

AACC VFA-PDP Transition Workflow

AACC is excited to enter a partnership with the National Student Clearinghouse (NSC) to collect and display Voluntary Framework of Accountability data. This document will describe the process for Voluntary Framework of Accountability (VFA) participants to transition the Postsecondary Data Partnership (PDP) as a VFA participant in the PDP. There are three key organizations that will help with this process:

1. The American Association of Community Colleges (AACC) will serve as the primary organization for VFA in the PDP
2. National Student Clearinghouse (NSC) is the organization that maintains and manages all aspects of the PDP
3. ResearchEd has been contracted by AACC to help colleges import and use the PDP.

Colleges that participated in the VFA in the 2024 collection cycle are encouraged to begin the process of making the transition as early as possible, as there will be some work involved in creating and importing the PDP data files.

The PDP relies on the import of two file types—Cohort File (all students in the designated cohort) and Course file (all courses taken by all students in the Cohort file). These data are combined with existing NSC data to create PDP metrics.

AACC, in collaboration with ResearchEd will be providing webinars and resources for colleges working to make this transition. In addition, ResearchEd will have weekly “office hours” for all participants to assist colleges with the process of extracting data, signing up to use the PDP, importing PDP data, and eventually how to use the PDP data. The following are the key steps in the process of transitioning to the PDP.

Create an implementation team. Colleges are encouraged to create a PDP implementation project team. Potential roles and members would be:

1. Institution Research: Tasked with ensuring the college is selecting/providing the correct data sets
2. Project Leader: Tasked with keeping PDP reporting on track and working with leadership to be ready and able to use the data to gain and provide insight.
3. Information Technology: Tasked with security review of the data and assistance in extracting data from CRM.
4. Any associated third-party leaders: If the college is using a third party to assist in the PDP reporting or use of data, they should be involved.

Initial agreements with National Student Clearinghouse. Colleges will contact Mandy Bailey (Mandbail@studentclearinghouse.org) to begin discussions of the agreement with National Student Clearinghouse (NSC) to participate in the Postsecondary Data Partnership (PDP).

1. Ensure college has an existing Master Services Agreement with NSC
2. Once an institution expresses interest in pursuing the PDP, the NSC will draft a Statement of Work (contract) and send this to the institution. This is the agreement between the

- institution and the National Student Clearinghouse outlining terms and conditions. Evaluate data security – HECVAT if necessary for your institution
3. Review legal and financial aspects of the PDP contract.
 4. Finalize Contract

Orientation and introduction to the PDP. ResearchEd will provide group orientations to the PDP, open to colleges transitioning from the VFA to the PDP. In addition, the NSC Account Manager will provide an introduction to the college's PDP implementation team. This orientation will include:

1. Providing access to, and explanation for the PDP set-up form. This will enable the setup of login credentials in the system. Login credentials will be sent from FTPadmin@studentclearinghouse.org by the NSC Implementation Team.
2. Setting a timeline for implementation based on conversations with the institution. As part of the VFA data collection cycle, colleges will be expected to submit data by September 1 of each year. This will allow AACCC to produce an annual VFA summary report as well as a point in time when the most recent data will be available for benchmarking for all VFA colleges.

Begin process for extracting and uploading data. Institution and NSC staff along with support from ResearchEd will work together to upload the initial data necessary for PDP. Colleges will be expected to upload **Cohort Files** and **Course Files** as part of participation in the VFA/PDP initiative. The Financial Aid file is not required as part of the VFA participation; however, colleges are welcome to upload that data if they desire. Initial data submission will include:

1. Cohort Files going back 3-6 years. Cohort Files will include all students new to the institution in the reporting time period. **AACC strongly encourages colleges to submit the full six years to use the newly developed six-year outcomes dashboard.**
2. Course Files going back 3-6 years. Course files should include every course taken by students identified in the cohort files and the number of years should be the same as the number of years for the cohort files.
3. For VFA purposes, the Financial Aid Files are not required. However, if your institution is submitting Financial Aid Files, Cohort and Course Files should be submitted prior submitting the financial Aid Files.
4. NSC and ResearchEd will work with the institutions to clarify all data requirements, formats and definitions.

Initial Data Submission. Each institution will develop a process for the data extraction files. NSC and ResearchEd will provide resources and technical assistance for this process. NSC will work with the institution to provide FTP access and login credentials to submit the data. Initial data submission will include the following:

1. A review of the data checks process for the PDP, including the types of errors and procedures for error correcting. Emails will come from PDPservice@studentclearinghouse.org
2. Account Managers will be copied on email and will review with the college's team the types of errors and how to repair files or make corrections
3. Final validation of submitted data ready for use

Initial Payment. Following successful completion of the initial setup for data submission (the institution has set up their FTP credentials), the initial invoice will be sent to the institution. For VFA colleges transitioning to the PDP, this will be a flat rate of \$2,000 for the 2025 cycle.

Analysis Ready Files sent. NSC will create and send the Analysis Ready (AR) files to the institution within 30 days following data validation. Analysis ready files include student level data with calculated fields for colleges to use at their institution for analysis beyond what is available in the dashboards. AR files include calculated metrics based on data from cohort files, course files, and other NSC data sources.

Dashboards created. Dashboards with the institution's data will be created and made available to this institution within 30 days following data validation.

Data use and sharing orientation. The institution's PDP account manager will host a session with the institution to review the use of PDP website and dashboards and process of 3rd party data sharing authorization. The session will include:

1. PDP website orientation
2. A review of how to use dashboards
3. Benchmarking in the PDP
4. An explanation of data authorizer and sharing with 3rd parties
5. Developing a schedule of regular reporting at the institution to keep data incoming