Core Data Metrics

Institutional Data Collection

Frequently Asked Questions

Updated: August 18, 2020

2020 Core Data Collection for Powered by Publics
Why can’t APLU just use IPEDs data to monitor progress? IPEDS data do not disaggregate the data for cohorts associated with subgroups that are typically under-represented.

What is the difference between this collection and IPEDS Outcome Measures? IPEDS OM does not track students who transfer out and graduate at other institutions.

My institution already participates in SAM. Will submitting data through this process fulfill my SAM obligation? Yes, the system is setup to automatically submit bachelor’s degree data to SAM. Institutions have the option to modify the models that are published to SAM.

Is there a way to opt-out of automatic submission to SAM? Yes, if you have already submitted data to SAM, your data will NOT be updated. If you have NOT submitted data and wish to opt-out, please send an email to cdm@aplu.org with a clear message to OPT OUT of SAM.

Will the SAM site be updated to reflect these new queries? Yes. This happens after the collection closes in September.

When will we see the results of the data collection? How will data be displayed? The data will be analyzed by APLU staff and VSA Analytics. Preliminary results of that analysis will be made available to participating institutions within 2 months of closing the data collection. Institutions that subscribe to VSA Analytics, will also have access to institution level data for participating schools. Institutions who do not subscribe will receive a PDF file of the results.

Will analysis of the data be made public and if so, will it be institutionally-identified? No institutional data will be made public without permission from the institution. The only data that will be made public will be data aggregated across institutions or clusters.

With whom will APLU share my institution’s data? The institution level data are only available to PxP institutions and APLU staff and contractors. Institutional data will be available in VSA Analytics only to PxP participating institutions who subscribe.

Is my institution’s data secure? Yes. The submission process is secured with a username and a password. The data files are stored behind a firewall. The only data that will be shared publicly at the institution level are the standard Student Achievement Metrics which are published on the SAM website.

How long will you keep my institution’s data for? The data will be kept for the entirety of the
My institution uses different definitions for one or more of the metrics listed here. How do I handle this? Institutions will typically do their best to adjust to the given definitions, however, in cases where the institution needs to keep their institutional definitions, the primary contact will notify the CDM staff at CDM@aplu.org of the definitional change.

How should we treat data from regional campuses, which are often reported separately to IPEDS? Each institution that has a separate IPEDS ID should report data separately – just like you do to IPEDS.

What about graduates from a different campus within the same university system? Similarly, each institution that reports separately to IPEDS should report separately to CDM. However, the SAM process allows students who graduate elsewhere to be reported as “graduated” for CDM analysis.

How should we handle students who transfer among regional/system campuses? Similarly, each institution that reports separately to IPEDS should report separately to CDM. However, the SAM process allows students who enroll elsewhere to be reported as “still enrolled” for CDM analysis.

What about students who start as FTFT freshmen, stop out, and then return as transfer students full time – should they be in both the FTFT and transfer student cohorts? They should not be counted in more than one cohort. Generally, a student should stay in the cohort that they started in. However, there are some possible exceptions. If the student left for a significant amount of time, such that the student was required to re-apply to the university or program they were previously in, they may start over as a transfer full-time student. But if the student left for just a semester and transferred some credits in while still being considered enrolled, then the student would continue to be in the FTFT cohort. The institution has some flexibility in determining where the cutoff point is for this nuanced issue. It depends on the institution’s policies guiding how long a student can stop out before they need to re-apply.

Should full-time and part-time students be combined into one group or reported separately? They should be combined into one group for most metrics except where it is explicitly stated to report full-time. Refer to the data dictionary.
Should we report data for degree-seeking undergraduates only, or include non-degree-seeking students? Are associates degree-seeking students included, or only bachelor’s degree-seeking students? Please report data for undergraduate degree-seeking students only (both associates and bachelors). Non-degree seeking students should not be included in the cells; however, if you wish to add these data, please do so outside of the preformed cells. You may also add any footnotes that are appropriate.

Are “Pell recipients” students who receive the Pell grant in their first year, or in any year? While typically IPEDS restricts Pell status to the student’s first year, CDM will allow institutions to report students who ever receive Pell.

Should we use the federal aggregation method for race/ethnicity? Yes.

How should we handle unknown gender identity? Institutions can use the same method that they use for reporting gender to IPEDS. This method may vary across institutions.

Are retention rates for FTFT students only, or do we include transfer students in the denominator? Retention is reported for each of the 15 subgroups – one of which is the FTFT and another is for Transfer full-time.

What does the “total undergraduates” field for Fall 2013 consist of? All undergraduates registered in Fall 2013, sum of all Fall 2013 cohorts, or sum of all Fall 2013 cohorts plus new Fall 2013 transfer students? The total for undergraduates includes all full time and part time, new students (freshmen and transfers) as well as returning degree-seeking students. This number is reported to IPEDS.

Do bachelor’s degrees in 2018-2019 include summer term, and if so, would it be summer 2018 (preceding summer) or summer 2019 (subsequent summer)? This would be consistent with what is reported to IPEDS. Typically, the summer follows the academic year (Fall, Spring, then Summer). However, if your institution reports differently, then please remain consistent with the reporting you currently do for IPEDS.

My institution doesn’t collect data for one or more of the metrics listed here. What should I do? If unable to submit data for any of the metrics, please contact the CDM staff to determine an alternative option.

Some of the disaggregated race/ethnicity categories have a small N and students could potentially be identified. How will APLU handle this? Is there a threshold below which “no
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**data /insufficient data” will be displayed?** No institutional data will be shared outside of PxP institutions that will contain any cells with less than 5. In general data will be aggregated to the cluster or to the entire initiative when shared with external constituents.

**If the number of records in a subcohort is less than the required minimum to submit to NSC, what should we do?** You can make a decision to exclude that cohort.

**How should we treat missing data?** In the spreadsheet, you can leave the cells blank.

**Can my institution receive more than one set of login credentials to the online portal?** Yes.

**Can I use the data to benchmark with peer institutions and if so, how?** Through VSA Analytics, you will be able to create peer groups based on data submitted by PxP institutions only. No data will be available for institutions outside of PxP.

**What are the benefits of sharing my institutions data? What are the risks?** The benefits allow institutions to examine national trends and explore areas where institutions have common challenges. PxP is part of a community of learning where institutions can learn from one another and co-create solutions to challenges facing student success. A possible risk is the university’s sensitivity around being transparent about these data and progress compared to peers.

**Can my institution opt-out of sharing data?** Yes. If an institution would like to opt out of sharing data, the institution’s president would need to notify the APLU president.

**For how many years will Powered by Publics be collecting data?** Through 2025

**I don’t have enough staff in my IR office to complete this data request. What support will APLU provide to institutions like mine?** APLU will work with each institution that is understaffed to provide whatever support we can to try and find a solution to the problem.