

Entry and Exiting Cohorts: How to Create an Entry Cohort and How to Use the Cohort for Performance Measure 2P1 Postsecondary Completion

**Roundtable Session
Thursday, June 15, 2006
Data Quality Institute, Phoenix, AZ**

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Exiting Cohorts

- Follow Employment and Training Methodology – WIA Title I.
- Employment & Training Traditions Include –
- Training offered when Core and Intensive services/interventions do not lead to desired results.
- Case management approach.
- Programs provide dollars to support students child care, transportation, etc.
- Extra support services makes full-time study more possible for these students.
- When training is provided short term training is preferred.
- Emphasis on placement in employment and preparation for entry level jobs.

Creating an Entry Cohort

- Annually identify students that reach the concentrator status. (Denominator 1P2 and 2P1).
- Track concentrators for pre-determined observation period (e.g., 3 years).
- At the end of the observation period, report the concentrators that meet the criteria for success for the specified measures – Skill Attainment and Completion (Numerator 1P2 and 2P1).

Cohorts and Perkins Performance Reporting

- 2P1 Entry Cohort – At the end of the observation period, report concentrators that have graduated and transferred (other positive outcomes may be tracked).
- 1P2 Entry Cohort – At the end of the observation period, report concentrators that have attained state defined skills.

- 3P1 Graduating Cohort – Take all graduates from the previous year and track job placement based on the agreed upon post program quarter (UI data, Military, Postal, other Federal Employment) and track transfers to another higher education institution any time during the following fiscal year.
- 3P2 Graduating Cohort – Take the graduates from 3P1 that were placed in employment in the specified quarter (e.g., 2nd post program) and track them for retention in employment (e.g. 4th post program quarter).

Tracking Decision Points

Postsecondary Completion 2P1

- Bottom Line – What are the characteristics of students for which programs should be responsible and accountable for their outcomes?
- Standardization – How will states operationalize cohort definitions?
- Program Enrollment
 - ▶ Career and Technical Education (CTE) program majors.
 - ▶ Major demonstrates a level of commitment to CTE by the student.
 - ▶ Eliminate CTE course takers.
- First-time Freshmen New to Higher Education.
 - ▶ Ask . . . but verify.
 - ▶ Verification requires accessing multiple years of unit record data.
 - ▶ Opportunity to increase Time Equivalence Validity – Ideally the numerator and denominator should both have the same year of origin.
 - ▶ Opportunity to increase Group Equivalence Validity – The rate numerator and denominator should be based on the same student population.

Tracking Decision Points

Postsecondary Completion 2P1

■ Cohort – Credit Hour Threshold?

12 credit hours?

One-third of the credits toward the award? – Tied to Degree Type.

- 20 credits for an Applied Associate in Science (AAS) Degrees.
- 20 credits for a 2 year Certificates. (Where applicable).
- 10 credits for a 1 year Certificates.
- Completers for Short Duration Certificates.

■ Cohort Threshold – Hours to Include?

All college level hours?

All Career and Technical Education (CTE) hours?

CTE hours toward the major?

All graded hours – cumulative?

Exclude pre-college – developmental/remedial, (PCS 14) ABE/ASE/ESL (PCS 17/18/19).

Exclude other non-credit continuing education (PCS 13).

Group Equivalence Validity – The rates numerator and denominator should be based on the same student population.

Assess the extent to which state administrative data systems across the country contain different levels of detail on centrally collected credit hours.

Tracking Decision Points Postsecondary Completion 2P1

■ Cohort Threshold Timing

Academic Intensity – How long do students have to achieve the threshold?

- One year?
- Two years?
- Other?

Demonstrated Commitment – Must students demonstrate some initial level of active involvement in their studies that would be necessary to achieve outcomes within a relatively short time frame?

Programs should be responsible for individuals who are actively pursuing graduation and the threshold should address this component.

■ Enrollment Status

All CTE majors – both enrolled on a full-time and part-time basis?
CTE majors enrolled full-time only (IPEDS GRS approach)?

Tracking Decision Points Postsecondary Completion 2P1

- How long are students tracked to record outcomes?
 - Three Years?
 - Four Years?
 - Five Years?
 - Accommodate part-time enrollment patterns?
 - Accommodate intermittent enrollment patterns?
 - Balance coverage and timeliness.
 - Opportunity to strengthen Maturation Validity – The observation period should allow enough time for students to naturally mature from new entrants to successful transfers.

Tracking Decision Points Postsecondary Completion 2P1

- Key Question – To what extent does measure construction capture as many of the student’s positive outcomes as reasonably possible?
- Under counting legitimate student success and progress seems counterproductive.
- Positive Outcomes Include – hierarchical listing for breakouts.
 - Graduation** (Degree or Certificate awarded).
 - Advancement** (Transfer – to a 2 or 4 year higher educational institution during the observation period.).
 - Continuing Progress** (Retention – continuing enrollment in the last fiscal year tracked at the original community college).

Tracking Decision Points

Postsecondary Completion 2P1

- Graduation = formal academic award. State and locally recognized degrees or certificates are included.
- Helps build trust among policy makers and the general public.
- Standardizing on degree and certificate graduates should improve Perkins PART review scores.
- Limits potential problem of double counting if non-graduate completers come back and meet the requirements for a formal award.
- Graduates finished a curriculum designed to develop workplace skills.
- WIA Title I and other factors has placed additional emphasis on developing shorter duration certificates that are designed to deliver a marketable skill set.
- A series of short duration programs can be linked in career ladder arrangements allowing for multiple meaningful exit points.
- Win - Win: Proving students with certificates that recognize a defined skill set for employment benefits everyone.

Data Resources to Facilitate Outcomes Tracking

- Administrative Data System – Individual student records — demographics, enrollment, graduation, etc.
- Matching Data Elements – SSN and student name and demographics.
- Transfer Data Sources – National Student Clearinghouse or state administrative record exchange.
- Employment Data Sources – Home state Unemployment Insurance Wage Record (UI) access, neighboring state UI access, federal data sources – individually or collectively (FEDES).
- Technical Staff – Individuals with technical expertise and experience to manipulate the data and interpret the results.
- Professional Staff – Individuals with the knowledge and skills to assist with the development, implementation, and monitoring of program improvement initiatives.

Entering Cohort – Program Improvement for Current and Future Students

- Accountability systems exist to promote continuous program improvement.
- Early cohort identification allows interventions to be designed, implemented, and evaluated.
- Outcomes can be impacted and tracked –
 - Time to formal award (degree/certificate).
 - Enrollment patterns.
 - Retention.
 - Continuous Enrollment.
 - Full and part-time course taking behavior.
 - Follows educational traditions. Conceptually aligned with secondary/HS graduation.
 - Avoids complications that can arise when individuals labeled as “leavers” return.
- Overall entering cohort approaches rate highest on measurement validity criteria.

Recommendations Based on Examining the Data and Validity

- 4 Year Tracking based on an Entering Cohort of first time freshmen of Career and Technical Education majors.
- Use 1/3 of hours earned over initial two years.
- This threshold best balances coverage and timeliness. Rates are as follows for IL –
 - 56.4% Graduation & Transfer
 - 63.8% Graduation, Transfer & Retained
- +7.4% Including retained in last fiscal year of observation period. This approach recognizes additional student progress and continued engagement in the educational process.
- Additional efforts to limit the denominator possible.

Framework for Analyzing Entering Versus Exiting Approach for Postsecondary Completion (2P1)

- Time Equivalence Validity – Ideally the numerator and denominator should both have the same year of origin.
Entering = High.
Exiting = Moderate.
- Maturation Validity – The observation period should allow enough time for students to naturally mature from new entrants to successful transfers.
Entering = Moderate (3 year potential to increase with a longer tracking period).
Exiting = Low.
- (Validity Information adapted from Phil Garcia, California State University Chancellor's Office, working with the California Inter-segmental Coordinating Council Task Force on Transfer, 1992)

Framework for Analyzing Entering Versus Exiting Approach for Postsecondary Completion (2P1)

- Group Equivalence Validity – The rates numerator and denominator should be based on the same student population.
Entering = High.
Exiting = Low.
- Construct Validity – The rate should accurately measure the theoretical concept it is supposed to measure. In this case, the proportion of graduates and transfers who emerge from a cohort of new community college students who possess the potential to benefit from pursuing a career and technical curriculum.
Entering = High.
Exiting = Low.
- (Validity Information adapted from Phil Garcia, California State University Chancellor's Office, working with the California Inter-segmental Coordinating Council Task Force on Transfer, 1992)

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