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StudentTracker Cohort Query Guide

The StudentTracker Cohort Query (CO query) was created for the VSA College Portrait's "Undergraduate Success & Progress Rate" table. It provides a summary of the retention and completion rates of a cohort group by academic year and institutional category. (For more on the College Portrait, see the "About the Voluntary System of Accountability" section in this guide.)

Who Can Use the CO Query?

Colleges and universities that participate in the Clearinghouse's Core, DegreeVerify and StudentTracker services may use the CO query.

If you do not know if your institution participates in Core, DegreeVerify and StudentTracker, contact your Clearinghouse regional director or service@studentclearinghouse.org.

Submitting Your CO Query File

You can submit your CO query file using either Excel or flat file format. Instructions for preparing your query file in either format are at the end of this guide.

You can send your files to us using your Clearinghouse secure FTP account (a customer service representative will help you set up your account). Each time you successfully upload a file, a file delivery receipt will be emailed to you.

Obtaining Your CO Query Results

You will receive an email when your CO query results are ready for retrieval from your secure FTP account. Your CO query research results include:

1. Control Report: An overview of the match rate and number of records submitted in your query provided in an .htm file.
2. Aggregate Report: A summary report contained in a .csv table.
3. Detail Report: Report of every student's enrollment in a .csv file.

For your convenience, the Clearinghouse has created a report template in Excel that you can use to complete your VSA submission and/or quickly generate graphs and charts that illustrate your cohort query results.

<http://www.studentclearinghouse.org/colleges/Tracker/docs/CO%20Query%20Report%20Template.xlsx>

You can see a sample report at

<http://www.studentclearinghouse.org/colleges/Tracker/pdfs/Cohort%20sample%20report.pdf>.

Please allow 72 hours for your request to be processed. If you do not receive your results by then, please contact us at studenttracker@studentclearinghouse.org.

If you need assistance, contact studenttracker@studentclearinghouse.org.

Cohort Query Guide, cont'd

What Enrollment Record is Used for Each Year?

Enrollment history is separated into academic years based on the search date used in the query. For example, if the CO query search date is "20010915," the academic year will be counted as 9/16/2001-9/15/2002 and shown as 2001-2002 in the report. The searching algorithm will find all terms ending on and degrees awarded after 9/15/2001. Within each academic year, enrollment and degree instances are counted based on a priority scale.

For each academic year of enrollment, one of seven degree and enrollment categories can be assigned to a student. The categories are prioritized in the table below.

Category	Priority
Four-year degree from your institution	1
Four-year degree from other institution	2
Two-year degree from your institution	3
Two-year degree from other institution	4
Retained at your institution	5
Retained at other four-year institution	6
Retained at other two-year institution	7

The top priority is counted and the others are ignored. For example, a four-year degree from your institution is counted over all other enrollment and degree instances in a given academic year. Similarly, any degree instance supersedes a retention instance.

Can a Student Be Double Counted in the Four-Year Graduation Rate?

No. Receiving a four-year degree is a terminal event in the enrollment and graduation summary table. Once a student has completed a four-year degree, all subsequent enrollment and degree records are not counted. For example, if a student completes a four-year degree from another institution and later returns to your campus and completes a four-year degree, the second four-year degree is not counted.

Does the CO Query Give the Same Graduation Rate as IPEDS?

No. There are multiple differences in the process.

- StudentTracker only counts domestic students because the Clearinghouse StudentTracker database does not contain international student information.
- There may not be a match in the Clearinghouse system for a student from your cohort. The most common reason for this is poor data quality in the school's Core data submission. If for any reason a record was not loaded during the Core submission, it will not be available in StudentTracker.
- IPEDS uses October 15 as its cutoff date. The CO query uses end-of-term enrollment status. Any changes in enrollment between October 15 and end-of-term will create a counting difference.

If you need assistance, contact studenttracker@studentclearinghouse.org.

Cohort Query Guide, cont'd

Can I Verify Counts?

Yes. We have prepared SPSS and SAS code that imitate the CO query logic for all non-FERPA blocked students. You can download the code and run it against the detail data that was returned to you.

- To download the SPSS code, go to http://research.studentclearinghouse.org/content/code/Cohort_Query.sps
- To download the SAS code, go to http://research.studentclearinghouse.org/content/code/Cohort_Query.SAS.

Which Enrollments are Counted?

The query counts all full-time, half-time and less than half-time enrollments from two and four-year institutions. Less than two-year institutions are not counted.

Which Degrees are Counted?

The query counts all bachelor's, master's, professional and doctoral degrees as valid four-year degrees and uses the degree title information when available. If degree title information is not available, the institutional type (two or four-year) is used. Associate degrees are counted as two-year degrees. Certificates, honors and awards are not counted.

How are Associate Degree Recipients Who Continue Their Education Counted?

Subsequent enrollment and degree information for students completing associate degrees is counted in a second table. This allows two-year institutions to investigate four-year completion patterns and incorporate two-year completers in their outcomes measures without double counting.

If you need assistance, contact studenttracker@studentclearinghouse.org.

About the Voluntary System of Accountability (VSA)

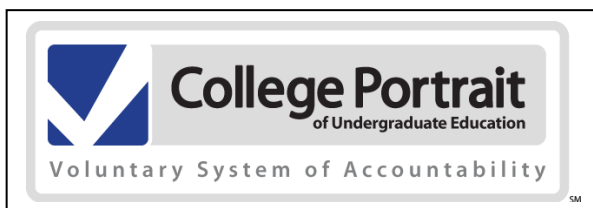
The Voluntary System of Accountability (VSA) is a joint project of the American Association of State Colleges and Universities (AASCU) and the Association of Public & Land-grant Universities (A·P·L·U). The voluntary initiative enables four-year public colleges and universities to provide information regarding undergraduate experience to students, families, policymakers, faculty and staff via electronic submission. The VSA increases awareness of how public institutions operate, and provides information to assist students with the college selection process.

The VSA was created in 2006 as an effort to hold public institutions more accountable for student learning and development. More than 80 higher education leaders from 70 public institutions participated in the creation and development of the VSA and its Web-based data reporting template, called College Portrait.

Through the College Portrait template, the VSA gives the public access to comprehensive reports on participating institutions, including institutional and student body characteristics, tuition, learning process, and core outcomes. The data elements included in College Portrait were identified and evaluated based on input from student/family focus groups, feedback from the higher education community, and research on higher education. The majority of the data elements selected are from currently available data sources with established definitions and reporting conventions.

Together, A·P·L·U and AASCU represent more than 525 public institutions, which enroll more than 7.5 million students. Over 94% of A·P·L·U and AASCU schools also belong to the Clearinghouse.

For more information on the VSA, please contact the executive director, Christine Keller, or visit www.voluntarysystem.org.



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