programs, and August 31, 2002 for four-year programs.

Transfers-out. A student is to be counted as a transfer-out only if the institution can document that the student has subsequently enrolled in another institution eligible for Title IV participation. This documentation may occur through certification by the receiving institution, through information from data exchange or tracking systems, or by communication with the student. Institutions are required to report the transfers-out that are known to the institution through whatever processes the institution has in place. Institutions are not required to establish any new processes for obtaining any information on transfers-out that they do not already have.

Equivalent programs. Institutions may count as graduates those students who complete the "equivalent of an associate degree"--those who complete within three years a two-year transfer program that is acceptable for full credit toward a bachelor's degree and that qualifies a student for admission into the third year of a bachelor's degree program. Students also may be counted as graduates if they complete, within four and one-half years, the first three years of a 3-2 formal transfer program.

Exclusions. The Student Right-to-Know regulations permit institutions to exclude from graduation rate or transfer-out rate calculations those students the institution can verify are deceased or totally and permanently disabled, or who have left school to serve in the armed forces, foreign aid service, or on official church missions.

Athletically-related student aid. Institutions that award athletically-related aid must, in addition, calculate completion or graduation rates and transfer-out rates (for the transfers-out that are known to the institution) by race and gender, and by race and gender within sport for students who receive athletically-related aid. These data must be calculated annually (beginning 2000 for two-year institutions, and 2003 for four-year institutions) and four-year averages must be provided. The sports categories are baseball, basketball, football, track and cross-country, and all other sports combined. These institutions must also report enrollment for the prior academic year for all students by race and gender, and for students receiving athletically-related aid by race and gender within sport. The information on enrollment, graduation rates, and transfer-out rates must be disclosed to potential student-athletes and their parents, coaches, and high school counselors, and must be submitted annually, beginning July 1, 1997, to the U.S. Department of Education. If a race/gender/sport category includes five or fewer students, the institution is not required to disclose the graduation rate or transfer-out rate for that category.

NCAA member institutions. The Department of Education has granted the NCAA permission to compile and publish the graduation rate information for its member institutions and to

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disseminate it to high schools which will satisfy the requirement that the information be disclosed to high school coaches and counselors. The institutions will be responsible for the disclosures to current and prospective students and to prospective student athletes and their parents.

Current Status of IPEDS Graduation Rate Survey (GRS)

Correspondence between GRS and SRK. The GRS will collect the data necessary for the preparation of SRK reports and additional information beyond that required in the SRK regulations.

Information collected. All data must be reported by race/ethnicity and sex. Institutions will report graduation data by time-to-degree: 4, 5, or 6 years for four-year programs; 2, 3, 4, 5, or 6 years for two-year and three-year programs at four-year and public two-year institutions; 2 or 3 years for two-year and three-year programs at private two-year institutions. Persisters will be reported--students who have not completed their programs but are enrolled after three years for two-year programs, or after six years for four-year programs.

Transfers-out. If an institution has received verified information about students who have not graduated and who have transferred out, it must report those data by level of institution to which the students have transferred: less than 2-year; two-year; four-year or higher. Institutions are instructed to complete the transfers-out section of the GRS only if they have or receive data about transfers-out through the specified verification processes. If the institution does not have or receive such data the institution is instructed to skip that section of the survey.

Special requirements by level and control. Those four-year institutions that have information about student intent will report all data separately for students who enter the institution seeking a bachelor's degree. In addition to reporting graduation, transfer-out, and persistence data for cohorts of full-time students, public two-year institutions will report these data for cohorts of part-time students. Public two-year institutions will be mailed a supplementary survey form in 2000 to collect 4-, 5-, and 6-year graduation rates for the 1994 cohort.

Three- and five-year programs. Students persisting after six years in five-year programs, or students persisting after three years in a three-year program at a two-year institution will be reported separately. Institutions with such programs will be mailed supplementary survey forms in 1999 or 2000 to collect 7-year graduation rates for students in the 1991 cohort who were enrolled in five-year programs or 4-year graduation rates for students in the 1994 cohort who were enrolled in three-year programs at two-year institutions.

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Implications for Institutions

The GRS will collect, in a standard format, graduation, transfer-out, and persistence data for all institutions participating in the federal student aid programs in Title IV of the HEA. These data will be publically available, and are likely to be published. Institutions will have to provide the contextual information necessary for meaningful interpretation of the data.

Timelines

December 1995--Final SRK regulations published in Federal Register.

Fall 1996--Institutions must begin collecting data for SRK cohort of students who enter in 1996-97 academic year.

July 1, 1997--Enrollment report due to Department of Education from institutions that award athletically-related aid. NCAA provided this report to the Department for its members.

June 1997--SRK technical amendment passed changing the cut-off date for 150% of normal time from June 30 to August 31.

October 1997--GRS mailed to institutions.

March 1, 1998--Deadline for return of GRS to NCES. Deadline for NCAA members to send GRS to NCAA.

January 1, 2000--First SRK report must be made available to current and prospective students by institutions whose longest program is two-years.

January 1, 2003--First SRK report must be made available to current and prospective students by institutions whose longest program is four-years.

Additional Resources

The Student Right-to-Know final regulations were published in the Federal Register, Friday, December 1, 1995, pp. 61776-61788. Part 668 of the Code of Federal Regulations is available online at <http://sfa.ope.ed.gov/TM/T1682>. The relevant sections are .668.8(b)(1)(ii), .668.41, .668.46, and .668.49.

IPEDS survey forms can be downloaded from www.ed.gov/NCES/IPEDS/IPEDSsurveys.htm

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The American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers (AACRAO) is sponsoring a series of SRK/GRS workshops in locations across the country between October 21 and December 12, 1997. For information visit AACRAO's web site at www.aacrao.com or contact Gloria Rutberg at rutbergg@aacrao.nche.edu or (202) 293-9161.

Authors:

Carol Fuller with Anthony Broh and Jan Lyddon

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