UPWARD BOUND ANNUAL PERFORMANCE REPORT

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS
Program Year 2004–05

We are providing below answers to some of the most frequently asked questions concerning preparation and submission of the annual performance report (APR) in Upward Bound, Upward Bound Math-Science, and Veterans Upward Bound. We have divided these into "Technical Questions" and "Programmatic Questions."

Section I: Technical Questions covers issues related to computer programs, software issues, and requirements for electronic submission. If you have additional questions, you should contact our Help Desk either by telephone (703-846-8248) or e-mail (UBWEB@cbmiweb.com).

Section II: Programmatic Questions provides interpretations of certain issues concerning the data requirements of the report. For answers to questions of this type not covered below, please contact your program specialist directly. A state listing of program specialists and their contact information is available at http://www.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ope/trio/staffdirectory-cupt.html.

I. TECHNICAL QUESTIONS

Each Upward Bound project is required to prepare the annual performance report in accordance with the instructions provided at the following Web address:

> **http://www.ed.gov/programs/trioupbound/report.html** (Upward Bound and Veterans Upward Bound)
>
> **http://www.ed.gov/programs/triomathsci/report.html** (Upward Bound Math-Science)

The performance report includes four parts:

> --Section I requests project identifying information;
> --Section II contains detailed instructions for preparing a data file of information on individual participants;
> --Section III requests information on the extent to which the project has met its objectives; and
> --Section IV poses questions for those projects that first implemented the Upward Bound Initiative in 2004–05.

Prior to the due date for submitting the annual performance report to the U.S. Department of Education, each grantee must prepare electronic files with the individual participant records (Section II). Projects will respond to online forms for Sections I, III, and IV.

Question #1: How should a project begin to prepare the performance report?

Response #1: First, an Upward Bound project must review the required data elements in Section II of the report to ensure that the project is collecting all the required information. If some data elements are not being collected, the project should develop plans and procedures to collect the required data.

Next, the project should determine how it will prepare the electronic data file of individual participant records. Below, in response to question #2, is a brief discussion of options available for preparing the participant data file.

If you currently have a management information system for your project with participant level information, you may choose to create a text file or export the data to a spreadsheet or database. If, however, your project does not have a database or the database does not capture many of the required data elements, you may decide to use the Department's Participant Data Collection Tool (see discussion of this tool under question #3), which provides internal checks and prompts to increase accuracy

Question #2: What options are available for preparing the participant data file (Section II of performance report)?

Response #2: A grantee has three basic options for preparing the student data file. You may choose any of these options, provided you submit the data in accordance with the instructions for preparing the participant data file (Section II of the performance report). These instructions are available at the following Web address:

> http://www.ed.gov/programs/trioupbound/report.html (Upward Bound and Veterans Upward Bound)
>
> http://www.ed.gov/programs/triomathsci/report.html (UBMS)

Option A: Use the database or spreadsheet that you currently use to capture and manage your project data. Then export the data required for the performance report to an Excel spreadsheet (xls), Access database (mdb), or database file (dbf). If you choose this option, you must:

- Change your column names to match the "Database Column Names" provided in column three of Section II--Record Structure for Participant List (if you are using Access, you must change the column names in the "Design, Table");
- Provide the data (columns or fields) in the same order as that used for data fields in column three of Section II of the report instructions (i.e., the first column of your spreadsheet must be PR, the second column must be BatchAY, etc.); and
- Use only the valid field content provided in column eight of the report instructions. For example, the valid field content for "Gender" (field #9) is 1 for Male, 2 for Female, and 0 for Unknown. Values such as M for male and F for female are not acceptable.

Option B: Prepare a text file in accordance with the record structure provided in Section II of the report. A text file (sometimes called an ASCII text file) is a text-only document that contains no formatting; by contrast, word processor files insert special (non-readable) characters for bold text, italic text, underlined text, etc. Most current word processing software will save a document as a text file, usually under the "Save As…" and "Save As Type. . ." options. This will remove all special formatting from the file. The advantage of a text file is that it is a standardized file type and many different software packages can read the data in the file. Once you have created the text file, you must check the file to ensure that the data fields exported correctly and that the data elements meet the valid field content requirements provided in column eight of Section II of the report instructions.

Option C: Use the software tool developed by the Department for capturing and submitting the performance report data.

Question #3: What is the Department's tool?

Response #3: With input from the TRIO community, the Department developed the Upward Bound Annual Performance Report Participant Data Collection Tools, which are self-installing Visual Basic software applications that you may use to collect the data required in Section II of the performance report for UB, UBMS, and VUB projects. The tools are stand-alone applications that require no additional software to run. However, in order to properly run this application, you must have an IBM-compatible PC with the Windows 2000 (or higher version) desk operating system.

These applications are designed to assist grantees, especially those without participant databases, in meeting the new performance reporting requirements. Grantees without an automated participant recordkeeping system may use the tool to enter information on participants manually. The tools will also help grantees check the quality of their data submissions in order to reduce the number of potential errors associated with importing data to the TRIO databases. Once all the required data are entered, the grantee can create a file to upload the data via the UB online performance report application and submit the data to the Department as Section II of the APR.

The UB and UBMS Tools are currently being updated and will be available for download by November 1 from a link provided on the TRIO Web site. Projects that have used the UB or UBMS Tools in previous years will be able to import their data into the new tools. As no changes were made to the VUB Tool for 2004–05, projects may use the 2003–04 version of the VUB Tool if they wish.

Question #4: Must an Upward Bound project use the Department's tool?

Response #4: As noted above under the response to Question #2, Upward Bound grantees have several options for preparing the individual participant records; use of the UB, UBMS, or VUB Tool is one of them. You are encouraged to select the method most compatible with your current data management systems.

Question #5: What are the features and functionality of the software tool?

Response #5: The UB, UBMS, and VUB Tools are software applications to assist grantees in submitting the required data for the annual performance report electronically. *The tools are not intended to serve as project management information systems* and thus have limited functionality. Grantees without an automated participant recordkeeping system may use the tools to manually enter the participant information. The tools are designed to reduce the number of input errors by prompting the user to enter valid field contents. Once all the required data are entered, the project can create a file to upload the data via the UB online performance report application and submit the data to the Department as Section II of its performance report.

The UB, UBMS, and VUB Tools also have three additional features to assist grantees.

- Each tool allows grantees to select data fields from other databases and import the data into the tool. The grantee can then use the tool to check the data for formatting and field content errors. Once the data are checked, the grantee can create a file to upload and send to the Department.
- Each tool allows grantees to export the data to another database, spreadsheet, or management information system. This feature allows UB projects to use the performance report data to develop a project management system without having to re-enter the basic data required for the performance report.
- Each tool will generate a statistical report that aggregates the individual participant data.

Question #6: How should a grantee format date fields when preparing the participant data file (Section II) in Microsoft Excel or Access?

Response #6: Excel attempts to convert all numbers to a correct format. For example, when you enter "022571" in a field, Excel will convert that to "22571" because that is a true number. To avoid this problem, please use one of the three options provided below to ensure correct import.

Option A: Include slashes in the date fields. For example, a date of June 24, 2005, should be entered as 6/24/2005 or 6/24/05.

Option B:

1. **Before entering information**, select the entire column by clicking on the grayed column name (for example, "E") so that the column itself turns gray.

2. Select the Format menu and the "Cells…" prompt. You can also do this by clicking on your right mouse button while the mouse is over the highlighted column and selecting "Format Cells."
3. A tabbed dialog box should now appear. Select the first tab, "Number."
4. Change the category to "Text." **Do not** change the category to "Date" because it can give you some unexpected results.

Option C: Place an apostrophe as the first symbol within a cell (e.g., '06242005).

SUBMITTING THE ANNUAL REPORT

Question #7: Are Upward Bound projects to submit the annual performance report electronically?

Response #7: Yes. All Upward Bound projects are expected to submit the annual performance report via the World Wide Web. A link to the Web application for submitting the report will be available at the following Web address on **November 1, 2005**:

http://www.ed.gov/programs/trioupbound/report.html (Upward Bound and Veterans Upward Bound)

http://www.ed.gov/programs/triomathsci/report.html (UBMS)

Question #8: How does a project use the Web to submit the annual performance report?

Response #8: The Web application for UB grantees to use to submit the UB annual performance report has the following features:

- Online Web forms for completing the project identifying information (Section I), providing information on the extent to which the project has achieved its objectives (Section III), and answering questions about the Upward Bound Initiative (Section IV);
- Functionality to upload electronic files with the records of individual participants (Section II);
- A submit button to send the entire report to the Department; and
- An e-mail confirmation that the report has been submitted.

Beginning with the 2002-03 report, so as to meet the Department's security standards and policy directives, the Web site required the use of passwords, and has since continued to do so. In late October 2005, the Department will send a temporary password to each grantee; upon first use of the Web site, the grantee will be guided to select a new password that must meet certain requirements regarding number of characters and use of combinations of characters (English upper and lowercase, numerals, and special characters). A "forgot password" link and the Help Desk will be available should you need assistance with your password. Any project director who does not receive a letter or e-mail message from the Department containing the temporary password by November 1 should call the Help Desk.

Question #9: How are the participant records (Section II) uploaded?

Response #9: The UB Performance Report Web site has features for you to use to upload a file with participant data. Once you are at the site and have entered your project identifying information in Section I, you will be given two methods to upload your file:

Enter the file path:

- When prompted, enter the path and file name into the window (e.g., A:\Student.txt); and
- Click the Upload button to start the file upload.

Or use the Browse feature to locate the file:

- Click the Browse button to open the window that will allow you to locate the file with the participant data on your computer;
- Click on the file name so that it is highlighted;
- Click on the Open button to select the file name and close the Browse window; and
- On the UB Web page, click on the Upload button to start the upload.

With either method, when the upload is completed, the Web page will display the "File name" and "File Path." Check these before proceeding to ensure that the correct files were uploaded.

Question #10: Have Macintosh users experienced problems uploading data files when using Internet Explorer?

Response #10: Yes, some projects using Macintosh have experienced problems uploading data files to the Department's Web site using Internet Explorer. To prevent this, Macintosh users should use Netscape 4.7 or higher to upload data files.

Question #11: Will a project receive confirmation that the report has been successfully submitted?

Response #11: Yes. When completing Section I of the report on the Web, the project staff member who is entering the performance report data will be asked to provide an e-mail address. After also completing Sections II-IV of the report, project staff will reach the "Submit Application" page, where he or she will be reminded to check the accuracy of the information entered and to print a copy of the report. After verifying accuracy and printing the report, the project staff member will click the "Submit" button at the bottom of the page, generating a message that the report has been successfully submitted. A confirmation will also be automatically e-mailed to the address that the project entered in Section I.

Question #12: After electronically submitting the report, should a project also send a paper copy of the report with the original signature of the project director and certifying official?

Response #12: Except for Section I, the Department only requires an electronic version of the performance report information. A grantee, however, must submit, via fax, a signed copy of Section I of the report form that certifies that the information submitted electronically is accurate, complete, and readily verifiable. The signed copy of Section I

only of the report should be faxed to 703-991-8375. *Please do not fax in a copy of the entire report.*

Question #13: Should a project keep a printed copy of the electronically submitted annual performance report?

Response #13: Yes, projects should retain a copy of the electronically submitted report for their own files. As noted in question #11, at the "Submit Application" page of the Web application, projects will be reminded to check the information they have entered and to print a copy of the report. Please note that the printed report will show all the information entered online (Sections I, III, and IV) and will include the name of the file you uploaded (Section II). The contents of the uploaded file will not be on the printed report. Your project should maintain an electronic version (and, if desired, hard copy) of this file as documentation of the data submitted to the Department.

Question #14: When time is short, may the project director and certifying official sign the printed version of Section I prior to completing the entire report?

Response #14: No. In signing the printed version of Section I, the project director and certifying official are making the following assertion: "We certify that the performance report information reported and submitted electronically on [date] is readily verifiable. The information reported is accurate and complete to the best of our knowledge." Such statements can be truthfully and responsibly made only after the report has in fact been completed; therefore, the online application has been designed to print Section I only after the project has completed the entire report.

Question #15: When is the annual report due?

Response #15: In accordance with the Department's regulations, the annual performance report is to be submitted within 90 days of the end of each 12-month grant (budget) period. For the 2004–05 performance report, the Department has extended the report due date to November 30, 2005 for those Upward Bound projects with twelve-month project periods that began in June, July, or August 2004.

*Grantees **should not** wait until the last week of November (or December for UBMS) to submit their performance reports via the World Wide Web, as this practice has the potential of overloading the Web sites. When a large number of users use a Web site at one time, there may be interruptions and delays.* ***Upward Bound grantees are asked to submit their performance reports as soon as complete data are collected.***

II. PROGRAMMATIC QUESTIONS

Question #16: Is there any place on the data file to track a student who graduated from high school in May 1999 (or before) who is still in college or who has completed college?

Response #16: The instructions at the end of field #19 (Participant Status) state that grantees should not include in the file individuals whose participation *ended* prior to the 1999–2000 project year (a correction from the 2003–04 report, in which we incorrectly referred to the 1999–2000 *school* year). TRIO is aware of only one scenario in which a May 1999 graduate could be included: the student would have had to have participated in summer bridge in 1999 in a project whose period ran June or July 1999–May or June 2000. In such a case, the student would indeed have participated during that project's 1999–2000 project year.

Question #17: The California Achievement Test (CAT), the Texas Assessment of Academic Skills (TAAS), and ARIO Assessment Tools are no longer valid options in field #23 (Type of National Standardized Test Used to Measure Academic Skills). How should a project that is still using one of these tests respond to this field?

Response #17: In light of the shift to criterion-referenced state tests in response to No Child Left Behind, in 2004 TRIO shortened the list of national standardized tests included in earlier versions of the report format. The current list retains some of the most commonly used nationally normed tests and, at a grantee's suggestion, includes options 10–13 (ACT's PLAN, ACT, PSAT, and SAT). Projects that use one of the three tests that are no longer valid options for field #23, or that use another test not listed, should select 08 for "Other."

Question #18: How should a project complete the postsecondary fields for a prior participant who is doing postsecondary work at an accredited school that is not listed on the FAFSA Web site?

Response #18: If the student is receiving any form of federal financial aid, the school should have a six-digit school code that can be found at **www.fafsa.ed.gov/fotw0506/fslookup.htm**. If a school code cannot be found, the project should report known information on the postsecondary status of the student in fields #91–99 and should choose "0s" for "Unknown" for fields #93 and 94 (school codes).

Question #19: How should a project complete fields #91-98 for prior participants who have graduated from college?

Response #19: Grantees are not required to report on participants beyond their college graduation; if the grantee has reported the participants' college graduation on a previous year's data file, the project may drop the participants from this year's file. If, however, the project knows a participant is pursuing another degree or is otherwise enrolled in postsecondary education, the grantee may report this information as follows. Data for fields #92, 93, and 95 (first enrollment date, first postsecondary institution, and financial aid at first enrollment) should have been reported previously and should not change (except for corrections). For #91 (Reporting of Postsecondary Education Information), choose the relevant option for the source of current information. For #94, 96, 97, and 98 (School Code for Postsecondary Institutions at end of reporting period, Postsecondary Enrollment Status, College Grade Level at the beginning of academic year 2005–06, and Postsecondary Academic Standing), please provide data that reflect the student's enrollment during the reporting period.

Question #20: How should a project whose reporting period ended in August 2005 complete field #98 (Postsecondary Academic Standing at the end of the reporting period) for prior-year participants who graduated from college in spring 2005?

Response #20: Please use option 1, good standing, which we assume was the prior-year participants' standing at the end of the academic year, just before graduation. This field is one of several in which it helps to think in terms of the academic year within the reporting period.