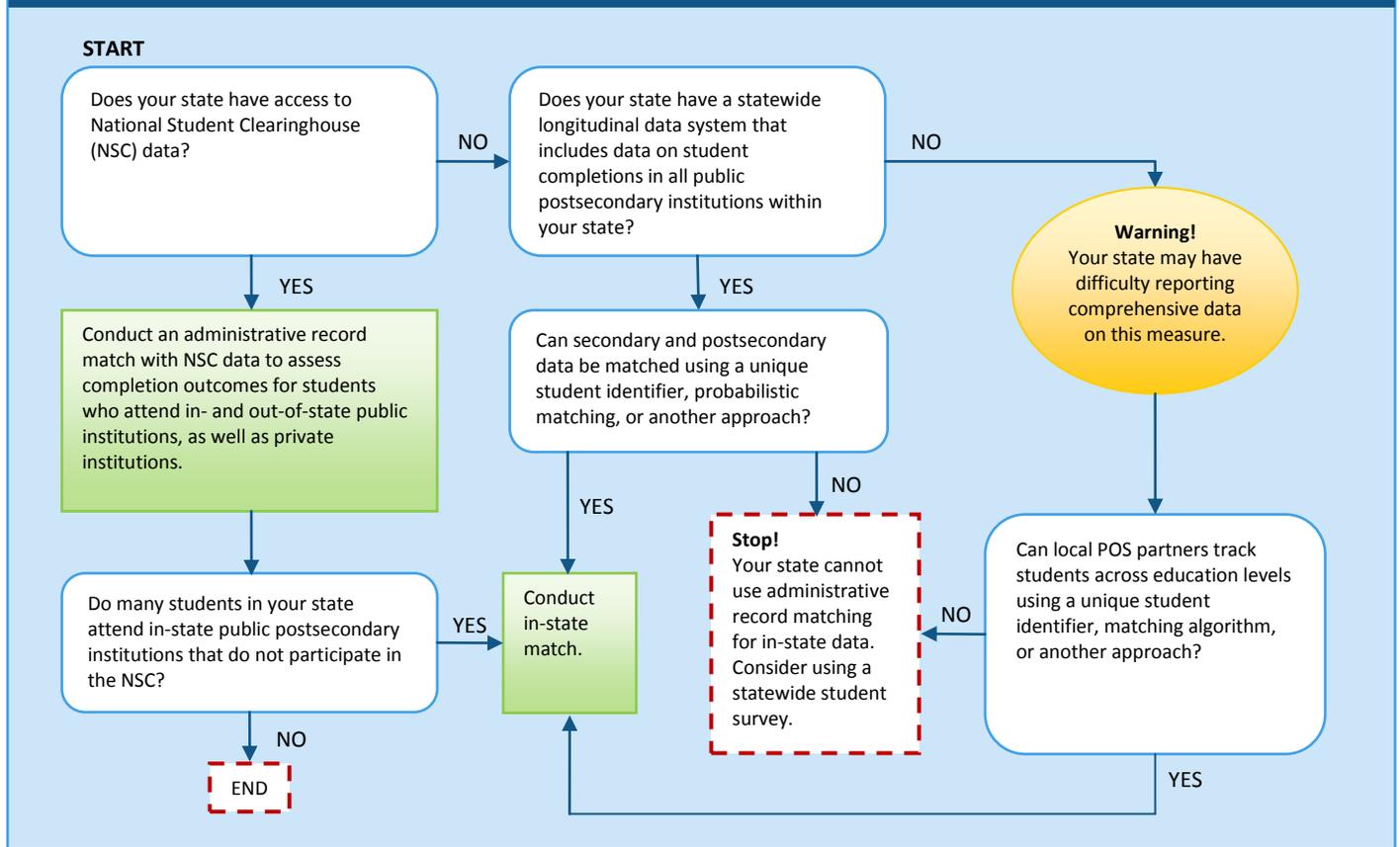


Postsecondary Completion



MEASURE CONSTRUCTION

Percentage of CTE concentrators who attain an industry-recognized credential, certificate, or associate's degree within two years following enrollment in postsecondary education.

- **Numerator:** Number of secondary students who completed at least 50 percent of a state-approved career preparation program by the end of the reporting year, who graduated in the reporting year, who enrolled in postsecondary education by December 31 of the following reporting year, and who earned a credential, certificate, or associate's degree within two years following enrollment in postsecondary education.
- **Denominator:** Number of secondary students who completed at least 50 percent of a state-approved career preparation program by the end of the reporting year, who graduated in the reporting year, and who enrolled in postsecondary education by December 31 of the following reporting year.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Q1: How should states track students across education levels?

A1: States should ideally use a unique student identification number that is used at both the secondary and postsecondary levels to conduct student record matching. In the absence of a unique student identifier, sites will need to conduct probabilistic matching, using elements such as students' name, birth date, and high school of attendance to establish linkages.

Q2: Why are states advised to use the [National Student Clearinghouse \(NSC\)](#) for determining postsecondary completion?

A2: In some districts, a large proportion of high school graduates may attend institutions that are not included in the state postsecondary data system. The NSC covers not only the public, in-state institutions included in state data systems, but also can track students who enroll in private or out-of-state public institutions.

The NSC is a good source of data for this measure, but there are limitations. Not all postsecondary institutions submit data to the NSC: the database covers 93 percent of college enrollments across degree-granting, Title IV institutions nationwide, although coverage may vary by state. Information on students' postsecondary program, such as degree program and major, also may be difficult to interpret; for example, the NSC does not use a program taxonomy, such as Classification of Instructional Programs (CIP) codes, to identify program majors. There is also a cost to access Clearinghouse data.

Q3: My state cannot access the NSC or match data across the secondary or postsecondary education levels. Can my state use a student follow-up survey to collect these data?

A3: States are required to collect data on secondary student enrollment in postsecondary education. If your state cannot access the NSC or conduct administrative record matching, then a student follow-up survey may be your best option for reporting on this indicator. There are, however, significant drawbacks to using survey data.

Surveys often have low response rates and can be expensive to administer, particularly if states or local agencies must follow-up with students who do not respond. States also need to achieve relatively high response rates to ensure unbiased data. For example, [National Center for Education Statistics statistical standards](#) call for at least a 95 percent universe response rate. Surveys also rely on student self-reported data, which are often less accurate because individuals do not always understand survey questions or correctly recall key dates. For this reason, administrators are encouraged to build state and local capacity to conduct administrative record matching rather than undertaking survey efforts.

Q4: What information does this indicator provide?

A4: Measure construction allows for valid and reliable comparisons to be made between the postsecondary completion rates of CTE concentrators and other students within the state. The measure may not support comparisons across states due to differences in how states define CTE concentrators, postsecondary enrollment, and state and/or NSC coverage of postsecondary institutions.