

**U. S. Department of Education  
Office of Postsecondary Education/Federal TRIO Programs  
Policies and Procedures for the Prior Experience (PE) Assessments  
Student Support Services (SSS) Program  
2020-2025 Grant Award Cycle**

***Brief summary of policies and procedures for assessing PE points***

The purpose of this appendix is to provide information on the Department's policies, procedures and calculation rules used to award Prior Experience (PE) points for the FY 2020-2025 SSS grant cycle.

We have indicated in the past that reporting periods 2021-22, 2022-23, and 2023-24 would constitute the assessment years for the 2020-25 grant cycle—that is, the years during which projects may earn PE points for specific accomplishments. In light of disruptions caused by the global pandemic to many projects' plans, the Department has decided to assess PE points using the average of the highest two years' total scores.

- The calculation of PE points for the 2023-24 APR reporting period is based on:
  - A project's approved number of participants to be served;
  - A project's approved objectives; and
  - The student-level data a project submits in its annual performance report (APR).

**A project that served less than 90 percent of the number of students the project was funded to serve will not have PE points assessed.**

- To determine if a project has served at least 90 percent of the approved number of student to be served, standard rounding rules are applied; if the calculated Number Served rate is between 89.5 and 90.0 percent, it is rounded up to 90 percent.
- To receive PE points for the Funded Number criterion, a project must serve at least the number funded to serve. Except for the one situation noted above, no rounding is applied to the Number Served rates. For example, if the calculated rate is 99.6 percent, the rate will be 99 percent, not 100 percent.
- The PE points a project receives are based on meeting or exceeding the approved objectives. No partial credit is given. If the calculated rate is greater than or equal to the approved rate, PE points will be calculated. Standard rounding rules are used (e.g., 79.6 percent rounds to 80 percent) for the Persistence, Good Academic Standing, and Attainment objectives.
- To receive PE points for the **Attainment** criterion, a SSS project must have been operating a project and must have submitted an APR for the year in which the cohort is established.
- A project that does not submit an APR in this reporting period will not receive PE points in subsequent assessment years for the **Attainment** objectives because the project's prior year's APR data file is used to verify that the current data file being submitted contains all the participant records required to calculate the project's attainment rate.
- The Department will not accept any changes to the project's APR data once the APR has been submitted.

The formulae for calculating the PE points are provided below.

### ***How is the Funded Number Criterion Calculated?***

PE points are assessed based on the project having served the approved number of participants for the reporting year. The actual number of participants served must be equal to or greater than the number of participants the project was funded to serve.

- The **denominator** is the project's approved number of participants to be served.
- The **numerator** is actual number of participants served during the reporting year and is the sum of field #22 (Participant Status), options 1, 2, 8, and 9.

### ***How is the Persistence Rate Calculated?***

For a 4-year institution, PE points are assessed based on the percentage of all participants served by the SSS project in the reporting year who enroll at the grantee institution in the fall term of the next academic year or graduate with a bachelor's degree during the reporting year.

For a 2-year institution, PE points are assessed based on the percentage of all participants served in the reporting year who enroll at the grantee institution in the fall term of the next academic year or graduate with an associate's degree or receive a certificate and/or transfer from a 2-year to a 4-year institution by the fall term of the next academic year.

The Persistence Rate is calculated based on the greater of the number of participants funded to be served or the number of participants served.

The calculation rules for the persistence rate are as follows:

- The **denominator** is the greater of the number funded to be served or the number served.
  - Number funded to be served is from project's approved objectives.
  - Number served is derived from Field #22, Participant Status, options 1 (new), 2 (continuing), 8 (new summer, earned college credits), and 9 (new summer, did not earn college credits).
- The **numerator** is derived from Field #34, Persistence Status (at the beginning of the next academic year) and is the sum of all participants served who were reported in Field #34, Persistence Status, as indicated with a "✓" below.

<b>Field #34—Persistence Status Options:</b>	<b>4-Year Institution</b>	<b>2-Year Institution</b>
1 = Enrolled at grantee institution	✓	✓
2 = Has graduated from <u>the</u> grantee institution with an associate's degree or received a certificate <b>and</b> transferred from a 2- to a 4-year institution		✓
3 = Has transferred from the grantee institution (i.e., 2-year) to a 4-year institution without receiving an associate's degree or certificate		✓
4 = Has graduated from <u>the grantee institution</u> with an associate's degree or received a certificate <b>but did not transfer</b> to a 4-year institution		✓
5 = Has graduated from the grantee institution with a bachelor's degree or equivalent	✓	

### ***How is the Good Academic Standing (GAS) Rate Calculated?***

PE points are assessed based on the percentage of participants served who are in good academic standing (GAS). The GAS is calculated based on the greater of the number of participants funded to be served or the number of participants served minus those new summer participants that did not earn college credit.

- The **denominator** is the greater of number funded to be served or the number served.
  - Number funded to be served is from project's approved objective minus those new summer participants that did not earn college credit (Field #22, Participant Status, option 9).
  - Number served is derived from Field #22, Participant Status, options 1 (new), 2 (continuing), and 8 (new summer, earned college credits).
- The **numerator** is derived from Field #24, Academic Standing, and is the sum of all participants served who were in good standing (option 1).

### ***How are the Degree Attainment Rate / Transfer Rate Calculated?***

#### **Bachelor's Degree Attainment Rate (4-year institutions):**

PE points are assessed based on the percentage of participants served by the project in the cohort year who completed a bachelor's degree within six reporting years of first entering the project.

**Note:** PE points will not be assessed for projects at 4-year institutions if they were first funded in the 2020-25 grant cycle because the project did not serve students in the cohort year.

- The **denominator** is the number of participants in the 2018-19 cohort year.
- The **numerator** is the number of participants in the cohort year who graduated with a first bachelor's degree or equivalent of a bachelor's degree within six years from the grantee institution as reported by the grantee in the APR. The field and options used to determine the **numerator** are provided below.

Field #31—Undergraduate Degree/Certificate Completed at Grantee Institution Options:
4 = 1 <sup>st</sup> Bachelor's degree
6 = Equivalent of 1 <sup>st</sup> Bachelor's degree

#### **Associate's Degree or Certificate Attainment/Transfer Rate (2-year institutions):**

Two-year institutions have two objectives related to the standard objective criterion for degree or certificate attainment and transfer.

**Note:** PE points will not be assessed for projects at 2-year institutions if they were first funded in the 2021-22 or 2022-23 reporting period because the project did not serve students in the cohort year.

#### **C1: Denominator and Numerator**

For the first objective (C1), PE points are based on the percentage of new participants served in the cohort year who graduated with an associate's degree or certificate within four reporting years of first entering the project.

- The **denominator** is the number of participants in the 2020-21 cohort year.
- The **numerator** for C1 is the number of participants in the cohort year who graduated with an associate's degree only, received a certificate only, or graduated with an associate's degree or received a certificate and transferred from a 2-year to a 4-year institution within four reporting years of first served by the project. The field/options used to determine the **numerator** are provided below.

<b>Field #31—Undergraduate Degree/Certificate Completed at Grantee Institution Options:</b>
1 = Certificate/diploma for occupational, educational program (less than two-year program)— <b>Did not transfer from a 2- to a 4-year institution</b>
2 = Certificate/diploma for occupational, educational program (at least two-year program)— <b>Did not transfer from a 2- to a 4-year institution</b>
10 = Associate's degree only— <b>Did not transfer from a 2- to a 4-year institution</b>
11 = Associate's degree <b>AND</b> transferred from a 2- to a 4-year institution within the academic year or by the beginning of the next academic year
12 = Certificate <b>AND</b> transferred from a 2- to a 4-year institution within the academic year or by the beginning of the next academic year

For the second objective (C2), the percentage of new participants that will transfer with an associate's degree or certificate within four years, PE points are based on the percentage of new participants served in the cohort year who transferred with an associate's degree or certificate within four reporting years of first served by the project.

### **C2: Denominator and Numerator**

- The **denominator** for C2, is the number of participants in the 2020-21 cohort year.
- The **numerator** for C2, is the number of participants in the cohort year who transferred from a 2-year to a 4-year institution with an associate's degree or certificate within four reporting years of first served by the project. The field and options used to determine the **numerator** are provided below.

<b>Field #31—Undergraduate Degree/Certificate Completed at Grantee Institution Options:</b>
11 = Associate's degree <b>AND</b> transferred from a 2- to a 4-year institution within the academic year or by the beginning of the next academic year 12 = Certificate <b>AND</b> transferred from a 2- to a 4-year institution within the academic year or by the beginning of the next academic year
12 = Certificate <b>AND</b> transferred from a 2- to a 4-year institution within the academic year or by the beginning of the next academic year