

National ACT College Success Research Partnership

Join ACT and other postsecondary institutions in participating in the National ACT College Success Research Partnership. The goal is to collaborate on a broad agenda of research related to student success and the use of ACT data.

Possible areas of research include:

- Evaluating relationships between college readiness indicators and college success in the first year and beyond, including college grades, retention, and degree completion
- Exploring a holistic view of student readiness that leads to college success using students' academic achievement (e.g., test scores, HS GPA, coursework), interests, intentions, and preferences
- Examining pre-college factors related to college success for special subgroups of students (e.g., first-generation students, economically disadvantaged students, STEM majors)
- Determining information that is useful for identifying students who are at risk of dropping out

Over the years, ACT has collaborated with hundreds of postsecondary institutions on academic advising, enrollment management, and college success research, and conducted predictive studies of ACT assessments.

Two reports of these studies can be found on our website (www.act.org/research)—*Development of STEM Readiness Benchmarks to Assist Educational and Career Decision Making* and *Predicting Long-Term College Success through Degree Completion Using ACT Composite Score, ACT Benchmarks, and High School Grade Point Average*

Benefits of the Research Partnership

When you engage ACT in research services and predictive studies through the National ACT College Success Research Partnership, your institution will have the opportunity to:

- Receive selected free institution-specific reports for ACT-tested first-time entering students enrolled at your institution, including the Class Profile report, Admissions Service report, and the Retention/Attrition Service report
- Receive matched ACT and local college outcomes data files for use in your own institutional research projects
- Receive aggregate reports and conference presentation materials from multi-institutional studies

- Participate in free ACT webinars that share multi-institutional study results and explore ways institutions can use other data elements from the ACT® test (e.g., ACT Interest Inventory scores, intended major) to inform enrollment and retention strategies
- Co-present at conferences to showcase the effects of institutional initiatives and services on student success as a complement to national findings

Data Collection

The research will track first-time entering freshmen from participating institutions for six years. Preferably your institution will provide data for multiple cohorts (e.g., 2010–11 cohort through present). The initial data submission will include unit-record data on the freshman cohorts from their first term of enrollment through summer 2016. These data will be followed by annual updates to complete the six-year span for each cohort.

Participants will be asked to submit the following data elements for each student:

- Student identifiers and characteristics (local student ID, name, birthdate, last four digits of SSN, gender, high school attended)
- Year of first enrollment as freshman (i.e., cohort year)
- For each term:
 - Enrollment indicator (still enrolled, not enrolled, completed program/degree)
 - Term and cumulative GPA
 - Term and cumulative hours attempted
 - Term and cumulative hours earned
 - CIP major code
- Degree information (date, type, and title)

Institutions are encouraged to use the standard data file layout ACT has developed to expedite data handling. (Details about this layout can be provided upon request.)

The initial data file is to be submitted to ACT in October of the current year, and annually thereafter to complete the six-year span for each cohort.

continued



Confidentiality and Data Security

ACT will use student data specifically to provide research services to participating institutions and to conduct studies for the institutions to develop or validate predictive tests, consistent with the Family Education Rights Privacy ACT (FERPA) and other FERPA requirements, as applicable. Personal identifiers will be used strictly for matching to ACT data sources.

For research purposes, data will be pooled and reported in aggregate across institutions. Institution-specific data and reports will be sent only to the primary contact from each participating school. In publications of research, institutions will not be identified without prior consent.

A secure file transfer protocol and site will be used to transfer data between institutions and ACT. All content stored on the site or in transit to/from the site will be password protected and encrypted for data security.

ACT Contact and Next Steps

For more information about the National ACT College Success Research Partnership, contact Lakisha Bates at lakisha.bates@act.org or call 319.834.6140. Once you confirm your commitment to participate in this free research service, your institution and ACT will enter into the ACT Use of Data and Research Services Agreement.



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