

Appendix A

Technical Review Panel

**National Postsecondary Student Aid Study 2007/2008 (NPSAS:08)
Technical Review Panel**

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Appendix B

NPSAS Endorsements

NPSAS Endorsements

The following professional associations have endorsed the research efforts of the National Postsecondary Student Aid Study (NPSAS).

American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers
American Association of Community Colleges
American Association of State Colleges and Universities
American Council on Education
Association for Institutional Research
Association of American Colleges and Universities
Association of Catholic Colleges and Universities
Association of Schools of Allied Health Professions
Career College Association
The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching
The College Board
Council of Graduate Schools
The Council of Independent Colleges
Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities
Midwestern Higher Education Compact
National Accrediting Commission of Cosmetology Arts and Sciences
National Association of College and University Business Officers
National Association for Equal Opportunity in Higher Education
National Association of Independent Colleges and Universities
National Association of State Universities and Land-Grant Colleges
National Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators
New England Board of Higher Education
Southern Regional Education Board
State Higher Education Executive Officers
The United Negro College Fund
Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education

Appendix C

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Institution Contacting Materials

Chief Administrator Letter

NPSAS Endorsed by

American Association of
Collegiate Registrars and
Admissions Officers

American Association of
Community Colleges

American Association of State
Colleges and Universities

American Council on Education

Association for Institutional
Research

Association of American Colleges
and Universities

Association of Catholic Colleges
and Universities

Association of Schools of Allied
Health Professions

Career College Association

The Carnegie Foundation for the
Advancement of Teaching

The College Board

Council of Graduate Schools

The Council of Independent
Colleges

Hispanic Association of Colleges
and Universities

Midwestern Higher Education
Compact

National Accrediting Commission
of Cosmetology Arts and
Sciences

National Association of College
and University Business Officers

National Association for Equal
Opportunity in Higher Education

National Association of
Independent Colleges and
Universities

National Association of State
Universities and
Land-Grant Colleges

National Association of Student
Financial Aid Administrators

New England Board of Higher
Education

Southern Regional Education
Board

State Higher Education Executive
Officers

The United Negro College Fund

Western Interstate Commission
for Higher Education

<DATE>

<CHIEF ADMIN NAME>

<ADDR 1>

<ADDR 2>

<CITY STATE ZIP>

Your IPEDS UNITID:

Your PASSWORD:

Dear <NAME>:

<INSTITUTION NAME> has been selected to participate in the field test of the 2008 National Postsecondary Student Aid Study (NPSAS:08). The Higher Education Act (Sec. 131 (d) as amended in 1998) mandates that the U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) periodically gather information from students and institutions on how students and their families finance education beyond high school.

In response to the continuing need for these data, NPSAS collected information from students and institutions in 1987, 1990, 1993, 1996, 2000, and 2004. NPSAS:08 is being conducted for NCES by RTI International, a not-for-profit research organization. Additional information about our plans for NPSAS:08 is provided in the enclosed NPSAS brochure.

The purpose of the field test is to evaluate survey instruments and procedures so that the full-scale study is as effective as possible. Your institution's participation is crucial to the success of the field test. Institutions selected for the field test will not be selected for the full-scale study.

I am writing to request that you appoint a NPSAS coordinator, who will be asked to send a data file of the students enrolled at your institution. Once a small sample of students has been selected from your institution, the NPSAS coordinator will be asked to provide additional information on the enrollment status, the demographic characteristics, and the financial assistance provided for each sampled student. The sampled students will also be asked to complete a questionnaire on the Internet.

All responses that relate to or describe identifiable characteristics of individuals may be used only for statistical purposes and may not be disclosed, or used, in identifiable form for any other purpose, unless otherwise compelled by law. The enclosed brochure details our data collection procedures and provides a full description of the laws and procedures safeguarding the confidentiality of questionnaire responses, contact information, and other data collected. Additional information, including reports based on data from previous NPSAS studies, is available on the NPSAS website: <https://surveys.nces.ed.gov/NPSASschool>.

We are aware that you and the staff at your institution are confronted with many competing demands for your time. Therefore, we are providing you—and the coordinator you designate—with this advance notice of the study to allow you adequate time to plan for this data collection effort and, if needed, to contact us for more information prior to the start of student list collection in winter 2007. Once designated, an RTI representative will contact your coordinator to discuss the study timeline and the information needed from your institution.

If you have any questions about the study or procedures involved, please contact the RTI Project Coordinator, Brian Kuhr, at 1-888-NPSAS411 (1-888-677-2741) or via e-mail at NPSASschool@rti.org. You may also direct questions to NCES by contacting James Griffith at 1-202-502-7387 (e-mail address: James.Griffith@ed.gov).

At your earliest convenience, please complete the *NPSAS Designate a Coordinator* form online at the NPSAS website, using the IPEDS UNITID and password printed on the first page of this letter.

We look forward to your participation in this important study. Thank you for your cooperation and prompt completion of the *NPSAS Designate a Coordinator* form.

Sincerely,



Mark Schneider
Commissioner
National Center for Education Statistics

Enclosures

The *NPSAS Designate a Coordinator* form may be completed online
at

<https://surveys.nces.ed.gov/NPSASschool>

To access the online form, enter the user name (which is your IPEDS
UNITID) and password printed on the first page of this letter.

**NPSAS
Endorsed by**

American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers
 American Association of Community Colleges
 American Association of State Colleges and Universities
 American Council on Education
 Association for Institutional Research
 Association of American Colleges and Universities
 Association of Catholic Colleges and Universities
 Association of Schools of Allied Health Professions
 Career College Association
 The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching
 The College Board
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 National Association of State Universities and Land-Grant Colleges
 National Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators
 New England Board of Higher Education
 Southern Regional Education Board
 State Higher Education Executive Officers
 The United Negro College Fund
 Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education

Institution Coordinator Early Contacting Letter

<Date>

(Salutation) (FirstName) (LastName)
 (Title)
 (Institution)
 (Address)
 (City), (State) (Zip)

Your IPEDS UNITID: (UnitID)

Your password: (Password)

Dear (Salutation) (LastName):

(Institution) has been selected to participate in the field test of the 2008 National Postsecondary Student Aid Study (NPSAS:08). The Higher Education Act (Sec. 131 (d) as amended in 1998) mandates that the U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) periodically gather information from students and institutions on how students and their families finance education beyond high school.

In response to the continuing need for these data, NPSAS collected information from students and institutions in 1987, 1990, 1993, 1996, 2000, and 2004.

The purpose of the field test is to evaluate survey forms and procedures so that the full-scale study is as effective as possible. Your institution's participation is crucial to the success of the field test. Institutions selected for the field test will not be asked to participate in the full-scale study.

Additional information about our plans for NPSAS:08 is provided in the enclosed brochure and project timeline.

The chief administrative officer of your institution has selected you as your institution's coordinator for NPSAS:08. You will have three primary responsibilities for NPSAS:08:

- Complete the *Institution Registration Page* online at the NPSAS website, within the next few weeks, using the UNITID and password printed at the top of this letter. We will schedule data collection for your institution based on the information you provide. (This can also be done by telephone, if you prefer.)
- Oversee the preparation of an enrollment list of students at your institution. These data files will be used to draw a small sample of students from your institution for participation in NPSAS:08. Sampled students will be asked to complete a questionnaire on the Internet.
- Complete a separate web-based program requiring institution record information on such things as enrollment status, demographic characteristics, and financial assistance provided for the sampled students.

Complete instructions for your institution's participation will be sent directly to you in advance of your institution's due date. This date is tailored to your institution's term structure. (Your student enrollment list is due two weeks after the start of the last term at your institution that includes April 30, 2007.) **In the meantime**, please review the enclosed materials at your earliest convenience.

We are aware that you and other staff at your institution are confronted with many competing demands for your time. We hope that giving you this advance notice of the study will provide you with ample time to plan for your school's participation in NPSAS:08. A project representative will call you in the next few days to ensure that you have received this notification and to answer any questions that you may have. You may also call the NPSAS Help Desk directly at 1-888-NPSAS411(1-888-677-2741).

All responses that relate to or describe identifiable characteristics of individuals may be used only for statistical purposes and may not be disclosed, or used, in identifiable form for any other purpose, unless otherwise compelled by law. The enclosed materials detail our data collection procedures and provide a detailed description of the laws and procedures safeguarding the confidentiality of questionnaire responses, contact information, and demographic data collected. Additional information, including reports based on data from previous NPSAS studies, is available on the NPSAS website:
<https://surveys.nces.ed.gov/NPSASschool>.

RTI International, the contractor for the study, is a not-for-profit research organization based in North Carolina. If you have questions about the study or procedures, please contact the RTI NPSAS Project Coordinator, Brian Kuhr, at 1-888-677-2741 or via e-mail at NPSASschool@rti.org. You may also direct questions to NCES by contacting James Griffith at 1-202-502-7387 (e-mail address: James.Griffith@ed.gov).

At your earliest convenience, please complete the *Institution Registration Page* online at the NPSAS website, using the IPEDS UNITID and password printed on the first page of this letter.

We look forward to your participation in this important study.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Sincerely,



Mark Schneider
Commissioner
National Center for Education Statistics

Enclosures

The NPSAS *Institution Registration Page* may be completed
online at

<https://surveys.nces.ed.gov/NPSASschool>

To access the *Institution Registration Page*, enter the
IPEDS UNITID and password printed on the first page of
this letter.

Institution Coordinator List Participation Letter

NPSAS
Endorsed by

American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers

American Association of Community Colleges

American Association of State Colleges and Universities

American Council on Education

Association for Institutional Research

Association of American Colleges and Universities

Association of Catholic Colleges and Universities

Association of Schools of Allied Health Professions

Career College Association

The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching

The College Board

Council of Graduate Schools

The Council of Independent Colleges

Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities

Midwestern Higher Education Compact

National Accrediting Commission of Cosmetology Arts and Sciences

National Association of College and University Business Officers

National Association for Equal Opportunity in Higher Education

National Association of Independent Colleges and Universities

National Association of State Universities and Land-Grant Colleges

National Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators

New England Board of Higher Education

Southern Regional Education Board

State Higher Education Executive Officers

The United Negro College Fund

Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education

<date>

«salutation» «fname» «lname»

«Title»

«entity_name»

«phys_addr1»

«phys_addr2»

«phys_city», «phys_state» «phys_zip»

Your IPEDS UNITID: «entity_id»

Your password: «password»

Student Enrollment List Due: «list_expected_Date_curr»

Dear «salutation» «lname»,

We are pleased that «entity_name» has agreed to participate in the 2008 National Postsecondary Student Aid Study (NPSAS:08) field test, which is sponsored by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), U.S. Department of Education. As described in our earlier letter to you, NCES is mandated by Congress to conduct this important study on how students and their families finance education after high school. This study is being conducted for NCES by RTI International.

As you know, you have been designated as your institution’s coordinator for NPSAS:08. We look forward to working with you on this important research effort, and are available to answer any questions you may have.

As the Institution Coordinator, you are asked to oversee completion of the following tasks:

- Complete the *Institution Registration Page* online at <https://surveys.nces.ed.gov/NPSASschool>, using the UNITID and password printed at the top of this letter. If you have not completed the Institution Registration Page, please do so as soon as possible. Where possible, term information and grant/scholarship information entered previously for the 2003/2004 cycle of the study and/or available from publicly available sources has been pre-loaded for your convenience. This information simply needs to be updated, amended, or corrected to reflect the current 2006/2007 academic year.
- Oversee the preparation of an enrollment list of students at your institution. This data file will be used to draw a small sample of students from your institution for participation in the NPSAS:08 field test. Beginning in the spring of 2007, sampled students will be asked to complete a questionnaire via the Internet.
- Complete a separate web-based program requiring institution record information on such things as enrollment status, demographic characteristics, and financial assistance provided for the sampled students.

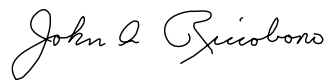
The initial due date for providing your student enrollment list is «list_expected_Date_curr». Complete specifications for compiling this list and uploading it to the secure website are provided online. Your deadline date is tailored to your institution’s term structure.

If you are unable to meet this deadline, or have any questions about the information requested for the student list, please contact the NPSAS Help Desk at 1-888-677-2741. All responses that relate to or describe identifiable characteristics of individuals may be used only for statistical purposes and may not be disclosed, or used, in identifiable form for any other purpose, unless otherwise compelled by law. The NPSAS website at <https://surveys.nces.ed.gov/NPSASschool> provides complete instructions for participation, including a detailed description of the laws and procedures safeguarding the confidentiality of questionnaire responses, contact information, and demographic data collected. Additional information, including reports based on data from previous NPSAS studies, is also available on the NPSAS website.

If you have questions about the study or procedures, please contact the NPSAS Help Desk at 1-888-677-2741 or via e-mail at NPSASschool@rti.org. You may also direct questions to NCES by contacting James Griffith at 1-202-502-7387 (e-mail address: James.Griffith@ed.gov).

Thank you for your cooperation.

Sincerely,



John Riccobono
Project Director, NPSAS
RTI International

Your institution's response to the National Postsecondary Student Aid Study may be completed online at:

<https://surveys.nces.ed.gov/NPSASschool>

To upload lists or other data collection forms, go to the **login** tab found on the home/login page. You will be prompted to enter the IPEDS UNITID and password printed on the first **page of this letter**.

WebCADE Letter

NPSAS
Endorsed by

American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers

American Association of Community Colleges

American Association of State Colleges and Universities

American Council on Education

Association for Institutional Research

Association of American Colleges and Universities

Association of Catholic Colleges and Universities

Association of Schools of Allied Health Professions

Career College Association

The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching

The College Board

Council of Graduate Schools

The Council of Independent Colleges

Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities

Midwestern Higher Education Compact

National Accrediting Commission of Cosmetology Arts and Sciences

National Association of College and University Business Officers

National Association for Equal Opportunity in Higher Education

National Association of Independent Colleges and Universities

National Association of State Universities and Land-Grant Colleges

National Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators

New England Board of Higher Education

Southern Regional Education Board

State Higher Education Executive Officers

The United Negro College Fund

Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education

<date>

«salutation» «fname» «lname»
 «Title»
 «entity_name»
 «phys_addr1»
 «phys_addr2»
 «phys_city», «phys_state» «phys_zip»

Your IPEDS UNITID: «entity_id»
 Your password: «password»

webCADE Due: «list_expected_Date_curr»

Dear «salutation» «lname»,

Thank you for your cooperation and participation in the 2008 National Postsecondary Student Aid Study (NPSAS:08). I am writing to let you know that we have finished processing the student enrollment file you sent, and have selected a random sample of [# **sampled**] students from your institution for participation in the study. We will send separate correspondence to these students asking that they complete a questionnaire either over the Internet or by telephone interview. At the same time, we are asking that you begin entering data for these students in the webCADE software. Please complete the record abstraction and data entry for these students on or before **[DUE DATE]**

In previous materials, we described to you the Internet-based system through which you (or someone on your staff) will be able to enter data for these students. This process is known as “webCADE” – web-enabled computer-assisted data entry. We believe you will find the NPSAS webCADE system easy to use. The website that you will access is the same one that you have used for prior elements of the study: <https://surveys.nces.ed.gov/NPSASschool>.

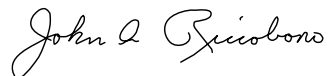
To assist you with the webCADE process, we have enclosed a webCADE User’s Guide that describes how to access and use the NPSAS webCADE software. Appendix B of the guide contains a list of data elements we would like to obtain for each sampled student. The list of sampled students can be found on the website listed above, and you can easily print a hardcopy if you would like one.

Please be assured that we consider the security of the data and confidentiality of our study participants to be of the utmost importance, and the webCADE software has been developed with this in mind. The application encrypts all data, with the latest technologies, before transmitting them over the Internet to RTI. Moreover, access to the list of students (and the forms in which users enter the data) will require your authentication using your IPEDS UNITID and unique password. They are printed near the top of this page for your convenience. Please ensure that access is given only to those at your institution authorized to complete webCADE.

Soon, our RTI project staff will call you to confirm receipt of this material and also confirm the completion date for entering student data in the webCADE software. Help Desk staff will be available to answer any questions or concerns that you may have about the study or entering student data in the webCADE software from 9:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. ET, Monday through Friday. You may contact the NPSAS Help Desk at 1-888-677-2741, toll-free, or via e-mail at NPSASschool@rti.org. You may also direct questions about the study to NCES by contacting James Griffith at 1-202-502-7387 (e-mail address: James.Griffith@ed.gov).

Again, thank you for your continued participation in this important study. We look forward to receiving your data.

Sincerely,



John Riccobono
Project Director, NPSAS
RTI International

Your institution's response to the National Postsecondary Student Aid Study may be completed online at

<https://surveys.nces.ed.gov/NPSASschool>

To access webCADE, go to the **Log in** link on the Home page. Then enter the IPEDS UNITID below as your Username and enter the password below.

Your IPEDS UNITID: «entity_id»

Your password: «password»

DataCADE Letter

NPSAS
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American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers

American Association of Community Colleges

American Association of State Colleges and Universities

American Council on Education

Association for Institutional Research

Association of American Colleges and Universities

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Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education

<date>

«salutation» «fname» «lname»
 «Title»
 «entity_name»
 «phys_addr1»
 «phys_addr2»
 «phys_city», «phys_state» «phys_zip»

Your IPEDS UNITID: «entity_id»
 Your password: «password»

Due Date: «list_expected_Date_curr»

Dear «salutation» «lname», Thank you for your cooperation and participation in the 2008 National Postsecondary Student Aid Study (NPSAS:08). We have processed the student enrollment file that you provided and have selected a random sample of [# **sampled**] students from your institution for participation in the study. Our records show that your institution has opted to provide the NPSAS record abstraction information for these students via data files that will be uploaded to the NPSAS website. We are asking you to create the data files and upload the requested information for all sampled students to the NPSAS website on or before [**DUE DATE**]. The website that you will access to upload the files is the same site that you have used for prior elements of the study: <https://surveys.nces.ed.gov/NPSASschool>.

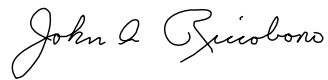
To assist you with this request, we have enclosed specifications for the data files and instructions for preparing and uploading them. These documents and a list of sampled students can also be found on the website listed above. Please note that a secure web-based data entry tool (webCADE) is also available if you decide that you would prefer to key the data for each individual student instead of creating/uploading combined data files.

Please be assured that we consider the security of the data and confidentiality of our study participants to be of the utmost importance, and the NPSAS website has been developed with these concerns in mind. Using the latest technologies, the application encrypts all data before transmitting them over the Internet to RTI. Moreover, access to the list of students (and the forms in which users enter data) will require your authentication using your IPEDS UNITID and unique password. They are printed near the top of this page for your convenience. Please ensure that access is given only to those at your institution authorized to complete the requested student record abstraction.

Our RTI project staff will call you soon to confirm receipt of this material and also confirm the due date for uploading your completed data files to the NPSAS website. If you choose to switch to webCADE, please let us know by contacting the NPSAS Help Desk at 1-888-677-2741, toll-free, or via e-mail at NPSASschool@rti.org, or you may simply tell the NPSAS project member when this person calls you. Help Desk staff will be available to answer any questions or concerns that you may have about the study from 9:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. ET, Monday through Friday. You may also direct questions about the study to NCES by contacting James Griffith at 1-202-502-7387 (e-mail address: James.Griffith@ed.gov).

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Your IPEDS UNITID: «entity_id»

Your password: «password»

DataCADE Background and Instructions

2008 National Postsecondary Student Aid Study (NPSAS:08) DataCADE Background and Instructions

What is NPSAS:08 dataCADE?

The **2008 National Postsecondary Student Aid Study (NPSAS:08)** collects student financial aid, registration/admissions, and enrollment/tuition data for students randomly selected from the enrollment list provided by your institution. Data collection is accomplished in two parts. The first set of data is obtained directly from the student through the completion of a self-administered web questionnaire or a telephone interview that is conducted with the student. The second set of data, provided by the institution, is captured from the student's record at the institution. These instructions are designed for institutions that have chosen to create data files to provide student record data abstracted from institutional files.

Student Eligibility

To be considered eligible for NPSAS:08, students sampled must have been enrolled in **any term** between July 1, 2006, and June 30, 2007, and satisfy **all** of the following requirements:

- The student was enrolled during these dates in at least one term or course of instruction that is one of the following (i.e., student considered to be eligible for Title IV aid):
 - an academic program;
 - at least one course for credit that could be applied toward fulfilling the requirements for an academic degree; *or*
 - an occupational or vocational program that requires at least 3 months or 300 clock hours of instruction to receive a degree, certificate, or other formal award.
- The student *was not* enrolled concurrently in high school and your institution during this *entire* period. (Note: If a student was enrolled in high school the entire time that he/she was enrolled in courses at your institution during the period of time listed above, then that student is not eligible. However, if a student was enrolled in both high school and your institution but then completed high school and was enrolled only in your institution at any time within the period of time listed above, that student is eligible.)
- The student *was not* enrolled in your institution during this *entire* period solely for the purpose of earning a general equivalency diploma (GED) or finishing another high school completion program. (Note: If the student completed such a program at your institution and then enrolled in another course of instruction at your institution any time within the period of time listed above, the student is eligible.)
- The student *was not* enrolled in your institution during these dates only for vocational purposes, not receiving credit.
- The student *did not* drop out of your institution early enough to receive a full refund of his tuition.
- The student *did not* pay tuition during these dates *solely* to a different institution.

Your institution used a similar definition in creating the list of students enrolled. The difference in that definition and the one above are the dates. For the student enrollment list, we requested all students who were enrolled at your institution between the dates of July 1, 2006 and April 30, 2007. For CADE we use the period from July 1, 2006 to June 30, 2007. The reason for the earlier end date for student enrollment lists is because we need to provide a cut-off point that allows us to receive the student lists early enough in our data collection period that we have sufficient time afterward to select sample students from the list and then request and collect CADE data for those students.

Please use the above definition including the time period July 1, 2006 to June 30, 2007 to evaluate the eligibility of the students sampled for CADE. If a sampled student is not eligible but is listed in your sample for dataCADE, you will need to indicate this on the NPSAS website. Instructions for doing so are provided later in this document.

Confidentiality Provisions

The Family Education Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA) allows RTI International (RTI) to obtain student information from institutions.¹ As contractor for this research, RTI is acting as an agent of the U.S. Department of Education. All student information obtained will be kept confidential. Any student data released to the general public (for example, statistical tables) are designed so that it is not possible to identify specific individuals. The data may be used only for statistical purposes and may not be disclosed, or used, in identifiable form for any other purpose except as required by law.

All responses that permit the identification of individuals will be protected by the Education Sciences Reform Act of 2002 (ESRA) (Public Law 107-279) and its predecessor, the National Education Statistics Act of 1994 (NESA) (Public Law 103-382) as amended by the U.S.A. Patriot Act of 2001 [Public Law 107-56], which provide the authority to the U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), to collect, compile, and disseminate full and complete statistics on the condition and progress of education, including postsecondary education. ESRA establishes that NCES and its contractors, under penalty of law, must keep all records on individuals confidential. Researchers are subject to fines and imprisonment for misuse or disclosure of individual data. Procedures have been implemented to ensure confidentiality and privacy of all information obtained.

Please refer to the Frequently Asked Questions on confidentiality on the NPSAS website for more information on how the data are maintained and how the website is secured, as well as copies of the confidentiality agreements that are signed by all project staff. In addition, a Disclosure Notice form may also be printed from the NPSAS website. Institutions may place one in each sampled student's file. A copy of the form is included in this packet.

Computer Capability Requirements

To use the NPSAS website, your computer must possess the following (at a minimum):

- An **Internet connection** (high-speed cable is optimum).
- A **web browser**, such as Netscape 6.0 or higher, Microsoft Internet Explorer 6.0 or higher, or FireFox 1.5 or higher with the following:
 - **128-bit encryption.** Browser settings may need to be adjusted or an update may need to be downloaded to activate 128-bit encryption.
 - 1. **JavaScript enabled.** JavaScript is the programming language of the interactive sections of our website and must be enabled for many pages to work properly.
 - 2. **Secure Sockets Layer (SSL) enabled.** SSL is used to provide additional security for our website and your data.
 - 3. **Session cookies enabled.** Session cookies are small text files stored in your RAM, temporarily, until the browser is closed. Session cookies are not stored on your hard drive and are automatically removed at the end of the browsing session.

Before beginning, it is best to verify that your computer has the above capabilities and that browser options are set properly. Most computers will have the required RAM and one of the required web browsers already loaded.

Completing dataCADE


The data we require for the study consist of approximately 200 data elements for each student in the sample. We have separated the data elements into eight files. Follow the steps below to abstract sampled student records.

1. Access the NPSAS:08 website at this web address: <https://surveys.nces.ed.gov/NPSASschool/>. On the NPSAS Home page, log in using the username and password printed on the letter sent with these instructions. Click on the **dataCADE** link to access the screen shown below (only part of the screen is shown here).

¹ RTI International is a trade name of Research Triangle Institute.

NPSAS

National Postsecondary Student Aid Study
OMB Clearance No.: 1850-0666 Exp. Date: 1/31/2010



[Home](#) [About NPSAS](#) [Early Contact](#) [Endorsements](#) [FAQs](#) [Forms/Instructions](#) [Legal Authority](#)
[Contact Us](#) [Help](#) [Logout](#)

Import DataCADE Files

The data we require for the study consists of approximately 200 data elements for each student in the sample. We have separated the data elements into eight files. Each of your data files must strictly adhere to the the layout requirements provided below. We can accept either fixed width or csv format. Click the following links to view a printable set of specs for each of the eight data files and to view a printable list of sampled students.

[General](#) [Locating](#) [Tests](#) [Terms](#) [Budget](#) [Enrollment](#) [Aid](#) [Other Aid](#)

[Printable List of Sampled Students](#)

Steps Prior to Uploading

It is possible that some of the students you provided on your Enrollment List are now ineligible for the NPSAS study. If so, you must [Mark Student\(s\) As Ineligible](#) before uploading your files. If necessary, review the [Eligibility Criteria](#).

GPA Scale: indicate what GPA scale this institution uses below. If your institution uses more than one scale, please select "Other". For users that are reporting for more than one institution: if all of the institutions use the same GPA scale, please select it below. If not, please select "Other".

4.0 Scale (where 4.0 is the highest) 100 point scale or percentages Other N/A

Steps for Uploading

When you are ready to upload the completed data files, follow the four steps below for each of the eight files:

1. Select the file type.
2. Specify the file format.
3. Select the data file on your computer to upload.
4. Push the upload button.

2. Review the data file specifications enclosed in this packet. They are also provided on the NPSAS website on the Import DataCADE Files screen. Each of your data files must strictly adhere to the layout requirements. We can accept either Fixed Width or CSV (comma separated values) format. The specifications will tell you what data are needed in each of the files and in what sequence and position.

If your institution provided dataCADE files in the 2004 NPSAS round, you may want to view the changes between the 2004 file specifications and the current ones. The changes are listed below the current specifications on the hardcopy file specifications included with these instructions. You can also view them online by clicking on the box labeled "Show changes from '04 specs" that appears near the top of each of the eight file specifications screens.

3. Review the list of sampled students. On the Import DataCADE Files screen, click on the **Printable List of Sampled Students** to view or print the list. You can click on any column heading to sort the list.
4. Mark students ineligible, if needed. If a sampled student is not eligible by the criteria listed earlier in these instructions but is listed in your sample for dataCADE, you must indicate this. Click on the **Mark Student(s) As Ineligible** link and you will see a new screen (see example below). The screen will contain a list of sampled students. Click on the box next to each student who is not eligible. You must mark students ineligible *before* uploading data files. Do not include ineligible students in the eight dataCADE files created.

[Print this page](#) [Return to Import page](#)

Ineligible Students

If any of the sampled students below are ineligible, click on the box next to the student to mark them as ineligible. Do not include these students in the eight data files that you create and upload. You will not be able to make changes to this screen after you upload the first data file.

Npsas ID	Name ▲	Student ID	Level	Ineligible
99900300	Arlington, Alice A	99900300	UG	<input type="checkbox"/>
99900306	Bell, Alexander G	99900306	P	<input type="checkbox"/>
99900301	Doe, Jane	99900301	GR	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
99900302	Frost, Robert H	99900302	P	<input type="checkbox"/>
99900305	Moore, Warren B	99900305	GR	<input type="checkbox"/>
99900307	Patterson, Sarah M	99900307	UG	<input type="checkbox"/>
99900304	Smith, Deborah R	99900304	UG	<input type="checkbox"/>
99900303	West, Brian P	99900303	UG	<input type="checkbox"/>

5. On the Import DataCADE Files screen, indicate what type of Grade Point Average (GPA) scale your institution uses. If your institution uses more than one scale, please select “Other.” For users that are reporting for more than one institution: if all of the institutions use the same GPA scale, please select it. If not, please select “Other.”
6. Create the eight data files containing the requested data for the sampled students. Do not include ineligible students in the data files you create.
7. Upload data files to the NPSAS website within 3 weeks of receipt of this packet.

How to Upload the Data Files

When you are ready to upload the completed data files, log on to the NPSAS website using the username and password printed on the letter sent in this packet. Then click on the link to **dataCADE** to access the Import DataCADE Files screen. Next, follow the four steps below for each of the eight files to upload them:

1. Select the file type by clicking the circle to the left of the type of file you are uploading: General, Locating, Tests, Terms, Budget, Enrollment, Aid, or Other Aid.
2. Select the file format: Fixed Width or CSV. In a fixed-width (or fixed-length field) data file, every row of data is exactly the same width. When the rows contain data in multiple columns, the data fields will be in consistent positions within the rows. CSV is a delimited data format that has fields separated by the comma character and records/rows separated by new lines.
3. Select the data file on your computer. Click the **Browse** button to locate the file you want to upload on your computer. When you locate it, double-click on the file with your mouse. The file name will appear in the box on the screen.
4. Click the **Upload** button. A new screen will open with a message telling you whether the file was successfully uploaded. If the file uploaded successfully, you will see a message appear on the new screen: “The file was uploaded successfully.” If there are errors detected with the file, such as a value that is outside of the specified range, you will see a message: “The file was uploaded, but the following items need attention.” Below the message a list of errors will be displayed. Please correct these errors and upload the file again. Example error messages are shown below for a Tests data file.

The file was uploaded, but the following items need attention.

Item
Row 1 Field 3 (SatVerbalScore): Must be in the range 200 - 800
Row 2 skipped (The NPSAS Study ID is not numeric or does not exist. Please check.)
Row 4 Field 3 (SatVerbalScore): Must be in the range 200 - 800
Row 4 Field 4 (SatMathScore): Must be in the range 200 - 800
Row 4 Field 5 (SatWritingScore): Must be in the range 200 - 800

If there are more than 20 rows in a data file with at least one error, the list of errors will be truncated after listing the errors for the first 20 rows of the data file and you will see an error message. Please address the errors listed and upload the file again.

Upload Statuses of the Data Files

There is an upload history table under the Upload button on the Import DataCADE Files screen, entitled DataCADE File Upload Status. This table will display the status of each of the eight requested data files. The keys for the icons used in the table are displayed below the table (see following example table).

Upload
4

DataCADE File Upload Status

File Type	Last Upload	Upload Attempts	Data Quality	Student Count Sufficient?
General	4/5/2007 5:29:10 PM	2	❗	❗
Locating	4/5/2007 5:29:31 PM	1	⚠	✅
Tests	4/5/2007 5:29:57 PM	1	⚠	✅
Terms	4/5/2007 5:30:59 PM	1	✅	✅
Budget	4/5/2007 5:31:43 PM	1	✅	✅
Enrollment	4/5/2007 5:33:29 PM	1	⚠	❗
Aid	4/5/2007 5:34:01 PM	1	✅	✅
Other Aid	4/5/2007 5:33:07 PM	3	✅	✅

Data Quality Key

❗ Not uploaded yet	❗❗ Upload failed - too many errors	❗❗ Upload failed - no rows uploaded	⚠ Uploaded with some errors	✅ Uploaded successfully
--------------------	------------------------------------	-------------------------------------	-----------------------------	-------------------------

Student Count Key

❗ Not uploaded yet	❗ The uploaded file did not contain data for a sufficient number of students	✅ The uploaded file contained data for a sufficient number of students
--------------------	--	--

The file type is listed in the left-hand column. The Last Upload column shows the date and time of the last upload for that type of file (if any). The Upload Attempts column shows how many times the file has been uploaded (or the user has attempted to upload it). The Data Quality column shows the quality status of the upload. You will see one of five statuses:

- Not uploaded yet
- Upload failed – too many errors
- Upload failed – no rows uploaded



Uploaded with some errors



Uploaded successfully (i.e., no errors detected)

The last column is the Student Count Sufficient indicator. The statuses shown in this column indicate whether the file uploaded contained data for a sufficient number of students. For example, we require one row for each sample student (minus ineligible) in the General file. If the uploaded file contains one row for each sampled student (and none are ineligible), the Student Count Sufficient column will show a checkmark. If there are fewer rows of data than the number of sample students in the uploaded file, the Student Count Sufficient column will show an exclamation point. You will see one of three statuses in this column:



Not uploaded yet



The uploaded file did not contain data for a sufficient number of students. (If you hover your cursor over this icon, you will see a message indicating the number of expected students and the discrepant number of students detected in the uploaded file.)



The uploaded file contained data for a sufficient number of students

Finishing the Process

When the Data Quality and Student Count Sufficient columns contain checkmarks for all eight requested files, a button labeled **All Files Uploaded** will appear on the screen (see following example). Press the button to indicate that you are done uploading files. Pressing the button will send an e-mail to the primary coordinator at your institution notifying you/him/her that dataCADE has been completed.

Upload
All Files Uploaded
4

You have successfully uploaded all files. You must click this button to submit your data.

DataCADE File Upload Status

File Type	Last Upload	Upload Attempts	Data Quality	Student Count Sufficient?
General	4/5/2007 5:37:27 PM	3	✓	✓
Locating	4/5/2007 5:37:16 PM	2	✓	✓
Tests	4/5/2007 5:37:40 PM	2	✓	✓
Terms	4/5/2007 5:30:59 PM	1	✓	✓
Budget	4/5/2007 5:31:43 PM	1	✓	✓
Enrollment	4/5/2007 5:37:51 PM	2	✓	✓
Aid	4/5/2007 5:34:01 PM	1	✓	✓
Other Aid	4/5/2007 5:33:07 PM	3	✓	✓

Contacting the NPSAS Project

The NPSAS Help Desk can be reached toll-free at 1-888-NPSAS411 (1-888-677-2741) if users have any questions or experience any difficulty accessing or using the site. The Help Desk is available Monday through Friday, 9:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. Eastern time. After hours, users may leave a message; our staff will return the call as soon as possible. NPSAS staff may also be reached by e-mail at NPSASschool@rti.org. We will respond to e-mail the same (or next) business day.

You may also wish to review the Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) that are accessible from the NPSAS website main menu page. These provide additional details regarding the research project. From the NPSAS Home page, click on the link entitled **frequently asked questions (FAQs)**. Then click on the link entitled **Completing Student Record Abstractions (webCADE)**. Please note that some of the FAQs refer specifically to using webCADE, which is a web-based data entry application for CADE.

NPSAS
Endorsed by

FieldCADE Letter

American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers

American Association of Community Colleges

American Association of State Colleges and Universities

American Council on Education

Association for Institutional Research

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Southern Regional Education Board

State Higher Education Executive Officers

The United Negro College Fund

Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education

<date>

<<salutation>> <<fname>> <<lname>>

<<Title>>

<<entity_name>>

<<phys_addr1>>

<<phys_addr2>>

<<phys_city>>, <<phys_state>> <<phys_zip>>

Your IPEDS UNITID: <<entity_id>>

Your password: <<password>>

Due Date: <<list_expected_Date_curr>>

Dear <<salutation>> <<lname>>,

Thank you for your cooperation and participation in the 2008 National Postsecondary Student Aid Study (NPSAS:08). We have processed the student enrollment file that you provided and have selected a random sample of [# **sampled**] students from your institution for participation in the study. Our records show that your institution has opted to provide the NPSAS record abstraction information for these students via data files that will be uploaded to the NPSAS website. We are asking you to create the data files and upload the requested information for all sampled students to the NPSAS website on or before **[DUE DATE]**. The website that you will access to upload the files is the same site that you have used for prior elements of the study:

<https://surveys.nces.ed.gov/NPSASschool>.

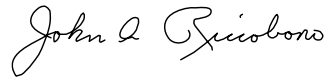
To assist you with this request, we have enclosed specifications for the data files and instructions for preparing and uploading them. These documents and a list of sampled students can also be found on the website listed above. Please note that a secure web-based data entry tool (webCADE) is also available if you decide that you would prefer to key the data for each individual student instead of creating/uploading combined data files.

Please be assured that we consider the security of the data and confidentiality of our study participants to be of the utmost importance, and the NPSAS website has been developed with these concerns in mind. Using the latest technologies, the application encrypts all data before transmitting them over the Internet to RTI. Moreover, access to the list of students (and the forms in which users enter data) will require your authentication using your IPEDS UNITID and unique password. They are printed near the top of this page for your convenience. Please ensure that access is given only to those at your institution authorized to complete the requested student record abstraction.

Our RTI project staff will call you soon to confirm receipt of this material and also confirm the due date for uploading your completed data files to the NPSAS website. If you choose to switch to webCADE, please let us know by contacting the NPSAS Help Desk at 1-888-677-2741, toll-free, or via e-mail at NPSASschool@rti.org, or you may simply tell the NPSAS project member when this person calls you. Help Desk staff will be available to answer any questions or concerns that you may have about the study from 9:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. ET, Monday through Friday. You may also direct questions about the study to NCES by contacting James Griffith at 1-202-502-7387 (e-mail address: James.Griffith@ed.gov).

Again, thank you for your continued participation in this important study. We look forward to receiving your data.

Sincerely,



John Riccobono
Project Director, NPSAS
RTI International

Your institution's response to the National Postsecondary Student Aid Study may be completed online at

<https://surveys.nces.ed.gov/NPSASschool>

To access the site, go to the **Log in** link on the Home page. Then enter the IPEDS UNITID below as your Username and enter the password below.

Your IPEDS UNITID: «entity_id»

Your password: «password»



The 2008 National Postsecondary Student Aid Study (NPSAS:08)

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) About WebCADE

1. What are the system requirements for completing webCADE via the Internet?

To use webCADE (web-enabled computer assisted data entry), your computer must possess (at a minimum):

- An Internet connection (high-speed cable is optimum).
- A web browser, such as Netscape 6.0 or higher, Microsoft Internet Explorer 6.0 or higher, or FireFox 1.5 or higher with the following:
 - 128-bit encryption. You may have to adjust your browser settings or download an update to activate 128-bit encryption.
 - JavaScript enabled. JavaScript is the programming language of the interactive sections of our web site and must be enabled for many pages to work properly.
 - Secure Sockets Layer (SSL) enabled. SSL is used to provide additional security for our website and your data.
 - Session cookies enabled. Session cookies are small text files temporarily stored in your RAM until you close your browser. Session cookies are not stored on your hard drive and are automatically removed at the end of the browsing session.

2. How confidential is this website?

For this and all other web-based data collections that are part of NPSAS, proven methods of protection for online sessions and data security over the Internet are being used. Secure Sockets Layer (SSL) protocol is used to encrypt the data over the Internet. All data entry modules on the website are password protected and require the user to log in to the site before accessing confidential data. The system will automatically log the user out after 20 minutes of inactivity on the session, preventing unauthorized user access to the site.

3. What about confidentiality of the data collected?

Privacy and confidentiality are always of concern to institutions and offices that maintain student and employee records. Both NCES and RTI follow strict confidentiality procedures to protect the privacy and confidentiality of study participants. The *Confidentiality Fact Sheet* on the NPSAS website describes our security arrangements and provides more details on how data are maintained. Any data released to the public will be in aggregate form (for example, statistical tables). Restricted use data files (which contain record-level data, but no identifying information) are available only to a limited number of qualified researchers, who must pledge, under penalty of law with severe fines and imprisonment, to maintain the confidentiality of the data.

4. Do we need to have the student's permission before providing this information?

The data request for NPSAS fully conforms to the requirements of the Federal Education Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA) [20 United States Code 1232g; 34 CFR Part 99]. FERPA is designed to protect the privacy rights of students and their families, by providing consistent standards for the release of personally identifiable student and family information. The National Center for Education

Statistics (NCES) and its agent, RTI International (RTI), are authorized by the provisions of FERPA to obtain student-level data from institutions. These data are subject to strict confidentiality protections, which must be adhered to by both NCES and RTI.

Student or parental consent is not required for release of information to NCES. FERPA explicitly states in 34 CFR 99.31 that an educational institution may disclose personally identifiable information from an education record of a student without prior consent if the disclosure is to an organization conducting studies for, or on behalf of, educational agencies or institutions. A definition of personally identifiable information can be found in 34 CFR 99.3. Personal identifiers, such as Social Security number and student number, are included in the definition. You may review a summary of this legislation on the U.S. Department of Education’s website: <http://www.ed.gov/offices/OIIfpco/ferpa/>.

5. By what authority does RTI collect this information?

RTI, as contracted by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), has been given the authority to collect information from institutional records under the provisions of the Education Sciences Reform Act of 2002 (ESRA) [Public Law 107-279], and its predecessor, the National Education Statistics Act of 1994 [Public Law 103-382] as amended by the U.S.A. Patriot Act of 2001 [Public Law 107-56], which authorize NCES to collect, acquire, compile, and disseminate full and complete statistics on the condition and progress of education, including postsecondary education. In addition, NPSAS is in compliance with the Federal Statistical Confidentiality Order of 1997, the Privacy Act of 1974 [5 United States Code 552a], and the E-Government Act of 2002 [Public Law 107-347].

6. Where do I go for the information requested?

The information needed for each of the sampled students potentially comes from three distinct (document or online) sources of data at your institution: the Admissions or Registrar’s Office; the Bursar’s or Business Office; and the Financial Aid Office. If you require assistance after reviewing the enclosed webCADE User’s Guide, please contact the Help Desk with your questions at 1-888-NPSAS411 (1-888-677-2741), toll-free, or via e-mail at NPSASschool@rti.org.

7. How long does this data abstraction take?

Because this abstraction requires accessing information from students’ files (electronic or hard copy), and institutions have different methods of record keeping, our estimates indicate that completing webCADE will take about 13 hours on average. If you have any concerns with either the sample size or the amount of time it is taking you to complete webCADE, please call the Help Desk at 1-888-NPSAS411 (1-888-677-2741), toll-free. RTI will work with you to ensure you have the support needed to successfully complete this study’s data collection efforts.

8. Can I provide a data file instead of using the webCADE data entry application?

In some instances, it may be possible for an institution with programming capability to create an ASCII file with a layout that matches the structure behind webCADE. If you are interested in doing this, please speak with RTI’s Help Desk at 1-888-NPSAS411 (1-888-677-2741), toll-free, to obtain the data file specifications you will need to consider this option. Creating the data files is not the same as creating a “data dump” of the information. After reviewing the data file specifications, please recontact the Help Desk or send an e-mail to NPSASschool@rti.org and we will contact you.

Additional FAQs can be found on the NPSAS website: <https://surveys.nces.ed.gov/NPSASschool>.

Student Contacting Letters

Student Lead Letter

<date>

NPSAS:08
Endorsed by

American Association of
Collegiate Registrars and
Admissions Officers

American Association of
Community Colleges

American Association of State
Colleges and Universities

American Council on Education

Association for Institutional
Research

Association of American
Colleges and Universities

Association of Catholic Colleges
and Universities

Association of Schools of Allied
Health Professions

Career College Association

The Carnegie Foundation for the
Advancement of Teaching

The College Board

Council of Graduate Schools

The Council of Independent
Colleges

Hispanic Association of Colleges
and Universities

Midwestern Higher Education
Compact

National Accrediting Commission
of Cosmetology Arts and
Sciences

National Association of College
and University Business Officers

National Association for Equal
Opportunity in Higher Education

National Association of
Independent Colleges and
Universities

National Association of State
Universities and
Land-Grant Colleges

National Association of Student
Financial Aid Administrators

New England Board of Higher
Education

Southern Regional Education
Board

State Higher Education
Executive Officers

The United Negro College Fund

Western Interstate Commission
for Higher Education

<fname> <mname> <lname> <suffix>
<addr1>
<addr2>
<city>, <state> <zip>

Study ID: <caseid>
<panelinfo>

Dear <fname> <lname>:

I am writing to ask you to participate in an important study that will help determine how students and their families meet the cost of education beyond high school. For your participation, I would like for you to complete a questionnaire over the Internet. On average, the questionnaire takes about 25 minutes to complete.

When you access the questionnaire on the Internet, you will be asked questions about how you paid for your school expenses during the 2006–2007 school year, including whether you received financial aid. If you received financial aid, you will be asked whether the amount of aid was enough to meet your educational expenses. If you did not receive financial aid, you will be asked about how you met your school expenses.

Students from all types of institutions and all financial situations have been randomly selected to participate in the 2008 National Postsecondary Student Aid Study. Your responses along with those of other selected students will represent responses of all students enrolled in postsecondary education. Therefore, your participation in this study is critical.

To complete the questionnaire over the Internet, go to <https://surveys.nces.ed.gov/npsas>. Type the study ID and password (provided below) on the Home/Login page, and Press “Enter” or click “Login” to begin the questionnaire.

RTI International (RTI) of North Carolina is conducting the study for the U.S. Department of Education. To express our appreciation, **a \$30 check will be mailed to you, if you complete the questionnaire by <EarlyIncDate>**. If you are unable to complete the survey by that date, an RTI interviewer will call you to complete the questionnaire by telephone.

Participation in this study is voluntary and will not affect any aid or any benefits you receive. The enclosed pamphlet answers many common questions about the study and contains additional information on laws and procedures that protect the confidentiality of your responses.

If you have questions about the study, you can visit our website at <https://surveys.nces.ed.gov/npsas>, you can call us toll-free at 1-877-NPSAS-NOW (1-877-677-2766), or you can e-mail us at npsas@rti.org. Persons who are hearing or speech-impaired can call us at 1-877-212-7230 (TDD).

We sincerely appreciate your participation and thank you in advance for helping us conduct this very important study.

Sincerely,



Mark Schneider
Commissioner
National Center for Education Statistics
Enclosures

<p>Go to: https://surveys.nces.ed.gov/npsas/ Your study ID: <caseid> Your password: <password>m</p>
--

Student Lead Letter (Spanish Version)

NPSAS:08

Patrocinado por:

American Association of
Collegiate Registrars and
Admissions Officers

American Association of
Community Colleges

American Association of State
Colleges and Universities

American Council on
Education

Association for Institutional
Research

Association of American
Colleges and Universities

Association of Catholic
Colleges and Universities

Association of Schools of
Allied Health Professions

Career College Association

The Carnegie Foundation for
the Advancement of Teaching

The College Board

Council of Graduate Schools

The Council of Independent
Colleges

Hispanic Association of
Colleges and Universities

Midwestern Higher Education
Compact

National Accrediting
Commission of Cosmetology
Arts and Sciences

National Association of
College and University
Business Officers

National Association for Equal
Opportunity in Higher
Education

National Association of
Independent Colleges and
Universities

National Association of State
Universities and
Land-Grant Colleges

National Association of
Student Financial Aid
Administrators

New England Board of Higher
Education

Southern Regional Education
Board

State Higher Education
Executive Officers

The United Negro College
Fund

Western Interstate
Commission for Higher
Education

Estimado(a) «fname» «lname»:

Le estoy escribiendo para pedirle que participe en un importante estudio que ayudará a determinar cómo los estudiantes y sus familias costean los gastos de educación después de la secundaria o "high school". Para que participe, me gustaría que completara un cuestionario en la red o Internet. En promedio, el cuestionario toma alrededor de 25 minutos en completarse.

Cuando tenga acceso al cuestionario en Internet, le harán preguntas sobre la forma como pagó por los gastos de sus estudios durante el año académico 2006-2007, incluyendo si recibió ayuda financiera. Si recibió ayuda financiera, le harán preguntas para saber si la cantidad de ayuda que recibió fue suficiente para pagar los gastos educacionales. Si no recibió ayuda financiera, le preguntarán sobre la forma como pagó los gastos escolares.

Estudiantes provenientes de todo tipo de instituciones y de diferentes situaciones financieras han sido seleccionados al azar para participar en el Estudio Nacional de Ayuda a Estudiantes de Postsecundaria 2008. Sus respuestas, así como las de otros estudiantes seleccionados, representarán las respuestas de todos los estudiantes matriculados en educación postsecundaria. Por lo tanto, su participación en este estudio es muy importante.

Para completar el cuestionario en Internet:

Vaya a: <https://surveys.nces.ed.gov/npsas> (disponible en inglés solamente)

En la página principal (Home/Login), ponga el número de identificación del estudio y la contraseña que se encuentran al final de esta carta. Luego presione "Enter" o haga un clic en "Login" para comenzar el cuestionario.

RTI International (RTI) de Carolina del Norte está llevando a cabo el estudio para el Departamento de Educación de los Estados Unidos. Para expresar nuestro agradecimiento, **se le enviará por correo un cheque por \$30 dólares si completa el cuestionario a más tardar el <EARLY INC DATE>**. Si no puede completar el cuestionario para esa fecha, un(a) entrevistador(a) de RTI le llamará para completar el cuestionario por teléfono.

La participación en este estudio es voluntaria y no afectará cualquier ayuda o beneficios que usted recibe. El folleto que adjuntamos a la presente contesta las preguntas más comunes sobre el estudio y contiene información adicional sobre las leyes y procedimientos que protegen la confidencialidad de sus respuestas.

Si tiene preguntas sobre el estudio, puede visitar el sitio de Internet (disponible en inglés solamente) <https://surveys.nces.ed.gov/npsas>, o nos puede llamar al número de teléfono gratuito 1-877-677- 2766 (1-877-NPSAS-NOW), o nos puede enviar un correo electrónico a npsas@rti.org. Personas con problemas de audición o de habla pueden llamarnos al número gratuito 1-877-212-7230 (Línea TDD, por sus siglas en inglés).

Apreciamos sinceramente su participación y le agradecemos de antemano por ayudarnos a realizar este importante estudio.

Atentamente,



Mark Schneider
Comisionado
Centro Nacional de Estadísticas de Educación
Anexos

Vaya a: <https://surveys.nces.ed.gov/npsas>
No. de identificación del estudio: «caseid»
Su contraseña: «password»m

Web Instructions Insert

HOW TO COMPLETE THE NPSAS:08 QUESTIONNAIRE

To complete the self-directed web questionnaire:

1. Go to: <https://surveys.nces.ed.gov/npsas/>
2. At the login and password prompts, enter your study ID and password printed on the letter. Please note that upper/lower case letters must be entered exactly as they appear.
3. Press “Enter” or click “Login” to begin the questionnaire.
4. If you are using a pop-up blocker you will need to temporarily disable it to access the questionnaire.

If you need assistance in completing the self-directed web questionnaire or if you would like to complete the questionnaire over the phone, please call our Help Desk at 1–877–NPSASNOW (1–877–677–2766) for assistance.

You may complete the NPSAS web questionnaire at any time during the data collection period. We will also begin making calls asking study participants to complete the questionnaire over the phone starting on March 5, 2007.

For more information about this study visit the website at:

<https://surveys.nces.ed.gov/npsas>

NOTE: The study has been approved by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB). The valid OMB control number for this information collection is 1850-0666. The expiration date is 01/31/2010. Public reporting burden for this information request in its entirety is estimated at 25 minutes per response. You may send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden, to the U.S. Department of Education, Information Management and Compliance Division, Washington, DC 20202-4651; and to the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reduction Project 1850-0608, Washington, DC 20503.

Reminder/Thank You Postcard



**2008
National
Postsecondary
Student
Aid
Study**

PO Box 12194
Research Triangle Park, NC 27709-2194
RTI Project #0209777.100.236

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

«fname» «mname» «lname»
«Addr1»
«Addr2»
«City», «state» «zip»



**2008
National
Postsecondary
Student
Aid
Study**

Recently, we sent you information on how to complete the interview for the 2008 National Postsecondary Student Aid Study. RTI is conducting this study for the U.S. Department of Education's National Center for Education Statistics. If you have already completed the interview, we would like to thank you. Your assistance is very much appreciated.

If you have not yet completed your interview, we would like to remind you that if you complete the interview by «IncentiveDt», you will receive «incentive» as a token of our appreciation. To complete a web interview over our secure website, log on to <https://surveys.nces.ed.gov/npsas/>.

If you have any questions or problems completing your web interview, or would like to complete the interview over the telephone with a professionally trained interviewer, please contact the NPSAS Help Desk at 1-877-677-2766.

Refusal/Hard to Reach \$30 Promise Letter

<date>

«fname» «mname» «lname» «suffix»

Study ID: «caseid»

«addr1»

«panelinfo»

«addr2»

«city», «state» «zip»

Dear «fname»,

On behalf of the U.S. Department of Education, I am writing to ask for your participation in the 2008 National Postsecondary Student Aid Study (NPSAS:08), conducted by RTI International. By completing the questionnaire, you will make an important contribution to research that will help determine how students and their families meet the cost of education beyond high school. **Please note that once you complete the questionnaire, we will mail you a check for \$30.**

To complete the questionnaire, you can reach a telephone interviewer at RTI International by calling our help desk toll-free at 1-877-677-2766. Interviewers are available Monday through Thursday from 9:00 a.m. to 11:00 p.m. Eastern time, Friday from 9:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m. Eastern time, Saturday from 10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. Eastern time, and Sunday from 1:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. Eastern time. You can also complete the questionnaire at any time via the NPSAS:08 website:

1. Go to <https://surveys.nces.ed.gov/npsas>
2. Enter your study ID: «caseid»
3. Enter your password: «password»
4. Click “Login” to begin the interview

The questionnaire only takes about 25 minutes, on average. Participation in this study is voluntary and will not affect any aid or any benefits you receive. The enclosed pamphlet answers many common questions about the study and contains additional information on laws and procedures that protect the confidentiality of your responses. If you have any questions about the study, you can visit the NPSAS:08 website, or you can e-mail us at npsas@rti.org. Persons who are hearing or speech-impaired can call us at 1-877-212-7230 (TDD). If you have any questions about your rights as a study participant, you can call RTI’s Office of Research Protection toll-free at 1-866-214-2043.

We greatly appreciate your participation in this important research!

Sincerely,



John Riccobono, Ph.D.
Project Director, NPSAS
RTI International

Refusal/Hard-to-Reach \$10 Prepaid Letter

<date>

<<name>>

Study ID: <<CaseID>>

<<address>>

<<panelinfo>>

<<address2>>

<<city_state>> <<zip>>

Dear <<fname>>,

On behalf of the U.S. Department of Education, I am writing to ask for your participation in the 2008 National Postsecondary Student Aid Study (NPSAS:08), conducted by RTI International. By completing the questionnaire, you will make an important contribution to research that will help determine how students and their families meet the cost of education beyond high school. **As a token of our appreciation for participating in the study, we have enclosed a check to you for \$10. Please note that we will mail you an additional \$20 once you complete the questionnaire, for a total of \$30.**

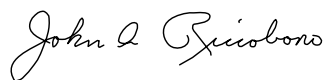
To complete the questionnaire, you can reach a telephone interviewer at RTI International by calling our help desk toll-free at 1-877-677-2766. Interviewers are available Monday through Thursday from 9:00 a.m. to 11:00 p.m. Eastern time, Friday from 9:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m. Eastern time, Saturday from 10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. Eastern time, and Sunday from 1:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. Eastern time. You can also complete the questionnaire at any time via the NPSAS:08 Website:

1. Go to <https://surveys.nces.ed.gov/npsas>
2. Enter your study ID: <<caseid>>
3. Enter your password: <<password>>
4. Click “Login” to begin the interview

The questionnaire only takes about 25 minutes, on average. Participation in this study is voluntary and will not affect any aid or any benefits you receive. The enclosed pamphlet answers many common questions about the study and contains additional information on laws and procedures that protect the confidentiality of your responses. If you have any questions about the study, you can visit the NPSAS:08 website, or you can e-mail us at npsas@rti.org. Persons who are hearing or speech-impaired can call us at 1-877-212-7230 (TDD). If you have any questions about your rights as a study participant, you can call RTI’s Office of Research Protection toll-free at 1-866-214-2043.

We greatly appreciate your participation in this important research!

Sincerely,



John Riccobono, Ph.D.
Project Director, NPSAS
RTI International

CATI Requested Remail Letter

<date>

«name»

Study ID: «caseid»

«address»

«panelinfo»

«address2»

«city_state»«state», «zip»

Dear «name»:

Per your request, we are providing you with more information on the 2008 National Postsecondary Student Aid Study (NPSAS:08) that is now being conducted. Enclosed you will find a pamphlet with a brief description of NPSAS:08, findings from prior NPSAS studies, and confidentiality procedures.

To make the interview process as easy as possible for you, you may either complete the interview yourself on the web or over the telephone with one of our professionally trained interviewers.

Please call us at **1-877-677-2766** to complete a telephone interview or, if you wish to complete the interview yourself on our secure website, log on to <https://surveys.nces.ed.gov/npsas/>. You will need the Study ID and password provided below to access the web interview.

Study ID = «caseid»

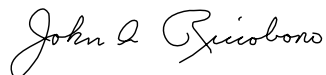
Password = «password»p

Please be assured that your answers will be kept confidential and protected to the fullest extent allowable under law.

Please do not hesitate to contact me directly at 1-877-677-2766 (toll-free) or by e-mail at npsas@rti.org if I can provide any additional information about the study or your interview.

Thank you in advance for your participation in this important study. Your cooperation is greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,



John Riccobono, Ph.D.
Project Director, NPSAS
RTI International

Reminder Letter

<date>

«stu_name»

Study ID: «caseid»

«stu_addr1»

«panelinfo»

«stu_addr2»

«stu_city», «stu_state» «stu_zip»

Dear «stu_name»:

We are writing to ask that you take a few moments to complete your interview for the 2008 National Postsecondary Student Aid Study (NPSAS:08), conducted by RTI International. By completing the questionnaire, you will make an important contribution to research that will help determine how students and their families meet the cost of education beyond high school. «fill1»

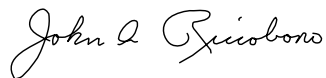
You may call us toll-free at **1-877-677-2766** to complete the interview with one of our professional telephone interviewers. Interviewers are available Monday through Thursday from 9:00 a.m. to 11:00 p.m. Eastern time, Friday from 9:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m. Eastern time, Saturday from 10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. Eastern time, and Sunday from 1:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. Eastern time. You can also complete the questionnaire at any time via the NPSAS:08 website:

1. Go to <https://surveys.nces.ed.gov/npsas>
2. Enter your study ID: «caseid»
3. Enter your password: «password»q
4. Click “Login” to begin the interview

The questionnaire only takes about 25 minutes, on average. Participation in this study is voluntary and will not affect any aid or any benefits you receive. If you have any questions about the study, you can visit the NPSAS:08 website, or you can e-mail us at npsas@rti.org. Persons who are hearing impaired or speech impaired can call us at 1-877-212-7230 (TDD). If you have any questions about your rights as a study participant, you can call RTI's Office of Research Protection toll-free at 1-866-214-2043.

Thank you in advance for making NPSAS:08 a success.

Sincerely,



John Riccobono, Ph.D.
Project Director, NPSAS
RTI International

Thank You/Incentive Letter

<date>

«name»

Study ID: «CaseID»

«address»

NP08 «panelinfo»

«address2»

«city_state» «zip»

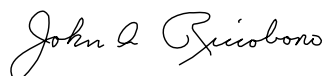
Dear «name»:

On behalf of the U.S. Department of Education and the staff of the National Postsecondary Student Aid Study, I would like to thank you for completing your NPSAS interview. Your participation in this study is very important to ensuring its success. Enclosed you will find a check for \$«amount» to reimburse you for your time completing the interview.

Please do not hesitate to contact me directly at 1-866-667-2704 if I can provide any additional information or assistance.

Again, thank you for your time and willingness to participate.

Sincerely,



John Riccobono, Ph.D.
Project Director, NPSAS
RTI International

Web Reinterview Letter

<date>

«fname» «mname» «lname» «suffix»

Study ID: «caseid»

«addr1»

«panelinfo»

«addr2»

«city», «state» «zip»

Dear «fname» «lname»:

On behalf of the U.S. Department of Education and the staff of the National Postsecondary Student Aid Study (NPSAS:08), I would like to thank you for completing your recent NPSAS interview. Your participation in this study is very important in ensuring its success.

«fill1». The purpose of this second interview, which takes about five to seven minutes, is to determine how well our questions collect reliable information. To complete it, log in to our secure website at <https://surveys.nces.ed.gov/npsas/> by **June 29, 2007** using the Study ID and password provided below:

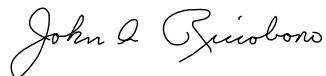
Study ID = «caseid»

Password = «password»r

If you have any questions or need assistance, you can visit our website at <https://surveys.nces.ed.gov/npsas/>, you can call us toll-free at 1-877-NPSAS-NOW (1-877-677-2766), or you can e-mail us at npsas@rti.org. Persons who are hearing or speech impaired can call us at 1-877-212-7230 (TDD).

Again, thank you for your time and willingness to participate.

Sincerely,



John Riccobono, Ph.D.
Project Director, NPSAS
RTI International

CATI Reinterview Letter

<date>

«fname» «mname» «lname» «suffix»

Study ID: «caseid»

«addr1»

«panelinfo»

«addr2»

«city», «state» «zip»

Dear «fname» «lname»:

On behalf of the U.S. Department of Education and the staff of the National Postsecondary Student Aid Study (NPSAS:08), I would like to thank you for completing your recent NPSAS interview. Your participation in this study is very important in ensuring its success.

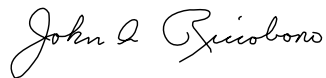
«fill1». The purpose of this second interview, which takes about five to seven minutes, is to determine how well our questions collect reliable information. To complete the telephone interview, call **1-877-NPSAS-NOW (1-877-677-2766)** by **June 29, 2007**, and provide our interviewer with the Study ID number listed below:

Study ID = «caseid»

If you have any questions or need assistance, you can visit our website at <https://surveys.nces.ed.gov/npsas/>, you can call us toll-free at 1-877-677-2766, or you can e-mail us at npsas@rti.org. Persons who are hearing or speech impaired can call us at 1-877-212-7230 (TDD).

Again, thank you for your time and willingness to participate.

Sincerely,



John Riccobono, Ph.D.
Project Director, NPSAS
RTI International

Initial E-Mail

Dear (first name) (last name):

We are emailing to ask you to participate in an important study that will help determine how students and their families meet the cost of education beyond high school. For your participation, I would like for you to complete a questionnaire over the Internet. On average, the questionnaire takes about 25 minutes to complete.

When you access the questionnaire on the Internet, you will be asked questions about how you paid for your school expenses during the 2006-2007 school year, including whether you received financial aid. If you received financial aid, you will be asked whether the amount of aid was enough to meet your educational expenses. If you did not receive financial aid, you will be asked about how you met your school expenses.

Students from all types of institutions and all financial situations have been randomly selected to participate in the 2008 National Postsecondary Student Aid Study. Your responses, along with those of other selected students, will represent responses of all students enrolled in postsecondary education. Therefore, your participation in this study is critical.

To complete the questionnaire over the Internet, go to <https://surveys.nces.ed.gov/npsas>. Type the study ID and password (provided below) on the Home/Login page, and Press "Enter" or click "Login" to begin the questionnaire.

Study ID = (study ID)
Password = (password)e

RTI International (RTI) of North Carolina is conducting the study for the U.S. Department of Education. To express our appreciation, a \$30 check will be mailed to you, if you complete the questionnaire by (date). If you are unable to complete the survey by that date, an RTI interviewer will call you to complete the questionnaire by telephone.

Participation in this study is voluntary and will not affect any aid or any benefits you receive. If you have questions about the study, you can visit our website at <https://surveys.nces.ed.gov/npsas>, you can call us toll-free at 1-877-NPSAS-NOW (1-877-677-2766), or you can e-mail us at npsas@rti.org. Persons who are hearing or speech impaired can call us at 1-877-212-7230 (TDD).

We sincerely appreciate your participation and thank you in advance for helping us conduct this very important study.

John Riccobono
Project Director, NPSAS:08
RTI International

Reminder E-Mail

Dear <first name> <last name>:

This message is only intended as a reminder to you that the early response period for the 2008 National Postsecondary Student Aid Study (NPSAS:08) is drawing to a close. We hope you will find the time to participate in the study soon. If you complete the questionnaire by <early incentive date>, a \$30 check will be mailed to you as a token of our appreciation. As indicated to you in previous correspondence, this important study will help researchers, counselors, and others better understand how students and their families meet the cost of education beyond high school.

To complete the questionnaire over the Internet, go to: <https://surveys.nces.ed.gov/npsas>. Type the study ID and password (provided below) on the Home/Login page, and Press "Enter" or click "Login" to begin the questionnaire.

Study ID = <study ID>
Password = <password> (upper/lower case letters must be entered exactly as they appear)

Your responses may be used only for statistical purposes and may not be disclosed, or used, in identifiable form for any other purpose, except as required by law. If you have questions or problems completing your interview online, simply call the NPSAS Help Desk at 1-877-677-2766.

If you have questions about the study, you can visit our website at <https://surveys.nces.ed.gov/npsas>, you can call us toll-free at 1-877-NPSAS-NOW (1-877-677-2766), or you can e-mail us at npsas@rti.org. Persons who are hearing or speech impaired can call us at 1-877-212-7230 (TDD).

We sincerely appreciate your participation and thank you in advance for helping us conduct this very important study.

John Riccobono
Project Director, NPSAS:08
RTI International

Refusal/Hard-to-Reach E-mail

Dear «fname»,

On behalf of the U.S. Department of Education, I am writing to ask for your participation in the 2008 National Postsecondary Student Aid Study (NPSAS:08), conducted by RTI International. By completing the questionnaire, you will make an important contribution to research that will help determine how students and their families meet the cost of education beyond high school. **{DISPLAY IF Inc_grp=1 or 7 and y_nresp=1} As a token of our appreciation for participating in the study, we have enclosed a check to you for \$10. Please note that we will mail you an additional \$20 once you complete the questionnaire, for a total of \$30. {DISPLAY IF Inc_grp=1, 4, or 7 and y_nresp=0} Please note that once you complete the questionnaire, we will mail you a check for \$30.**

To complete the questionnaire, you can reach a telephone interviewer at RTI International by calling our help desk toll-free at 1-877-677-2766. Interviewers are available Monday through Thursday from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 midnight Eastern time, Friday from 9:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m. Eastern time, Saturday from 10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. Eastern time, and Sunday from 1:30 p.m. to 10:30 p.m. Eastern time. You can also complete the questionnaire at any time via the NPSAS:08 website:

1. Go to <https://surveys.nces.ed.gov/npsas>
2. Enter your study ID: «caseid»
3. Enter your password: «password»f
4. Click “Login” to begin the interview

The questionnaire only takes about 25 minutes, on average. Participation in this study is voluntary and will not affect any aid or any benefits you receive. The enclosed pamphlet answers many common questions about the study and contains additional information on laws and procedures that protect the confidentiality of your responses. If you have any questions about the study, you can visit the NPSAS:08 website, or you can e-mail us at npsas@rti.org. Persons who are hearing or speech-impaired can call us at 1-877-212-7230 (TDD). If you have any questions about your rights as a study participant, you can call RTI's Office of Research Protection toll-free at 1-866-214-2043.

We greatly appreciate your participation in this important research!

Sincerely,

John Riccobono, Ph.D.
Project Director, NPSAS
RTI International

Refusal/Hard-to-Reach Reminder E-mail

Dear <first name> <last name>:

On behalf of the U.S. Department of Education, I am emailing to ask for your participation in the 2008 National Postsecondary Student Aid Study (NPSAS:08), conducted by RTI International. By completing the questionnaire, you will make an important contribution to research that will help determine how students and their families meet the cost of education beyond high school. **{DISPLAY IF Stage=21}** We have recently mailed you a \$10 check. Please note that we will mail you an additional \$20 once you complete the questionnaire, for a total of \$30. **{DISPLAY IF Stage=22}** Please note that once you complete the questionnaire, we will mail you a check for \$30.

REFUSAL/NONRESPONSE EMAIL

To complete the questionnaire, you can reach a telephone interviewer at RTI International by calling our help desk toll-free at 1-877-677-2766. Interviewers are available Monday through Thursday from 9:00 a.m. to 11:00 p.m. Eastern time, Friday from 9:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m. Eastern time, Saturday from 10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. Eastern time, and Sunday from 1:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. Eastern time. You can also complete the questionnaire at any time via the NPSAS:08 Website:

1. Go to <https://surveys.nces.ed.gov/npsas>
2. Enter your study ID: «caseid»
3. Enter your password: «password»c
4. Click “Login” to begin the interview

The questionnaire only takes about 25 minutes, on average. Participation in this study is voluntary and will not affect any aid or any benefits you receive. If you have any questions about the study, you can visit the NPSAS:08 website, or you can e-mail us at npsas@rti.org. Persons who are hearing or speech-impaired can call us at 1-877-212-7230 (TDD). If you have any questions about your rights as a study participant, you can call RTI's Office of Research Protection toll-free at 1-866-214-2043.

We greatly appreciate your participation in this important research!

John Riccobono
Project Director, NPSAS:08
RTI International

Institution Brochure

The 2008 National Postsecondary Student Aid Study Field Test NPSAS:08

For more information about NPSAS:08, please contact
members of the project team at this number:
1-888-NPSAS411 (1-888-677-2741)

RTI International*

Brian Kuhr
Project Coordinator
NPSASschool@rti.org

Dr. John Riccobono
Project Director NPSAS
jar@rti.org

National Center for Education Statistics

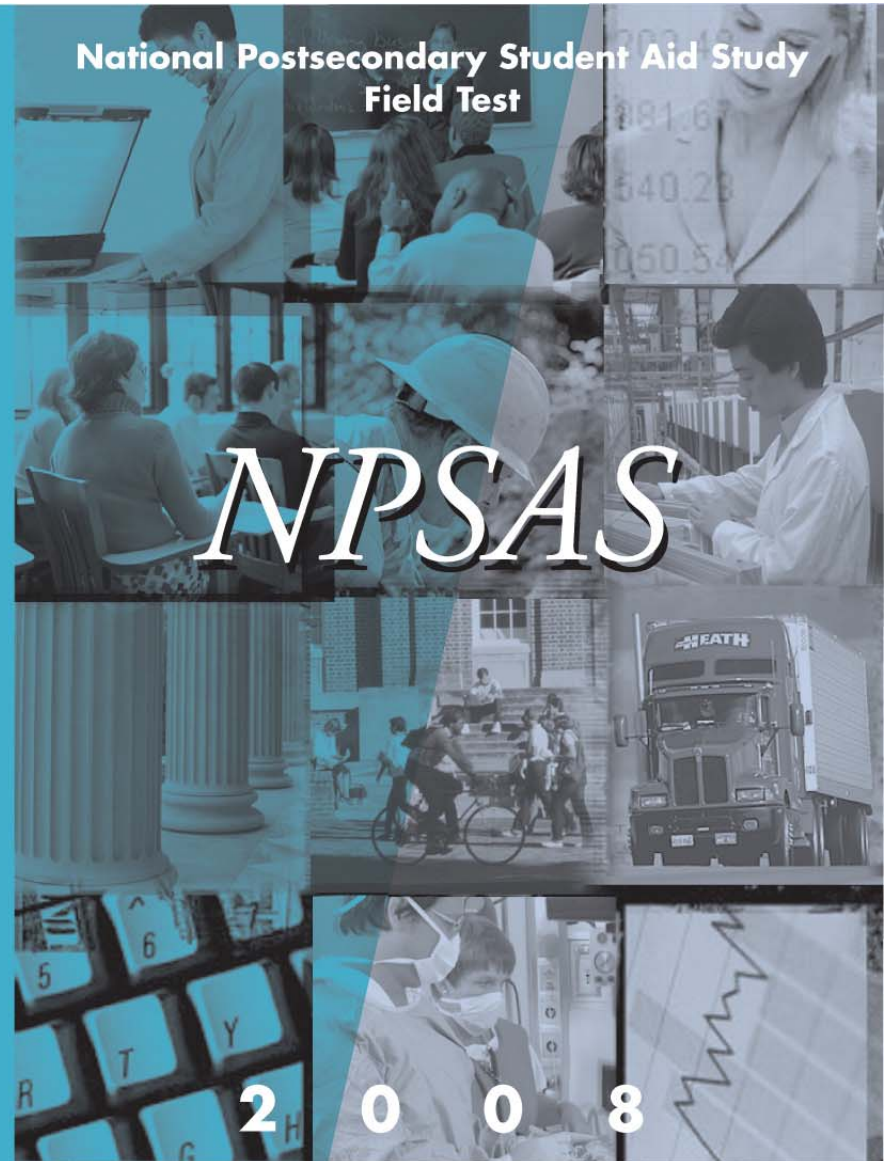
Dr. James Griffith
NCES Project Officer NPSAS
1-202-502-7387
James.Griffith@ed.gov

Sponsored by



U.S. Department of Education
National Center for Education Statistics, Washington, DC
<http://nces.ed.gov>
September 2006

* RTI International is a trade name of Research Triangle Institute.



Endorsements

American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers

American Association of Community Colleges

American Association of State Colleges and Universities

American Council on Education

Association for Institutional Research

Association of American Colleges and Universities

Association of Catholic Colleges and Universities

Association of Schools of Allied Health Professions

Career College Association

The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching

The College Board

Council of Graduate Schools

The Council of Independent Colleges

Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities

Midwestern Higher Education Compact

National Accrediting Commission of Cosmetology Arts and Sciences

National Association of College and University Business Officers

National Association for Equal Opportunity in Higher Education

National Association of Independent Colleges and Universities

National Association of State Universities and Land-Grant Colleges

National Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators

New England Board of Higher Education

Southern Regional Education Board

State Higher Education Executive Officers

The United Negro College Fund

Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education

About the Study

The 2008 National Postsecondary Student Aid Study Field Test NPSAS:08

The National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), part of the U.S. Department of Education, is authorized by federal law to collect, analyze, and publish statistics and other data related to education in the United States and other nations. As part of its mandate, NCES periodically conducts the National Postsecondary Student Aid Study (NPSAS)—a comprehensive study to find out how students and their families pay for education beyond high school. Undergraduate, graduate, and first-professional students—including those who receive aid and those who do not—participate in NPSAS.

NPSAS is the only comprehensive, nationally representative survey of student financial aid. No other single national database contains student-level records for students receiving aid from the numerous and disparate programs funded by the federal government, the states, postsecondary institutions, employers, and private organizations. The purpose of NPSAS is to compile a comprehensive research data set containing information about all of these programs, together with demographic and enrollment data. In addition, NPSAS provides vital information about the affordability of postsecondary education and the effectiveness of existing financial aid programs that will inform public policy at all levels. NPSAS not only includes students enrolled at public and private not-for profit, 2- and 4-year postsecondary institutions, it also includes those postsecondary institutions that are less-than-2-year and are private for-profit.

The purpose of the NPSAS:08 field test is to evaluate survey instruments and procedures so that the full-scale study will be as effective as possible. Your institution's participation is crucial to the success of the field test. Institutions selected for the field test will not be asked to participate in the full-scale study.

How Will the Study Be Conducted?

The NPSAS:08 field test will sample about 300 institutions that will be asked to provide lists of enrolled students. Over 3,000 postsecondary students will be randomly selected from these lists.

The study will consist of the following stages:

FALL 2006

- Beginning in September 2006, the chief administrative officer (CAO) at each institution will be asked to designate a NPSAS:08 institutional coordinator to work with RTI.
- Beginning in October 2006, RTI will contact the institutional coordinator(s) to clarify the tasks, timeline, and responsibilities. Coordinators will be asked to complete a brief registration at <https://surveys.nces.ed.gov/NPSASschool> that identifies the 2006–2007 terms and types of awards granted by the institution.

WINTER 2007

- Beginning in January 2007, the institutional coordinator for each of the 300 institutions participating in NPSAS will supply RTI with a list of students enrolled at the institution. The list will include contact and basic demographic information for students enrolled at the institution during any term that includes July 1, 2006, through April 30, 2007.
- Beginning mid-February 2007, RTI will select samples of students from each enrollment list received.

SPRING 2007

- Beginning February 2007, the institutional coordinator or other designated staff will provide student record information (for example, enrollment status, major, aid package received) for only those students sampled at the institution through a web-based computer assisted data entry (webCADE) instrument, or by uploading an electronic data file to the secure NPSAS website. RTI field staff will be available to assist with the student record abstraction phase.
- Beginning in February 2007, sampled students will complete web-based or telephone interview.

Web-based data entry and file upload applications have been developed to make participation easier and to minimize the burden on institutional staff in providing the data. The software is user friendly and efficient.

Confidentiality Issues

The 2008 National Postsecondary Student Aid Study is conducted under the authority of the Education Sciences Reform Act of 2002 (ESRA) (Public Law 107-279) and its predecessor, the National Education Statistics Act (NESA) of 1994, as amended by the USA PATRIOT Act of 2001. Under ESRA, NCES is authorized to collect and disseminate information about education in the United States. Collection is most often done through surveys. NCES is required to follow strict procedures to protect the confidentiality of persons in the **collection, reporting, and publication of data**. The *E-Government Act of 2002* requires that all individually identifiable information supplied by individuals or institutions to a federal agency for statistical purposes under the pledge of confidentiality must be kept confidential and used only for statistical purposes. NCES adheres to the guidelines issued by the Office of Management and Budget in the *Federal Statistical Order of 1997* for ensuring the privacy and confidentiality of data collected for statistical purposes.

The Family Education Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA) (20 U.S.C. 1232g) allows for the release of institutional record information to the Secretary of Education or his agent without prior consent of survey members [20 U.S.C. 1232g(b)(3)]. RTI International, as the contractor for NCES, has been given the authority to collect information from institutional records under federal law.

All responses that relate to or describe identifiable characteristics of individuals may be used only for statistical purposes and may not be disclosed or used in identifiable form for any other purpose, unless otherwise compelled by law.

Protection of Electronic Files

All electronic files from institution records and student interviews will be carefully protected. Computer accounts used to access data will be password protected with multilevel access controls to ensure that only those individuals with a need to access confidential information are allowed access to it. For the web-based data collection, proven methods of protection for online sessions and data security over the Internet will be used. Secure Sockets Layer (SSL) protocol will be used to encrypt the data over the Internet. All of the data entry modules on this site will be password protected, which will require the user to log in to the site before accessing confidential data. The system will automatically log the user out after 30 minutes of inactivity on the session, which will prevent unauthorized user access to the site.

Protection of Paper Records

All paper records will be maintained in locked storage cabinets. A unique study identification variable (not the Social Security Number or school ID) will be created and maintained for each survey participant to protect against disclosure of confidential data.

Preparation of Data for Public Release

All data released to the general public (for example, statistical tables) will be designed so that it will not be possible to identify specific individuals.

Violations

All personnel with access to individual data will be required to sign a confidentiality agreement and an affidavit of nondisclosure. Anyone who violates the confidentiality provisions of the act when using the data shall be found guilty of a **Class E felony** and can be **imprisoned up to 5 years, and/or fined up to \$250,000**.

The affordability of education after high school is a vital concern for students and their families. That is why the information gathered by the 2008 National Postsecondary Student Aid Study (NPSAS:08) is so important. This year's study explores how families with varying resources are able to pay for postsecondary education and provides comprehensive data on the enrollment status, education goals, employment, and demographic characteristics of students continuing their education after high school.

Basic Issues

National Postsecondary Student Aid Study (NPSAS)

NPSAS data provide information on the cost of postsecondary education, the distribution of financial aid, and the characteristics of both aided and non-aided students and their families. Research questions that can be studied using the data from NPSAS include the following:



- What is the "net price" of education to the student and family?
- How is student "need" for financial aid being met?
- How much are students borrowing?
- How does the distribution of aid differ by major field of study?
- What is the relationship between employment and a student's degree?
- How do aided and non-aided students compare on total resources available for education and other expenses?
- How do costs and financial aid influence students' choices of schools and majors?
- How have costs and financial aid packages changed over the years?
- How long does it take undergraduate students to complete a bachelor's degree program and how is this related to enrollment, demographic, and financial factors?

Data Analysis and Dissemination

To make the data as useful as possible, the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) will publish information in several ways:

- Descriptive reports are published by NCES on selected topics. Publications from previous NPSAS studies may be accessed electronically through NCES's website at <http://nces.ed.gov/surveys/npsas>.
- Special tabulations are provided on request.
- Data files (without identifying information) are available, and
- Presentations on study findings are made at conferences.

Student Brochure

Why is the study being conducted?

The National Postsecondary Student Aid Study (NPSAS) is a large national survey of undergraduate and graduate students, with a special focus on how they finance their education at different types of institutions. Information is collected from institutions and students to obtain a national picture of the background of students, their educational costs, amount of family support, types of financial aid received, student loan debt, and earnings from jobs. The NPSAS survey results are widely used by researchers to study whether the current financial aid programs are adequate to meet student needs. These results may also be used by Congress to make changes to the federal student loan and grant programs.

Students who earn a baccalaureate degree prior to July 2007 will be part of a special follow-up study in subsequent years. Their experiences after graduation, including further education and early work experience, will help us to learn more about the students who complete their postsecondary education and the factors that influence their success.

If you have additional questions or concerns about the study, please contact the NPSAS Project Director at RTI or the NCES Project Officer listed on the back of this pamphlet.

Are there any risks or benefits to my participation?

The risk of participation in this study relates to data security and is minimal, given the strict confidentiality and security procedures in place.

There are also no known benefits to your participation in NPSAS. However, your participation will help ensure the success of the study and help policymakers better understand and meet the financial needs of postsecondary students.

If you have additional questions or concerns about the study, please contact the NPSAS Project Director at RTI or the NCES Project Officer listed on the back of this pamphlet.

Where can I get

more information about NPSAS?

If you have questions about *your rights* as a study participant, please call RTI's Institutional Review Board at 1-866-214-2043 (a toll-free number) or send an e-mail message to orpe@rti.org regarding IRB number 11644.

If you have *questions* or concerns about the study, contact the following:

John Riccobono
RTI NPSAS Project Director
1-877-NPSAS-NOW
1-877-677-2766
npsas@rti.org

James Griffith
NCES Project Officer
1-202-502-7387
James.Griffith@ed.gov

You may complete your interview or simply learn more about NPSAS by visiting our website at: <https://surveys.nces.ed.gov/npsas/>.

For more information about NPSAS publications and other educational research, visit the NCES website at: <http://nces.ed.gov/pubsearch/>.



National Center for Education Statistics
U.S. Department of Education
Institute of Education Sciences

February 2007



2008

National
Postsecondary
Student
Aid
Study



U.S. Department of Education
Institute of Education Sciences



Who is conducting the study?

The 2008 National Postsecondary Student Aid Study (NPSAS:08) is sponsored by the U.S. Department of Education's National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) in the Institute of Education Sciences. The study is conducted under contract by RTI International, a nonprofit research organization located in North Carolina.

Who is included in the study?

NPSAS:08 consists of a sample of 120,000 students randomly selected from enrollment lists at about 1,600 institutions in the 50 states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico. You are one of only 3,000 students from 300 schools selected as part of an initial 2007 field test sample. As such, your participation and feedback are particularly important.

When will the study be conducted?

Institutions were initially contacted beginning in fall 2006 to take part in NPSAS:08. Beginning in spring 2007, sampled students will be contacted to complete the web-based interview. Students may access the interview on the web at <https://surveys.nces.ed.gov/npsas/> or by calling the NPSAS Help Desk at 1-877-NPSAS-NOW (1-877-677-2766).

Why should I participate?

Participation in this study is voluntary. Your participation, however, is essential to making this study a success. By participating, you have the opportunity to help policymakers, researchers, counselors, and others better understand and meet the financial needs of postsecondary students in the United States and Puerto Rico.

How can I Participate?

You may complete the study in one of two ways:

1. Log in to the website at <https://surveys.nces.ed.gov/npsas/>.

Once at the site, from the *Home/Login* page, enter your study ID and password, available on the letter or e-mail you received. If you need assistance with accessing the questionnaire on the website, please call the NPSAS Help Desk at 1-877-NPSAS-NOW (1-877-677-2766) or contact us via e-mail at npsas@rti.org.

2. Complete the interview over the phone.

We encourage web completion but, if you prefer, you may complete the questionnaire by telephone with a

professionally trained interviewer from RTI. You may choose to complete the interview when our staff call or set an appointment for a later date. We will attempt to identify a convenient time to call. Students may e-mail questions to RTI staff at npsas@rti.org or call the NPSAS Help Desk at 1-877-NPSAS-NOW (1-877-677-2766) with best times to do the interview.

How Long will this take?

On average, you should complete either the self-administered web-based questionnaire or the interviewer-administered telephone interview in about 25 minutes. Web interview time may vary depending on your Internet connection speed. If you do not have access to a computer with a fast connection, you may prefer to call the Help Desk to complete the interview by telephone.

Will my answers be kept Confidential?

Interview responses, combined with student record information (e.g., enrollment characteristics and financial aid data), may be used only for statistical purposes and may not be disclosed, or used, in personally identifiable form for any other purpose, unless otherwise compelled by law.

The following procedures have been implemented to ensure the confidentiality of your responses:

- Your answers are secured behind firewalls and are encrypted during Internet transmission using Secure Sockets Layer (SSL) protocol. All data entry modules are password protected and require the user to log in before accessing confidential data.
- Project staff may be severely fined or imprisoned for disclosure of individual responses.
- Confidentiality procedures are reviewed and approved by RTI's Institutional Review Board (Committee for Protection of Human Subjects).

How can I get a copy of the Results?

Publications from previous studies are currently available from the NCES website at <http://nces.ed.gov/surveys/npsas/>.

Reports can be downloaded or ordered at no charge. Current titles of interest include the following:

Student Financing of Undergraduate Education 2003–04 (NCES 2006-186)

Student Financing of Graduate and First-Professional Education 2003–04 (NCES 2006-185)

What have we learned from prior NPSAS studies?

The following are estimates based on information from 80,000 undergraduates, 11,000 graduates, and 1,000 first-professional students enrolled at approximately 1,400 postsecondary institutions during the 2003–04 academic year.

- Sixty-three percent of all undergraduates enrolled in the 2003–04 academic year received some type of financial aid (grants, loans, work-study, or other). Those who received aid were awarded an average amount of \$7,400.
- About one-half (51 percent) of undergraduates received grants and about one-third (35 percent) took out student loans in 2003–04. Eight percent of all undergraduates received aid through work-study jobs and 7 percent received other types of aid (federal PLUS loans to parents, veterans' benefits, and job training funds).
- The average amount of grant aid received by undergraduates who were awarded grants was \$4,000 in 2003–04. Among those who took out student loans, the average amount borrowed for the 2003–04 academic year was \$5,800. The average work-study award was \$2,000.
- In 2003–04, just under three-fourths (73 percent) of all graduate and first-professional students received some type of aid, including grants, loans, assistantships, or work-study. The average amount received by aided students was \$15,100.
- Doctoral students were the most likely to receive grant aid (55 percent vs. 38 percent of master's degree students and 41 percent of first-professional students) and received the largest amounts, on average (\$10,200 vs. \$4,500 and \$7,100, respectively).
- First-professional students were the most likely to take out student loans (78 percent, compared with 40 percent of master's students and 30 percent of doctoral students) and borrowed the largest amounts, on average (\$26,400 vs. \$13,500 and \$17,800, respectively).

SOURCE: Berkner, L., and Wei, C.C. (2006). *Student Financing of Undergraduate Education: 2003–04, With a Special Analysis of the Net Price of Attendance and Federal Education Tax Benefits* (NCES 2006-186). U.S. Department of Education. Washington, DC: National Center for Education Statistics.

Choy, S.P., and Cataldi, E.F. (2006). *Student Financing of Graduate and First-Professional Education, 2003–04* (NCES 2006-185). U.S. Department of Education. Washington, DC: National Center for Education Statistics.

