

StudentTrackerSM for High Schools

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

www.studenttracker.org

1. What is StudentTracker?

StudentTracker is a service developed by the National Student Clearinghouse that enables you to track your students to any college or university anywhere in the U.S. With StudentTracker's exclusive access to national postsecondary student records, you'll receive reliable, real-time information on student dropouts, transfers, and out-of-state enrollments, which are often difficult to track on your own.

2. We already use student surveys & state reports, why should we use StudentTracker?

Surveys are often very expensive, have low response rates, and can produce misleading results because respondents can provide answers that reflect intentions rather than actual events. State reports often do not include private or out-of-state institutions or go beyond the first year of college attendance.

On the other hand, StudentTracker:

- Uses enrollment and degree information from more than 3,300 collegiate institutions that enroll over 93% of all U.S. higher education students
- Provides a comprehensive view of a student's entire collegiate experience
- Data coverage includes all types of institutions (two-year/four-year, graduate, public/private, trade, vocational, etc.) and every state in the nation, D.C. and U.S. territories

3. What does the service include?

As a subscriber, you'll receive a set of aggregate and detail reports showing:

- Percentage of your students enrolled in college the fall immediately after high school graduation, within the first year, and within the second year following graduation
- Freshman-to-sophomore retention
- Percentage with a college degree, if available (requires at least six years of postsecondary data)
- Progress of a single class through postsecondary education, including first enrollment, retention, re-enrollment after stopouts, graduation, and dropouts
- Comparison between collegiate enrollment and graduation for:
 - In-state vs. out-of-state institutions
 - Public vs. private institutions
 - Two-year vs. four-year institutions
- Top colleges and universities where your students most often enrolled after high school
- Individual student data that you can combine with your own information for longitudinal study

To see a sample report, visit

http://www.studentclearinghouse.org/high_schools/files/STHS_SampleReport.pdf

4. How often will we receive reports?

You will receive an annual StudentTracker report after you sign up and submit your historic graduate data (see "How do we

implement StudentTracker?" on the back).

You'll be able to obtain reports:

- Three times a year: fall, spring, and summer

5. Is student unit level data shared with the high school or district?

Student unit level data is returned to the data provider along with postsecondary entry, persistence, and completion information added by the Clearinghouse.

6. Is StudentTracker FERPA compliant?

Yes. All Clearinghouse services are designed to facilitate an institution's compliance with FERPA (Family Education Rights and Privacy Act), The Higher Education Act, and other applicable laws. Our compliance enables secondary high schools or districts and the Clearinghouse to safely and securely exchange data on high school graduates and their postsecondary enrollment and graduation achievements.

7. How does the Clearinghouse maintain data security?

The Clearinghouse uses secure computer systems and transmission protocols, encrypted files, and operational safeguards. In addition, we take proactive measures to limit the risk of lost or stolen data. We have a multi-year record of high-volume data transfer and storage without a single instance of loss.

8. Does the Clearinghouse sell student lists for commercial purposes?

Absolutely not! The Clearinghouse only returns information to the organization that

continued on back

sent us the original student data request, so they can track student progress and validate educational achievements and use this information to improve instruction and for related educational purposes.

9. How do we implement StudentTracker?

Once you return your signed agreement and pay the invoice, a StudentTracker Client Coordinator will guide you through implementation. You will need to provide an initial history file in Excel containing your historic diploma recipients (up to eight years) and, after each graduation period, send records of your new diploma recipients to the Clearinghouse. Your StudentTracker Client Coordinator will provide you with step-by-step instructions throughout the entire process.

For more information, contact our Secondary Education team at highschools@studentclearinghouse.org.

10. How much does it cost to participate?

The cost is \$425 per high school for an annual subscription. This allows you to submit up to eight years of historic graduates.

11. How do we exchange information with the Clearinghouse?

You can send student-level files in ASCII or Excel formats, programmed according to standard layout specifications provided by the Clearinghouse. Your submissions are transmitted over the Internet using secure File Transfer Protocol (FTP). You will retrieve your reports through a secure Web tool which requires a unique username and password for each user. Our StudentTracker Client Coordinators are available to assist users and provide programming and file exchange guidance.

12. How much computer programming time is required?

School districts have completed programming in as little as five hours. Depending on the size of your district, you may be able to send and receive information in an Excel format, which does not require computer programming.

13. Do I need special software to access, view, or print my reports?

No. The aggregate report requires Adobe Reader 5.0 or higher to accurately open and view. Most browsers already have the reader plug-in, which is available as a free download from www.adobe.com. The student-level detail report is delivered as a comma separated values (CSV) file. This is a commonly-used data file format that you can open in Excel and import into most database software.

14. What is the National Student Clearinghouse?

The Clearinghouse, a non-profit organization, is the nation's trusted source for education verification and student educational outcomes research. More than 3,300 colleges and universities, enrolling over 96% of all students in public and private U.S. institutions, participate in the Clearinghouse. Participating institutions provide access to actual enrollment and degree information on each of their students to us. As a result, only the Clearinghouse provides access to a nationwide coverage of enrollment and degree records.

15. Do we need to get written permission from parents for us to request this kind of data on our students?

No. The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) has two provisions that allow you to share information with us without individual consent. First, schools may release certain information (such as name and date of birth) without consent, provided

they have designated the information as "Directory Information" and given parents the chance to opt out of sharing such information. Thus, provided that a high school has such policies in place, the National Student Clearinghouse may use the Directory Information provided by the high school to retrieve the postsecondary education records of its former students and release them back to the high school. Second, even if the school does not have designated Directory Information, the school is permitted to use contractors like the Clearinghouse in the same way it would use its own officials to perform work the school has outsourced to us by contract. Of course, the Clearinghouse honors any Directory Information blocks that have been placed on the postsecondary education records and will only return aggregate-level information for those students.

16. Is SSN required for tracking? What information will you need?

No, we do not require or use the student's SSN. The only required information we need about the student is their first name, last name, date of birth, graduation date, diploma type, FERPA block indicator, and high school attended.

Sign up for StudentTracker for High School Today!

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**NATIONAL STUDENT
CLEARINGHOUSE**

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