

Frequently Asked Questions

Isn't Transparency by Design and the College Choices for Adults website just for the for-profit institutions?

Absolutely not! Transparency by Design welcomes all regionally-accredited institutions with a mission of serving adult learners at a distance to join the membership and publish data on the College Choices for Adults website. As of the end of October 2010, we have a diverse mix of for-profit, private non-profit and state institutions represented within our membership.

My institution doesn't administer one of the 3rd party assessments Transparency by Design uses, are we still eligible for membership?

Absolutely! For the institutional profile, an institution must provide basic demographic data such as enrollment, student population demographics and institutional mission. Each institution also has the opportunity to report their data from the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE), the Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE), the Priorities Survey of Online Learning (PSOL), the ETS Proficiency Profile (formerly the MAPP) as well as reporting student responses to our common alumni satisfaction questions. While it's preferred that institutions report on all of these measures, the initiative understands all of these may not be appropriate for every institution, and therefore offers flexibility in reporting.

How many programs must we have prepared to upload when we join?

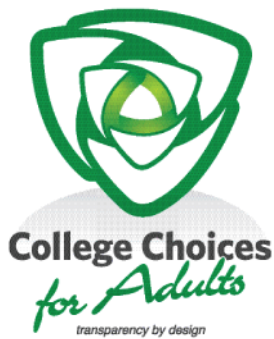
The initiative prefers that each joining institution publish at least two programs when they publish their institutional data. Historically these have been business or education programs, however, your institution has the opportunity which programs you'd like to feature on the site.

Do we have to have all of the data ready to publish immediately upon joining?

You do not – there are minimum requirements for publishing data, which include institutional demographic data and for the programs you wish to load, program demographic data as well as the two data items "Program Learning Outcomes: What will I Learn?" and "Evidence of Student Learning – Internal: How will the program measure what I have learned?". On average, it takes a new institution 2.5 months to prepare and upload all of the data necessary for the first publication. And it's not a one-shot deal, there are updating periods throughout the year, if you'd like to add data or update data.

How often do we have to report data?

Institutional level data related to the IPEDS reporting will be updated each spring to reflect data from the previous fall – with the aim of publishing this data on the same date the update of this data goes to the College Navigator website. For program-level data, there are several updating/addition periods throughout the year which will be scheduled by WCET and shared with the institutions. However, every program does not need to be updated every year. However, the initiative would prefer that they are updated at least every three years or more often if your assessment calendar allows.



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On the data item “Evidence of Student Learning – Internal: How will the program measure what I have learned?” what are the expectations for assessment?

Each institution determines how they will assess their student learning outcomes and reports it in this field, in a manner which is understandable to a potential student. The current requirements for this data item include answering the questions: How do you measure what program learning outcomes? And How well have recent students performed. Institutions are also required to identify, in the methodology section, how many students the data represents (either the actual N or reporting the range – 1 to 20 students or more than 20 students) as well as when the assessments were administered. Assessments do not need to be updated with new results every year.

Would you say that the College Choices for Adults website is primarily or secondarily a marketing tool, in addition to being a source for students to research schools? How many qualified leads will our institution get?

We stress that College Choices for Adults is not a marketing site – we strive to provide data which is not simply marketing focused. We are not a lead generation site and institutional marketing teams will not receive any names of potential students from our site – because we do not and will not collect any. Even our ‘tell us what you think’ feedback form can be submitted completely anonymously. In this sense, institutional marketing departments will not receive the ROI (return on investment) they may be accustomed to with the many lead generation sites. This is one of the key differentiators of College Choices for Adults in a crowded marketing focused market. The value for participating institutions lies outside of marketing ROI in helping create a well-informed adult learner population, who, in theory, will be more successful once they enroll at one of our member institutions.

In what format do we send the data – is there an input screen, an upload template, etc.?

Once an institution has joined the initiative, WCET will provide the institutional data representative with a username and log-in for our secure, online database into which they will enter the required data, as well as the text for the methodology, why are we different and more information sections. It is a simple system to use - much like a secure web form. The system allows institutions to enter data and save data. Prior to publishing the data, WCET will review it and ask any clarifying questions. When all questions have been satisfied and corrections/additions made, WCET will publish the data live on the web.

How many ‘hits’ does the College Choices for Adults website get per month?

As of the end of October 2010 we are averaging 1,000 hits per month and around 800 unique users. We track site analytics with Google Analytics which is embedded into every page created on our website. Over the next year we will be increasing our marketing efforts to drive more students to the site. However, one phenomenon we suffer from is the ‘chicken and egg syndrome’ – students who visit our site would like more selection in the institutions represented and while institutions would like to see more site ‘hits’ before they join the site.