
Research Study: Participant FAQs

What is the College Completion Network?

With funding from the U.S. Department of Education's Institute of Education Sciences, the American Institutes for Research (AIR) has convened a network of researchers building knowledge about promising strategies to improve college completion. The network brings together research teams from across the nation to collaborate, share ideas, conduct strong research, build new knowledge, and disseminate their findings among individuals in the field. You can learn more about the College Completion Network at <https://www.collegecompletionnetwork.org>.

What is the purpose of this research?

This research comprises two different but interrelated components—one component related to **advising and information** and one component related to **reengaging and retaining returning students**, who are often referred to as *stopouts* or *stopped-out students*.

- For the first component of this research, we seek more information about the strategies that colleges use to help all students experience academic success on campus. With this information, we will also investigate the perceived gap between student success interventions implemented at institutions, which are viewed as best practices but have not yet been studied, and interventions that have evidence of effectiveness but are not widely implemented.
- For the second component of this research, we seek to improve understanding of institutional efforts to reenroll and adapt programs and services to support and retain students who previously left campus without attaining a credential.

What is the benefit of the participating?

Participation in this research has no direct benefit. However, at the conclusion of this study, the authors will produce a promising practices brief, which will highlight interventions that institutions use to support student success. The authors will also prepare a full report that highlights the findings from focus groups. As study participants, you will receive advance copies of these documents.

Furthermore, participants' contributions will enable researchers to grow the evidence base of interventions supporting college completion vis-à-vis advising and supports for returning students. At the conclusion of the project, researchers intend to identify a set of interventions currently implemented by institutions related to student success that are ripe for future study and evaluation. Researchers will also identify a set of advising interventions that have been found effective and can be implemented by institutions.

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What are the risks of participating?

Risks to participating in this study are minimal. We will not ask you to share any sensitive or identifiable data. In addition, we will not identify you or your office in any public-facing materials. Your institution may be identified as a participant in the focus group, but nothing you say will be connected directly to your institution.

What is the time commitment?

Participants will take part in a 75- to 90-minute virtual focus group. Select participants will also be asked to aid researchers in contacting additional personnel to participate in the focus group, which we anticipate may take an additional 15 minutes of time.

Will I or my college be identified in public-facing materials?

We will not identify you or your office in any public-facing materials. Your institution may be identified as part of the sample included in the study, but nothing you say will be connected directly to your institution.

Will this study investigate our response to COVID-19?

This study was planned prior to the COVID-19 outbreak. As such, the primary subject of the focus groups will be on the pre-COVID-19 state of operations. However, we also understand that institutions may be discovering and implementing new practices in response to this situation and that these practices may be promising now and in the future. For this reason, we may ask a few questions about your approaches to supporting students during COVID-19.

How should participants prepare for focus groups?

We do not expect participants to do any preparation prior to the focus group. Participants have been identified based on the roles they serve at institutions. Participants should be prepared to discuss key or prioritized student success initiatives related to advising all students, as well as efforts to reengage and retain returning students, within their purview.