Council of Graduate Schools
Completion and Attrition in STEM Master’s Programs

Instructions and Format for the Student-Level Data Template

Background

As a condition of participating in the Council of Graduate Schools’ (CGS) project on Completion and Attrition in STEM Master’s Programs, partnering institutions agreed to provide data on all students enrolled in eligible master’s programs between 2003/04 and 2010/11. The following instructions describe the process by which other institutions can use this template to collect student-level data.

The data are to be entered into an Excel spreadsheet, with one record (row) for each enrolled student. Each student record will contain the following variables:

- Enrollment information (program, type of degree, date started in program)
- Prior educational attainment (undergraduate GPA, year of degree, previous graduate degree or number of graduate hours)
- Degree status information as of a date specified by the institution (status [graduated, voluntary or involuntary attrition, in progress], date of graduation). We recommend specifying a particular date (e.g., June 30, 2011).
- Demographic information (gender, race/ethnicity, citizenship, year of birth)

Definitions for each variable in the student-level template are provided below. We ask institutions to use these definitions in providing the data to ensure that the data across all institutions are consistent.

Questions? Contact Jeff Allum at 202-461-3878 or jallum@cgs.nche.edu.

VARIABLE DEFINITIONS:

Enrollment Data

- Scrambled ID number: This is a scrambled ID number assigned by the institution. The ID number will be used only for data cleaning purposes (e.g., to reference records where there are discrepancies in the data).
- Program name: The full name (no abbreviations) of the eligible master's program in which each student was/is enrolled (example: Biological Sciences).
- Type of degree: The type of degree (example: "M.A." for Master of Arts, "M.S." for Master of Science, "M.B.A." for Master of Business Administration, etc.) for each eligible master's program.
- Month student started in program (MM): Using MM format, indicate the month in which the student stated the program (example: 08 for August).
- Year student started in program (YYYY): Using YYYY format, indicate the year in which the student stated the program (example: 2003).

Previous Graduate Degree

- Type of previous graduate degree or certificate: Indicate the type of degree for each student who had a graduate degree before enrolling in each eligible master's program
(example: “M.S.” for Master of Science, “M.Agr.” for Master of Agriculture, etc.). If the student did not have a previous graduate degree, leave blank.

- **Field of previous graduate degree:** Use the taxonomy appended to these instructions to indicate the field of study in which the student earned previous graduate degree (example: enter “101” for students who earned a graduate degree in the field of agriculture, natural resources, and conservation). If the student did not have a previous graduate degree, leave blank.

- **Number of graduate hours transferred to program at enrollment, if any:** For each student who had earned graduate credit hours prior to enrolling in each eligible master's program, indicate the number of credit hours transferred (example: “3” if 3 graduate credit hours were transferred). If no graduate hours were transferred to the program at enrollment, enter “0.”

**Student Demographic Characteristics**

- **Year of birth:** Using YYYY format, enter the year of birth for each student enrolled in each eligible master's program.

- **Gender:** Use:
  - "M" for Male
  - "F" for Female

- **Citizenship:** Use:
  - "C" for U.S. citizen or permanent resident
  - "I" for international student (i.e., non-U.S. citizens on temporary visa)

- **Race/ethnicity of domestic students:** *For domestic students only*, use:
  - "H" for Hispanic/Latino
  - "N" for American Indian/Alaska Native
  - "A" for Asian/Other Pacific Islander (including Native Hawaiian)
  - "B" for Black/African American
  - "W" for White
  - "M" for two or more races (i.e., non-Hispanic/Latino)
  - "U" for race/ethnicity unknown

  *For international students (i.e., non-U.S. citizens on temporary visa), leave blank.*

**Undergraduate Data for Most Recent Degree**

- **Year undergraduate degree awarded (YYYY):** Using YYYY format, indicate the year in which each student from each eligible master's program earned their most recent undergraduate degree.

- **Undergraduate GPA:** Indicate the student’s cumulative GPA earned from their last undergraduate degree awarded (example: 3.22)

- **Scale for undergraduate GPA (if other than 4.0):** If the undergraduate GPA was calculated according to any scale other than a 4.0 scale, please indicate (example: 5.0, Pass/Fail). If the GPA is calculated according to a 4.0 scale, leave blank.
**Status of Master’s Student**

- **If the student has graduated ...**
  - **Month of Graduation (MM):** Using MM format, indicate the month of graduation for each master’s student enrolled in an eligible master’s program (example: 05 for May).
  - **Year of Graduation (YYYY):** Using YYYY format, indicate the year of graduation for each master’s student enrolled in an eligible master’s program (example: 2004).

- **If the student left the program without earning a master’s degree ...**
  - **Month of attrition (MM):** Using MM format, indicate the month of attrition for each master’s student enrolled in an eligible master’s program (example: 11 for November).
  - **Year of attrition (YYYY):** Using YYYY format, indicate the year of attrition for each master’s student enrolled in an eligible master’s program (example: 2009).
  - **Voluntary or involuntary attrition:** Use:
    - "V" for voluntary attrition if the student left of their own volition
    - "I" if the student was involuntarily asked to leave the program for any reason (academic or any other)

- **Status as of [date specified by institution]:** Use:
  - "G" for students who have graduated
  - "L" for students who left the program without completing
  - "C" for students who are actively enrolled in the program or on leave of absence and are eligible to continue in the program without reapplying
  - "U" for students whose status is unknown
Completion and Attrition in STEM Master’s Programs
Taxonomy of Fields of Study

Biological and Agricultural Sciences
101 Agriculture, Natural Resources, and Conservation
102 Biological and Biomedical Sciences

Physical and Earth Sciences
103 Chemistry
104 Earth, Atmospheric, and Marine Sciences
105 Physics and Astronomy
106 Physical Sciences, Other

Mathematics and Computer Sciences
107 Computer and Information Sciences
108 Mathematical Sciences

Engineering
109 Chemical Engineering
110 Civil Engineering
111 Computer, Electrical, and Electronics Engineering
112 Industrial Engineering
113 Materials Engineering
114 Mechanical Engineering
115 Engineering, Other

Social and Behavioral Sciences
116 Anthropology and Archaeology
117 Economics
118 Political Science
119 Psychology
120 Sociology
121 Social Sciences, Other

Health and Medical Sciences
122 Health and Medical Sciences

Arts and Humanities
123 Arts – History, Theory, and Criticism
124 Arts – Performance and Studio
125 English Language and Literature
126 Foreign Languages and Literatures
127 History
128 Philosophy
129 Arts and Humanities, Other

Education
130 Education Administration
131 Curriculum and Instruction
132 Early Childhood Education
133 Elementary Education
134 Educational Assessment, Evaluation, Research
135 Higher Education
136 Secondary Education
137 Special Education
138 Student Counseling and Personnel Services
139 Education, Other

Business
140 Accounting
141 Banking and Finance
142 Business Administration and Management
143 Business, Other

Public Administration and Services
144 Public Administration
145 Social Work

Other Fields
146 Architecture and Environmental Design
147 Communication and Journalism
148 Family and Consumer Sciences
149 Library and Archival Sciences
150 Religion and Theology
151 Other Fields