

THE DEGREE RECLAMATION PLAYBOOK

 **IHEP**
INSTITUTE FOR HIGHER EDUCATION POLICY

**DEGREES
WHEN
DUE** 

ABOUT THIS PLAYBOOK

As of 2021, at least 36 million Americans had attended college and accrued significant amounts of college credit without ever being awarded a college credential that recognizes their learning and effort.¹ For more than a decade, the Institute for Higher Education Policy (IHEP) has worked to support these students with “some college, no degree” (SCND) and promote degree completion.

In 2009, IHEP launched [Project Win-Win](#) (Win-Win). Over the next five years, 61 institutions in nine states participated in Win-Win by identifying students with unawarded earned degrees and retroactively awarding them, and reenrolling students who were close to completion but needed additional credits to graduate.

During the same period, the Office of Community College Research and Leadership (OCCRL) at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign launched its own initiative, [Credit When It’s Due](#) (CWID). CWID aimed to increase degree completion through reverse transfer, a practice through which institutions ensure that students are awarded degrees they began at another institution. When a student transfers from a two-year institution to a four-year institution and earns the remaining credits required for an associate’s degree, the two institutions employ “reverse transfer” to apply credits from the four-year institution back to the two-year institution for the purpose of awarding the associate’s degree.

In 2017, upon the conclusion of Win-Win and CWID, IHEP released [The Potential of Degree Reclamation: A Path to Reclaiming the Nation’s Unrecognized Students and Degrees](#), and coined the term “degree reclamation” in outlining the findings from both initiatives. This term encompasses the strategies from both Win-Win and CWID, with the shared focus on enabling students and institutions to recognize earned credits and unawarded degrees. Together, Win-Win and CWID helped students claim over 20,000 new associate’s degrees.



The following year, IHEP launched its next college completion initiative, [Degrees When Due](#) (DWD). DWD deployed evidence-based and equity-minded degree reclamation strategies from Win-Win and CWID to support institutions as they sought to help students complete credentials that were meaningful to their education and career goals. DWD spanned three cohorts and included almost 200 institutions across 23 states between 2018 and 2021.

This playbook distills more than a decade’s worth of best practices into a practical guide to support your degree reclamation efforts. On behalf of everyone at IHEP and past team members involved in our long history of degree completion efforts, thank you for your work to support students. We hope you find this to be a useful tool to increase completion at your institution, in your system, or across your state.

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1. National Student Clearinghouse. (2019). Some college, no degree: A 2019 snapshot for the nation and 50 states. Retrieved from https://nscresearchcenter.org/wp-content/uploads/SCND_Report_2019.pdf

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABOUT THIS PLAYBOOK	I
INTRODUCTION TO DEGREE RECLAMATION	1
HOW TO USE THIS PLAYBOOK	2
IMPLEMENTATION AT A GLANCE	3
STRATEGIC ASSESSMENT	4
IMPLEMENTATION	7
STEP 1: ESTABLISH YOUR TEAM(S)	7
STEP 2: BUILD AN EQUITY FRAMEWORK	9
Key Equity Terms and Concepts	9
Campus Equity Analysis	10
STEP 3: INVENTORY INSTITUTIONAL POLICIES AND PRACTICES	11
Policy and Practice Change	11
STEP 4: DIG INTO THE DATA	13
Identifying Students with Some College, No Degree	13
Matching Your Data	15
Determining Which Students to Reengage	16
STEP 5: SHARE TRANSCRIPTS AND OBTAIN STUDENT CONSENT (Reverse Transfer)	18
STEP 6: AUDIT DEGREES	22
Degree Mining Tool	23
STEP 7: COMMUNICATE WITH NEAR-COMPLETERS	24
STEP 8: REENROLL NEAR-COMPLETERS (Adult Reengagement)	26
STEP 9: CONFER DEGREES	29
STEP 10: SUSTAIN DEGREE RECLAMATION STRATEGIES	30
Integrating Degree Reclamation	30
Driving Policy Change	30
Leveraging Student Voice and Data	31
REGIONAL AND STATE LEADERSHIP	33
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS	34
APPENDIX	III



INTRODUCTION TO DEGREE RECLAMATION

Each year, millions of Americans decide to pursue a college education to broaden their skill sets, boost their earning potential, and transform their life circumstances. For many students, the path to a college degree is not linear. Students may face a variety of academic and non-academic barriers during their collegiate career, including barriers at the individual, institutional, state, and federal levels. Students may encounter personal challenges like financial hardships and family obligations, and institutional challenges like financial holds that prevent reenrollment and unknown graduation processes that leave degrees unawarded. Ultimately, almost one in five students leaves college empty-handed after investing precious time and valuable resources.²

Degree reclamation strategies equip campus staff with the skills to document, evaluate, and adjust institutional policy and practice to improve procedural efficiencies, increase completion, and identify and close equity gaps.

This playbook offers clear steps for implementing two proven degree reclamation strategies: adult reengagement and reverse transfer.

Degree reclamation – a combination of evidence-based and equity-focused strategies– helps institutions reengage the SCND population, provide these students with targeted supports to aid in their completion of degrees, and award degrees when sufficient credits are earned.

AR ADULT REENGAGEMENT

Adult reengagement strategies help colleges identify, locate, and communicate with students who accumulated a significant number of credits and who stopped out of college without completing a degree. This approach involves retroactively awarding degrees to students who meet degree requirements and identifying ways to reengage and reenroll students who are near completion.

RT REVERSE TRANSFER

Reverse transfer, also referred to as “reverse credit transfer,” is a practice through which institutions ensure that students are awarded the degrees they earn. When students transfer from a two-year institution to a four-year institution and earn the credit required for an associate’s degree, the two institutions employ “reverse transfer” to apply credits from the four-year institution back to the two-year institution for the purpose of awarding the earned associate’s degree.

2. Ryan, C. L., & Bauman, K. (2016). Educational attainment in the United States: 2015 (Report No. P20-578). Washington, DC: U. S. Department of Commerce & U.S. Census Bureau. Retrieved from <https://www.census.gov/content/dam/Census/library/publications/2016/demo/p20-578.pdf>

HOW TO USE THIS PLAYBOOK

This playbook includes a wealth of best practices to reengage stopped-out students and increase completion at your institution, in your system, or across your state. Use links in the online version to jump from one section to another and to resources elsewhere in the playbook based on your interests and how far along your institution, system, or state is in the degree reclamation implementation process.

Follow corresponding icons and background colors to find information specific to:

AR ADULT REENGAGEMENT

RT REVERSE TRANSFER

We recommend basing your approach on the level of experience at your institution, system, or state:

1. For those embarking on degree reclamation work, we recommend following the steps below, in order.
2. For those whose degree reclamation work is well underway, we recommend taking the [strategic assessment](#) to identify which of the steps below are most relevant.

The 10 primary steps to degree reclamation implementation are:

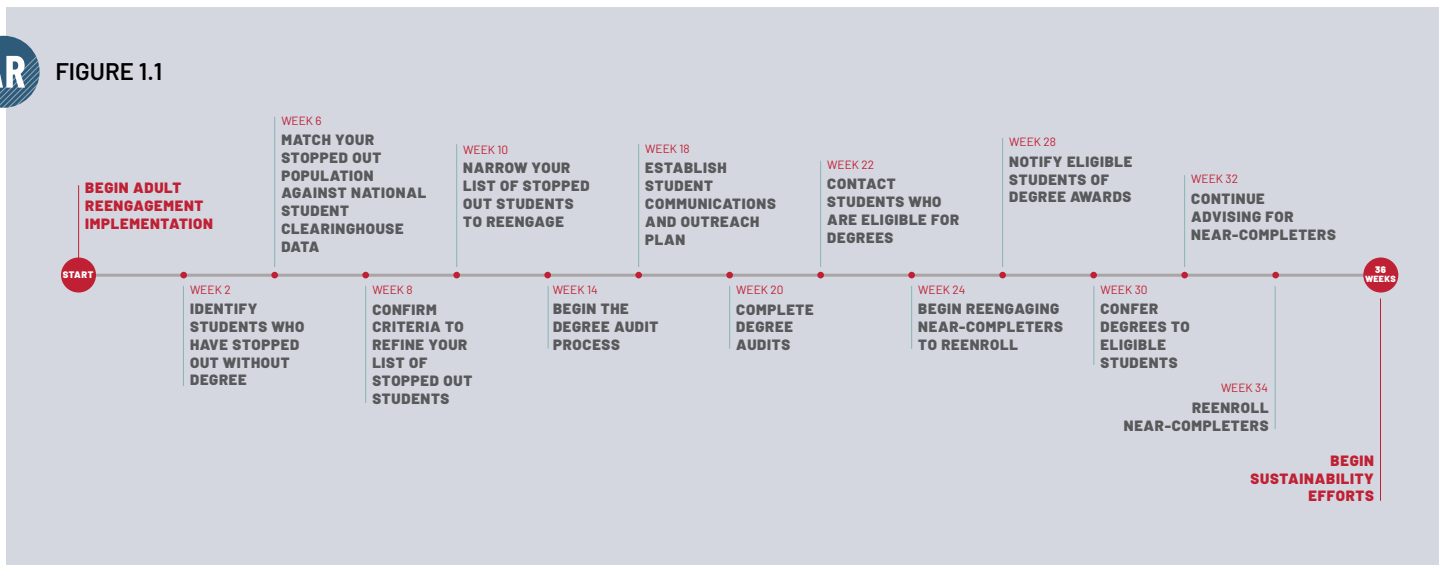
- **Step 1: Establish Your Team(s)** – Determine which team(s) are needed for your work, who should be included in your team(s), and how to get started.
- **Step 2: Build an Equity Framework** – Ensure your degree reclamation work is grounded in equity, familiarize your team(s) with key equity terms and concepts, and analyze your institution's policies and practices through an equity lens.
- **Step 3: Inventory Institutional Policies and Practices** – List and monitor policy and practice change throughout the implementation process and align your work with related internal and external efforts to leverage maximum support.
- **Step 4: Dig into the Data** – Identify students for degree reclamation efforts with an equity lens.
- **Step 5: Share Transcripts and Obtain Student Consent** **RT REVERSE TRANSFER ONLY** – Decide upon a method to share transcripts between institutions and a process to obtain student consent to share transcripts.
- **Step 6: Audit Degrees** – Develop a process for degree auditing.
- **Step 7: Communicate with Near-Completers** – Locate and communicate with students who must reenroll or continue enrollment to complete.
- **Step 8: Reenroll Near-Completers** **AR ADULT REENGAGEMENT ONLY** – Advise stopped-out students, remove student-level barriers to reenrollment, and continue support.
- **Step 9: Confer Degrees** – Confer degrees awarded through degree reclamation efforts.
- **Step 10: Sustain Degree Reclamation Strategies** – Maintain momentum and expand support for degree reclamation efforts.

The last section of the playbook outlines resources for regional and state leaders interested in supporting degree reclamation.

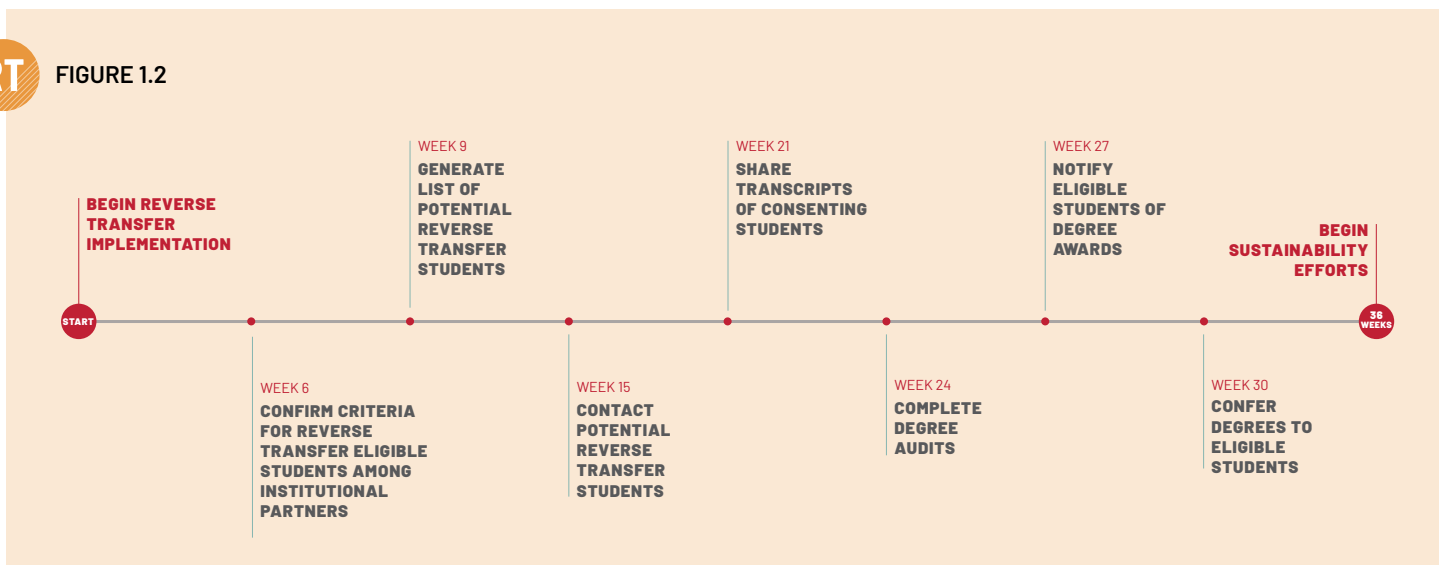
IMPLEMENTATION AT A GLANCE

Use these timelines for adult reengagement (Figure 1.1) and reverse transfer (Figure 1.2) implementation in your team's initial planning stage. We recommend beginning the implementation process at least nine months before you expect to see initial degree reclamation outcomes. Many factors may impact your timeline, including but not limited to: your institution's current processes and policies; data management practices; technological resources for degree auditing; and staff capacity.

AR FIGURE 1.1



RT FIGURE 1.2



STRATEGIC ASSESSMENT

This strategic assessment (Figure 1.3) evaluates the implementation level of various degree reclamation related policies, practices, and strategies at your institution, in your system, or across your state. Teams can use this self-assessment to determine which sections, topics, and resources within the playbook are most relevant to your work.

The following are definitions for one scale used within the assessment:

- **Not Present:** Not in consideration or previously implemented.
- **Exploring/Planning:** Actively being considered or preparing to pilot and implement.
- **Implementing:** Currently in full-scale implementation.
- **Sustaining:** Full-scale implementation complete, with work on long-term survival and effectiveness.

FIGURE 1.3

POLICIES AND PRACTICES				
<i>Indicate the extent that the following policies and practices are implemented at your institution:</i>				
	Not Present	Exploring/ Planning	Implementing	Sustaining
Degree reclamation policies/practices in place to reduce educational inequities				
Degree reclamation written into institutional policies				
Degree reclamation written into strategic plan				
Degree reclamation integrated into staff job responsibilities and job descriptions				
Disaggregated data used to identify and understand equity gaps				
Degree reclamation policies and practices focus on marginalized student populations				
Degree reclamation designed in partnership with historically Black colleges and universities (HBCUs), Hispanic serving institutions (HSIs), and/or minority-serving institutions (MSIs)				
<i>Indicate the extent to which the following are priorities for your institution:</i>				
	Not a Priority	Low Priority	Medium Priority	High Priority
Reducing equity gaps in degree completion				
Improving reverse transfer outcomes				
Reengaging adults who have stopped out of an associate's or bachelor's degree program				
Creating programs/courses/initiatives for returning students				
<i>Reflections on areas for growth and opportunity:</i>				

CAPACITY

Indicate the extent to which you agree with the following statements about your institution's capacity to implement degree reclamation strategies:

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Professional development/training for staff is adequate				
Institutional funding is adequate				
State and/or system funding is adequate				
Institutional technology capacity (e.g., degree auditing and electronic transcript exchange) is adequate				
Personnel capacity (e.g., staff time, staff knowledge, staff resources) is adequate				
Institutional leadership support is adequate				
State and/or system leadership support is adequate				

To what extent do resources for degree reclamation programs exist within your state and/or system:

	Not a Priority	Low Priority	Medium Priority	High Priority
Marketing and/or communication resources				
Dedicated state/system degree reclamation coordinator				
FERPA guidance				
Data sharing agreements				
Performance-based or outcomes-based funding initiative				
Direct legislative funding				
Legislative policy guidelines				

Reflections on areas for growth and opportunity:

REENGAGEMENT STRATEGIES

Indicate the extent that the following reengagement and/or reenrollment strategies are currently implemented at your institution:

	Not Present	Exploring/ Planning	Implementing	Sustaining
Financing incentives such as reduced tuition, free classes, debt forgiveness, or fee/fine forgiveness				
Registration/course scheduling flexibility such as early registration, or weekend and evening classes				
Advising and student support such as dedicated reenrollment advisor, one-stop-shop, or orientation programming				
Academic and program flexibility such as course substitutions, credit for experience and prior learning, or online learning				
Targeted outreach plan such as leveraging data to create customized messaging for student outreach				
Comprehensive communications plan such as employing multiple platforms to reach students or developing a consistent brand across communication channels				
Strategic partnerships with employers to identify and reengage SCND students				
Strategic partnerships with other colleges/universities to identify and reengage SCND students				
Dedicated institutional web page with degree reclamation information for SCND students				

Reflections on areas for growth and opportunity:



IMPLEMENTATION

STEP 1: ESTABLISH YOUR TEAM(S)

Implementing degree reclamation strategies requires staff from various departments across campus and works best through a team-based approach. This section outlines the key members of the four types of degree reclamation teams and their respective roles.

AR Adult Reengagement Team

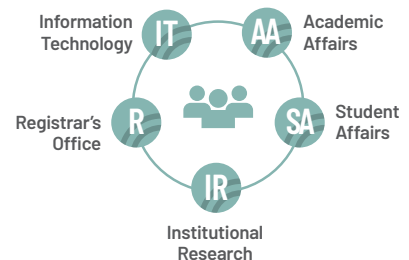
CAMPUS TEAM MEMBERSHIP

Adult reengagement work is typically implemented within one institution. This team is responsible for all adult reengagement efforts within the institution. At a minimum, the adult reengagement team (Figure 1.4) should include representation from the following five departments:

- **Registrar's Office:** Facilitate degree audits and award degrees.
- **Academic Affairs:** Identify the appropriate degrees to audit and options for course substitutions.
- **Student Affairs:** Support student outreach and reengagement, help returning students reenroll, and arrange for non-academic student resources.
- **Institutional Research:** Mine the institutional data system, perform data analysis, track key metrics, and supply the team with updated outcomes throughout the process.
- **Information Technology:** Support the data mining and degree audit processes and consider adjustments to student advising or registration portals to better facilitate adult student reengagement.

If your state or institution has student advising or registration portals that your team will use for regular communication and sharing of degree progress status, engage the managers or specialists responsible for those portals.

FIGURE 1.4
ADULT REENGAGEMENT
CAMPUS TEAM



RT Reverse Transfer Team

Reverse transfer requires a minimum of three teams working collaboratively—one two-year institution campus team, one four-year institution campus team, and a consortium team that includes leadership from both campus teams. Reverse transfer two- and four-year campus teams facilitate all aspects of reverse transfer work taking place on their respective campuses. Reverse transfer consortium teams contain members from all two- and four-year institutions within the consortium and a designated consortium liaison/coordinator who leads the consortium's efforts.

During reverse transfer implementation, state transfer policies must be considered, data sharing agreements drafted, and other policies and practices taken into consideration. Regional reverse transfer consortium or statewide partnerships are ideal, allowing member institutions to pool resources, share knowledge, and advocate together for needed changes.

CAMPUS TEAM MEMBERSHIP

At a minimum, each campus should have the key staff members listed here on the team. These representatives are critical players at important decision points in the reverse transfer implementation process. Both two- and four-year campus teams (Figure 1.5) should include the following team members, although their duties may vary based on which campus they represent:

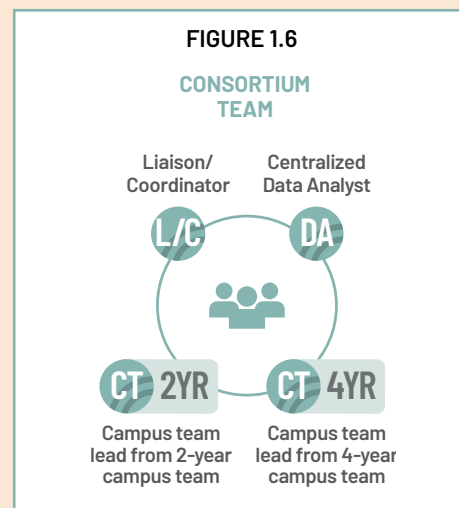
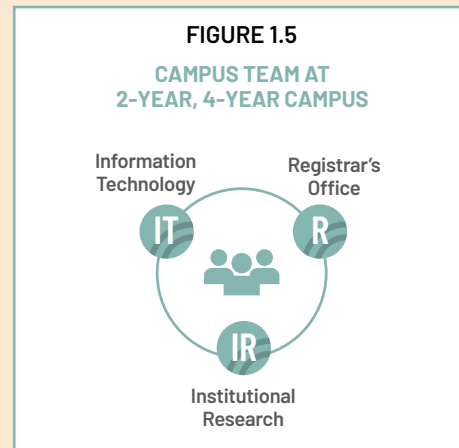
- **Registrar's Office:** Facilitate obtaining student consent, sharing of transcripts, degree audits, and degree awards.
- **Institutional Research:** Mine the institutional data system, perform data analysis, track key metrics, and supply the team with updated outcomes throughout the process.
- **Information Technology:** Support the data mining and degree audit processes and consider adjustments to student advising or registration portals to better facilitate degree reclamation.

If your state or institution has student advising or registration portals that your team will use for regular communication and sharing degree progress status, engage the managers or specialists responsible for those portals.

CONSORTIUM TEAM MEMBERSHIP

The consortium or state team (Figure 1.6) helps campus teams understand how certain policies and practices cross institutional borders. At a minimum, the consortium or state team should consist of the following key members:

- **Liaison/Coordinator:** This facilitator coordinates interactions among institutions within the consortium or state to build consensus for project policies, planning, and communication. This facilitator may be from a state agency, a state or regional affinity group, or an independent community convener.
- **Two-Year and Four-Year Campus Leads:** Each participating institution should have a representative on the consortium or state team that serves as the point person for partnerships with other campuses in the consortium and who is responsible for communicating information back to their own campus team.
- **Centralized Data Analyst:** If student data are housed in a state or consortium database, this consortium team member may pull the data for all consortium institutions. This member may also perform data tracking and analysis at the consortium level.



? REFLECTION QUESTIONS

ESTABLISH YOUR TEAM(S)

- Have all team roles been filled?
- If not, how does your team plan to gain buy-in and fill the remaining roles?

*For a full list of reflection questions, see the [appendix](#).



STEP 2: BUILD AN EQUITY FRAMEWORK

Data show that students from populations historically marginalized by our postsecondary education system stop out at higher rates, which contributes to inequitable rates of postsecondary attainment. For example:

- Students attending public two-year institutions stop out twice as often as those attending public four-year institutions (41% vs. 19%).³
- At public two-year institutions, Black (50%) and Hispanic (39%) students stop out at higher rates than their White (35%) and Asian (25%) counterparts.³
- At public four-year institutions, Black (28%) and Hispanic (22%) students stop out at higher rates than White (15%) and Asian (8%) students.³
- Part-time students are twice as likely to stop out than full-time students (54% vs. 27%).⁴

To maximize the potential of degree reclamation, undertake your efforts with an equity lens. If intentionally implemented, degree reclamation has the potential to close gaps in completion along racial and socioeconomic lines. Degree reclamation can improve completion for historically marginalized populations; assess and acknowledge practices and assumptions about serving stopped-out students through developing an inquiry-driven equity framework; and identify and address practices that are not serving all of today’s students, especially students of color, students from low-income backgrounds, and adult learners.

Key Equity Terms and Concepts

FIGURE 1.7

	Definition	What it Looks Like in Practice
EQUITY	An educational system in which race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status or any social or cultural factor are not predictors of student success.	Teams establish goals to close gaps in attainment between various student populations by assessing disaggregated data prior to implementation, throughout implementation, and then throughout the sustainability phase. Efforts to close gaps must take place at an institutional, system, and state level and touch all facets of how systems function, including practice and policy.
EQUITY-MINDEDNESS	The recognition and analysis of the contradictions between the ideals of democratic education and the social, institutional, and individual, practices that contribute to persistent inequalities in outcomes among different racial and ethnic groups and socioeconomic classes.	Teams develop an equity mindset by becoming aware of disparities in outcomes among student populations on campus through disaggregated data analysis. They discuss these inequities in team meetings on an ongoing basis. Awareness of disparities, coupled with the goal of closing equity gaps through degree reclamation, leads to equity-mindedness.
EQUITY LENS	A framework that centers equity in decision-making to shape practice and policy.	Teams intentionally and consistently apply an equity framework to all decision-making throughout degree reclamation implementation and the sustainability phase.

3. National Student Clearinghouse. (2020). Completing college: National and state reports. Retrieved from https://nscresearchcenter.org/wp-content/uploads/Completions_Report_2020.pdf

4. National Student Clearinghouse. (2021). Yearly success and progress report. Retrieved from https://nscresearchcenter.org/wp-content/uploads/Yearly_Success_Progress_Report_Feb2021.pdf



Campus Equity Analysis

Begin a campus equity analysis by collecting disaggregated retention and completion data from the institutional research team or registrar's office to understand which students will be served through your degree reclamation efforts. At minimum, these data should include:

- Retention rates (disaggregated by race/ethnicity, Pell status, age, and gender)
- Graduation rates (disaggregated by race/ethnicity, Pell status, age, and gender)

Other student factors your team(s) might want to consider depend on the communities your institution, system, or state serves. For example: Does your campus enroll a significant number of veterans? Are you located in a reentry community where formerly incarcerated students would like to enroll? Depending on your campus context, consider these factors:

- Race/ethnicity beyond IPEDS race/ethnic categories
- First-generation student
- Parent or guardian to minor children
- Single parent of minor children
- English as a second language
- Former foster student
- Formerly incarcerated
- Veteran
- Housing insecure
- Full-time work status
- Part-time work status

After collecting the data, meet to review as a team. What do these data tell you about current inequities on campus?



Although this may be your team's first structured equity conversation, equity will be a reoccurring theme throughout your degree reclamation implementation journey. Look for this equity icon throughout the playbook as a cue to revisit the information and resources in this section.



ADDITIONAL RESOURCE

[Everyone Deserves to Be Seen](#)

This report by IHEP and the Southeast Asia Resource Action Center (SEARAC) outlines how postsecondary data can reveal significant inequities when these data are disaggregated, including for aggregate Asian American Pacific Islander (AAPI) communities.



REFLECTION QUESTIONS

BUILD AN EQUITY FRAMEWORK

- Why are equity terms and concepts important to degree reclamation work?
- What student populations will your team(s) center their degree reclamation efforts on?

**For a full list of reflection questions, see the [appendix](#).*

STEP 3: INVENTORY INSTITUTIONAL POLICIES AND PRACTICES

Policy and Practice Change

Degree reclamation work often yields lessons that should inform broader institutional policy and practice. In fact, policy change is how systemic barriers are removed for former, current, and future students. As your team(s) moves through the implementation process, inventory and monitor policy and practice needs. After a policy or practice barrier is identified and documented, communicate the needed changes to appropriate stakeholders. Data demonstrating the need for change are a critical element in adjusting policy or practice.

Common policy and practice barriers to completion identified by degree reclamation implementation include:

- Fees for transcript requests
- Petitions to graduate and associated fees
- Financial holds
- Student institutional debt
- Intent/petition to graduate processes
- Unique institutional graduation requirements
- Lack of degree auditing capability

Addressing these barriers may require engaging some of the following institutional stakeholders:

- Academic departments/deans/directors
- Academic affairs leadership
- Accreditation committees
- Administration and finance leadership
- Faculty/academic senate
- Information technology leadership
- Institutional counsel

QUICK TIP: AVOID INITIATIVE FATIGUE

Avoid Initiative Fatigue by Aligning Degree Reclamation Efforts with Existing Initiatives

To avoid mistakenly conveying the idea that degree reclamation is yet another distinct campus strategy, which may contribute to initiative fatigue, aim to integrate degree reclamation strategies into existing reenrollment and completion efforts. Existing efforts could be institution-based, aligned with community partners, or statewide initiatives.

Examples of existing campus efforts that may align with degree reclamation include degree programs geared toward adult students; adult student offices; and holistic support programs for adult students, including those offered by nonprofits or local government agencies serving SCND adults in your community. Connect with potential partners about your degree reclamation goals and opportunities for collaboration.



POLICY AND PRACTICE CHANGE SPOTLIGHT

Identifying and Removing Barriers to Graduation

Through its participation in DWD, Shasta College in California discovered that a single computer literacy requirement was a common barrier to completion. This video features Joe Wyse, Shasta College's superintendent/president, describing how the college was able to remove that barrier and increase completion.

Removing Graduation Application Barrier

Anoka-Ramsey Community College (ARCC), a DWD participant in Minnesota, identified elements of the graduation application process as a barrier to completion. This video features Nora Morris, ARCC's dean of research and evaluation, describing how the college was able to change its practices and help students claim earned degrees.



REFLECTION QUESTIONS

INVENTORY INSTITUTIONAL POLICIES AND PRACTICES

- How do degree reclamation efforts align with your institution's policies or practices to close equity gaps in attainment?
- What institutional, system, and state incentives or resources can support your team's degree reclamation implementation?
- Which external partnerships would be beneficial in supporting your team's degree reclamation efforts?

*For a full list of reflection questions, see the [appendix](#).



STEP 4: DIG INTO THE DATA

By digging into the data, your team(s) will compile a list of your SCND students, match that list against external data to determine if any students should be removed, and decide as a team if and how your list of students to reengage should be further narrowed.

Identifying Students with Some College, No Degree

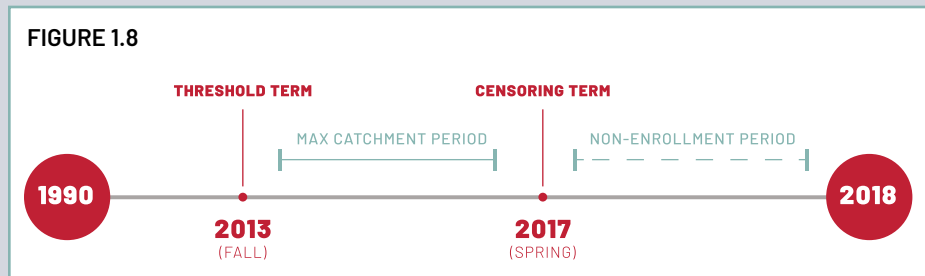
To support SCND students, you must first identify students who have attended your institution but have not graduated. Later steps may narrow the population to be reengaged for your initiative.



First, determine the parameters of your query and pull the initial list of students who stopped out prior to earning a degree.

Recommended parameters:

- Non-enrollment period: three consecutive semesters
- Credits completed:
 - 30 credits or more at two-year institutions
 - 60 credits or more at four-year institutions
- Years of enrollment: within the last five academic years



Recommended fields:

- | | | |
|--|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Institutional Student ID • First Name • Middle Name or Initial • Last Name • Last Reported Address • Phone • Email • Race/Ethnicity • Gender | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Date of Birth • Age (during semester of data pull) • Received Pell Grant (any semester) • Grade Point Average (GPA) • Any other student characteristics available like First-Generation, Student-Parent, Veteran, etc. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cumulative Institutional Credits (as of file creation) • Cumulative Transfer Credits (as of file creation) • Existing Awards Conferred by Home Institution • Existing Holds on Student Account • Program Enrolled in Prior to Stop Out |
|--|--|--|

Second, determine the data source, e.g., a state database, a third-party vendor, or your institution's student information system (SIS).

Third, determine who on your team will pull the student data. In most cases, this step is completed by an institutional research or registrar's office representative.

PROPER AND SAFE USE OF STUDENT DATA

The degree reclamation process must be grounded in the proper and safe use of sensitive student data, especially when collaborating with an outside institution or agency. Safeguard this information and minimize the parties with which you share data based on the party's right or existing access to the data and the party's need to know the information.

The U.S. Department of Education provides specific [guidance](#) on student privacy.



RT

First, determine the parameters of your query before pulling the initial list of students who attended a two-year institution in your consortium team and transferred to a four-year institution in your consortium team.

Recommended parameter:

- 30 credits or more at the two-year institution before transferring without a degree

To be included, students still currently enrolled at a four-year institution in your consortium should not be expecting a bachelor’s degree award within the semester.

Recommended fields to include:

- | | | |
|---|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student ID, unique per Student • Institutional Student ID (only of the institution receiving the file) • First Name • Middle Name or Initial • Last Name • Last Reported Address • Phone • Email • Race/Ethnicity • Gender • Date of Birth • Age (during semester of data pull) • Received Pell Grant (any semester from the awarding two-year institution) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grade Point Average (GPA) (at the potential awarding two-year institution) • Any other student characteristics available like First-Generation, Student-Parent, Veteran, etc. • Cumulative Institutional Credits (as of file creation) • Cumulative Transfer Credits (as of file creation) • Existing Awards Conferred by Home Institution • Existing Holds on Student Account • Program Enrolled in Prior to Stop Out • Potential Awarding Two-Year Institution | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Office of Postsecondary Education (OPE), Federal Code, of the Potential Awarding Institution • Last Date of Attendance at the two-year institution • Last Date of Attendance at the four-year institution • Name of Four-Year Institution of Current Enrollment • OPE, Federal Code, of Institution of Current Enrollment • Current Major/Program of Study • Credits Earned at the potential associate’s-awarding institution • Institutional Residency Requirement Met |
|---|---|--|

Second, determine the data source, e.g., a state or consortium database, a third-party vendor, a four-year institution’s SIS, or a two-year institution’s SIS.

Third, determine how the data will be shared, e.g., from the state/consortium to institutions, from a third-party vendor to institutions, or institution-to-institution sharing.

Fourth, determine who on your team will pull the student list:

- If the state/consortium is sharing the data with institutions, a state or consortium representative would be responsible.
- If a third-party vendor is sharing the data with institutions, an institutional research representative at each institution would most likely be responsible.
- If one institution is sharing directly with another, an institutional research representative at one institution (either the two-year or four-year) would be responsible for pulling the initial list.

**Before any data can be shared across institutions, you need to read the section on [Obtaining Student Consent](#).*



Matching Your Data

Adult reengagement teams must compare the initial list of SCND students against National Student Clearinghouse (NSC) data to determine which students enrolled at another institution. Reverse transfer teams will match that initial list against partner institutions' data. Reverse transfer teams can also match the list(s) against NSC data if they plan to implement reverse transfer with institutions outside of their consortium.

AR MATCH AGAINST NATIONAL STUDENT CLEARINGHOUSE (NSC) DATA

Match your institution's list of SCND students against NSC data to allow your team to filter out students who have enrolled at another institution since attending your college or university or who have already been awarded a degree elsewhere.

The first step will be for your team's institutional research or registrar's office representative(s) to create a NSC StudentTracker submission file from your institutional data. See NSC's [StudentTracker for Colleges & Universities User Manual](#) for technical information about how to create a batch file for the matching process.

You will need to inform NSC of your desired time frame for the query. Consider aligning the StudentTracker file submission with the expected start/end dates of your institution's semester.

Once you have received the NSC StudentTracker files, remove from your list of potential students to reengage any students who have enrolled or completed elsewhere.

RT MATCH AGAINST NATIONAL STUDENT CLEARINGHOUSE (NSC) DATA

Institutions that would also like to implement reverse transfer with two-year or four-year institutions outside of their consortium team can match their data with the NSC in the process described in the Adult Reengagement section.

MATCH AGAINST YOUR PARTNER INSTITUTION(S) DATA

The institution receiving the list of students who may be eligible for reverse transfer is responsible for matching the list against their institution's data to verify the students have an existing record, are not duplicates, and have not been awarded a degree by their institution. This could be the two-year or the four-year institution's responsibility, depending on which process your consortium chooses to follow.

Determining Which Students to Reengage

Adjust constraints to narrow the group of students you will reengage based on team capacity or prioritization of certain student subgroups based on institutional goals, such as narrowing inequities.

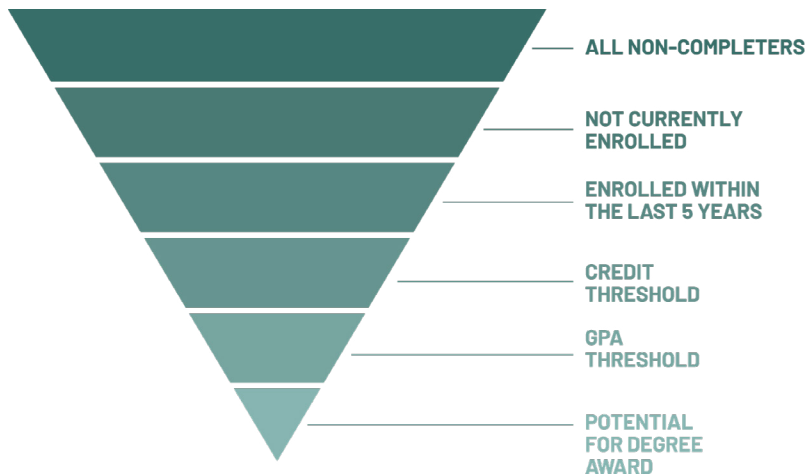


APPLYING AN EQUITY LENS

ADJUST CONSTRAINTS

Throughout this process, note how changing constraints impacts the racial and socioeconomic composition of students you will reengage. That is, you might have more or fewer students of color; more or fewer Pell Grant recipients; more or fewer first-generation students, etc. Do not look merely at the resulting aggregate number because some constraints may disproportionately exclude students from focus subgroups. Instead, apply an equity lens by reviewing the composition of the students selected. Like a funnel (Figure 1.9), as more constraints are adjusted, the number of students to reengage will continue to narrow.

FIGURE 1.9



PROJECT AND MAXIMIZE EQUITY IMPACT

After making constraint adjustments, compare the group of SCND students remaining in your list to your institution's overall enrollment, retention, and completion rates disaggregated by various student demographics. In doing so, you can project how including or prioritizing groups with lower persistence and completion rates can move the needle on closing attainment gaps at your institution.

ALIGN WITH INSTITUTIONAL EQUITY GOALS

Lastly, consider how your degree reclamation efforts may align with current equity-focused goals or initiatives at your institution. For instance, does your institution have equity goals written into its strategic plan? If so, how might your work align with these goals? Does your institution have established equity initiatives focused on academic outcomes for certain student populations like first-generation students, adult students, or Latinx students? If so, could your team partner with those initiatives to prioritize reengagement for these student populations?

APPLYING AN EQUITY LENS SPOTLIGHT

In 2021, IHEP facilitated a series of data workshops for California institutions participating in DWD. The series covered: understanding your SCND students; working with students who were eligible for a degree; reengaging and reenrolling near-completers; and leveraging data to tell the story of your work. During the series, institutions disaggregated their data, performed comparisons, and analyzed their data using an equity lens.

The following resources from the workshops will support your degree reclamation efforts:

- [Workshop 1 Activity Guide—Understanding Your Stopped-Out Students](#)
- [Workshop 2 Activity Guide—Working with Eligible Students](#)
- [Workshop 3 Activity Guide—Reengaging Near-Completers](#)
- [Workshop 3 Presentations Video—Reengaging Near-Completers](#)
- [Workshop 4 Activity Worksheet—Storytelling With Data](#)
- [Workshop 4 Presentations Video—Telling Your Data Story](#)



REFLECTION QUESTIONS

DIG INTO THE DATA

- Is your team versed on the U.S. Department of Education's laws and guidance on student privacy? If not, is professional development needed or can support be found from others within your institution?
- What data source will you use, and who will be responsible for pulling and matching the data?
- Does your institution already have an account with the National Student Clearinghouse?
- Which constraints will your team use to determine which students to reengage?

**For a full list of reflection questions, see the [appendix](#).*

STEP 5: SHARE TRANSCRIPTS AND OBTAIN STUDENT CONSENT

RT REVERSE TRANSFER ONLY

RT

This section covers choosing a transcript sharing method, tracking students through the reverse transfer process, and obtaining student consent to share transcripts. After consent is obtained, your team can share transcripts and begin the degree auditing process. Regardless of the transcript sharing method chosen, it is ideal to waive transcript request and sending fees to remove them as a potential barrier to reverse transfer efforts.

CHOOSING A TRANSCRIPT SHARING METHOD

Your consortium team will need to determine how you plan to share transcripts across institutions. Institutional partners can share transcripts via an exchange platform, electronically through PDFs, manually, or through some combination of the three.

SHARING TRANSCRIPTS USING AN EXCHANGE PLATFORM

Sharing transcripts through an exchange platform should allow for automated sharing of transcript data and data uploading or interfacing with SIS(s). If you have an electronic platform for sharing transcripts, discuss the following questions with your registrars, bursars, and information technology specialists:

- What version of the software are institutions in your consortium using? If there are variances, determine if the differences will impact how information can be distributed or received. Consider what it may take to update software, so institutions are using the same version of the platform.
- How will you notate in the system that a request or distribution is for the purposes of reverse transfer? This will help direct the transcript to the right place, so it does not get misdirected to other processes, such as admission or reenrollment.
- If the consortium has agreed to waive transcript fees, how will you make sure these fees are not triggered by the system? Some consortiums have used a notation in the system or complemented the electronic exchange with a secure way of providing a list of students for which the fee will be waived. In other cases, consortiums needed to override the system to avoid the charge.
- Based on your consortium's anticipated volume and schedule, what time frame would be appropriate for sending transcripts or processing receipt of transcripts? Institutions that may send or receive very large batches, especially for the first iteration of reverse transfer, may choose to do this in multiple exchanges.



SHARING TRANSCRIPTS USING PDF FILE SHARING

If your consortium partners do not have an electronic platform for sharing transcripts, other electronic options are available.

Your consortium may be able to send PDFs of transcripts in a secure fashion. Some institutions may have SIS(s) that can read and upload data from a PDF transcript. Other institutions may need to manually enter transcript information to perform a degree audit.

Your team should discuss these questions with your registrars, bursars, and information technology specialists:

- Can a PDF or other appropriate file format be created at the university partner(s)?
- How can a PDF of the transcript be sent securely from the university to the degree-awarding institution? Is a secure file transfer option available?
- What is a reasonable time frame for generating transcripts and sending them to the degree-awarding institution?
- If one contact has access to the secure file transfer and must share the transcript with the registrar's office, how will your team ensure that the information is shared securely?
- If the consortium has agreed to waive transcript fees, how will you make sure fees are not triggered by the system? Options include making a notation in the system, providing a list of students for which the fee will be waived, or overriding the system to avoid the charge.
- Based on your consortium's anticipated volume and schedule, what time frame would be appropriate to send transcripts or process receipt of transcript? Institutions that may send or receive very large batches may choose to do this in multiple exchanges.

SHARING TRANSCRIPTS MANUALLY

If your team has not found a suitable way to electronically exchange transcripts and plans to share hard copies, discuss these questions with your registrars, bursars, and information technology specialists:

- How will you schedule the sending and receiving of transcripts? Institutions may arrange batching of transcripts so that staffing can be scheduled for heavy exchange periods.
- To whom will you send transcripts? Identify a contact person to whom transcripts are addressed at the awarding institution to minimize potential misdirection.
- If the consortium has agreed to waive transcript fees, how do you ensure they are not incurred? It is unlikely that this manual process will trigger automatic fees, but it might be good to discuss the issue.

TRACKING STUDENTS THROUGH REVERSE TRANSFER

Before sending your first student communication, implement a way of tracking students through the reverse transfer process. The tracking system should yield data on practice and policy barriers, capture degree reclamation outcomes for continued assessment, and ensure follow-through with students. You can track in a SIS, database, or even an Excel spreadsheet.

A FULL LIST OF RECOMMENDING TRACKING FIELDS APPEARS ON [PAGE XIV OF THE APPENDIX](#), TO INCLUDE:

• Student ID	• Academically Eligible Students	• Near-Completer Students
• First Name		
• Last Name	- Non-Academic Barriers	- Academic Barriers
• Race/Ethnicity	- Degree Information	- Non-Academic Barriers
• Age		- Enrollment Status
• Pell Status		- Degree Information
• Gender		
• GPA		
• Degree Audit Conducted (yes/no)		
• Status After Audit (academically eligible for a degree or near-completer)		

For teams who use an institutional SIS for tracking, an information technology or institutional research representative should add a reverse transfer flag to students' records in order to enable queries of students in the reverse transfer pathway on data points like enrollment and completion.

OBTAINING STUDENT CONSENT

Before sharing any student files between institutions, review Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act ([FERPA](#)) requirements. Interpretation of FERPA regarding consent for reverse transfer data sharing varies by state. Campus legal counsel or the state attorney general should confirm the appropriate approach for your consortium.

Determine if there is already a reasonable expectation and legal standing that student records for the purpose of degree award or transfer may be shared among participating institutions without a separate formal consent request. This may be the case for two- and four-year institutions that have the same governing body and institutional record system. Branch campuses of a university system are a prime example of where this may be the case.

STUDENT CONSENT POLICIES

There are two policy options for obtaining student consent for transcript sharing: opt-in and opt-out.

- **Opt-in:** requires that students affirmatively express their desire to have transcripts and related data shared between a two-year and four-year institution.
- **Opt-out:** allows institutions to share transcripts and related data unless a student explicitly denies the request to share within a reasonable time frame following confirmed receipt of the request communication.

“Before sharing any student files between institutions, review Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) requirements.”

Anecdotal evidence suggests that an opt-out policy will likely result in larger consent rates among eligible students.⁵

5. Taylor, J. L., & Bragg, D. D. (2015). Optimizing reverse transfer policies and processes: Lessons from twelve CWID states. University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign: Office of Community College Research and Leadership. Retrieved from <https://degreeswhendue.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/optimizing-reverse-transfer.pdf>

COMMUNICATION METHODS FOR CONSENT

Consider ways to make the case to students that reverse transfer is a valuable path and that they should allow their transcripts to be shared between institutions. To make this case and increase consent rates at institutions using opt-in policies:

- Train student affairs staff on reverse transfer.
- Add flags to student records indicating to staff which students are potentially eligible.
- Display outreach materials on campus (e.g., posters, brochures, ads in the college catalog, and spots on closed-circuit television).
- Send emails, postcards, and text messages to potentially eligible students; follow up with phone calls to unresponsive students.
- Include pop-up messages in potentially eligible students' SIS or learning management accounts.
- Hold events and engage local press and community partners to create word of mouth.
- Use your institution's websites, social media accounts, and newsletters to create awareness about reverse transfer.
- Add a question to your institution's admissions application to obtain consent proactively in the future.

MESSAGING BEST PRACTICES

When drafting student messaging for reverse transfer, remember to:

- Ensure your messaging is easily understood by students, not just administrators and staff. If possible, engage students in developing your outreach campaign.
- Communicate the benefits of participating in reverse transfer and how easy the process is for students.
- Leverage data to customize messaging when possible, such as including the number of credits a student has accumulated, their program of study, and so on.

REVERSE TRANSFER COMMUNICATIONS SPOTLIGHT

Communication with students is key to a successful reverse transfer strategy. [This webinar](#) features Kate Mahar, dean of institutional effectiveness at Shasta College in California, sharing lessons about effective student communication strategies based on her own experience implementing reverse transfer.



REFLECTION QUESTIONS

SHARE TRANSCRIPTS AND OBTAIN STUDENT CONSENT

- Which transcript sharing method will your team use?
- Will your institution waive transcript fees for students participating in reverse transfer?
- Does your institution use an opt-in or opt-out policy to obtain student consent for transcript sharing?

**For a full list of reflection questions, see the [appendix](#).*

STEP 6: AUDIT DEGREES

Degree auditing involves reviewing transcripts to assess students' degree eligibility. When degree audit results are tracked effectively, this process also has great potential to identify systemic barriers that are likely to interrupt the studies of current and future students as well.

The degree auditing process sorts your SCND student population into three categories: (1) students who meet all academic degree requirements (eligible students), (2) students who are short at least one credit to complete a degree (near-completers), and (3) students who do not fit into either category (neither) due to circumstances like a hold that cannot be addressed and prevents them from reenrolling.

DEGREE AUDIT PLANNING

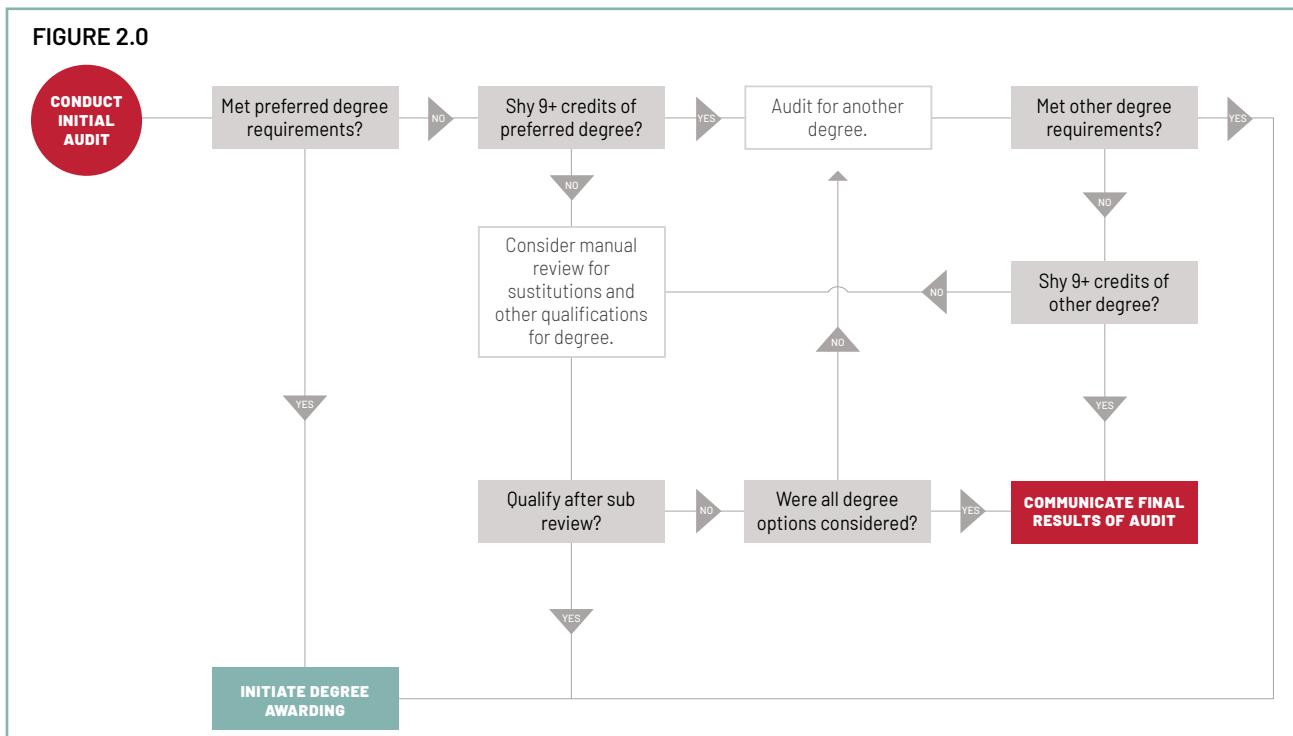
Prior to degree auditing, consider these questions for an efficient and effective process:

- What technology does your institution have for degree auditing automation?
- Does your institution have a plan to perform manual audits, either as a complement to technology or in lieu of technology?
- How does your team plan to manage staffing and work distribution for degree auditing?
- What catalog year will your team use to award degrees?
- What will be the default degree for the initial audit?
- Will your team consider auditing against other degrees after the initial audit?
- How will your team build exceptions/substitutions into your degree auditing process?

DEGREE AUDITING PROCESS

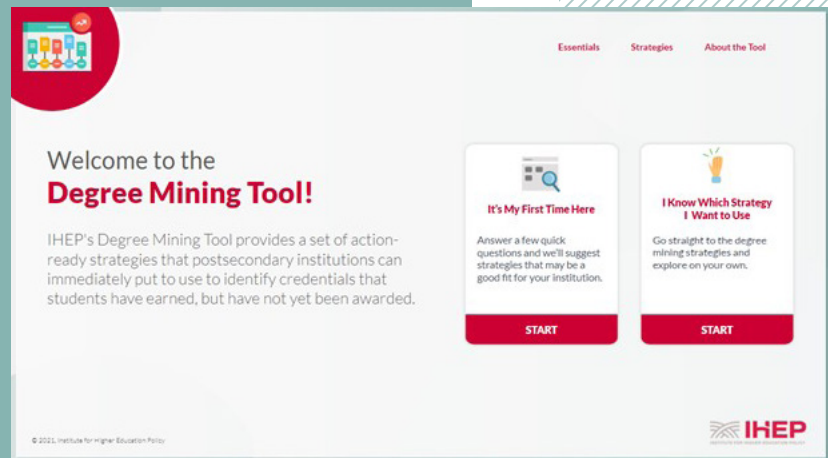
Through the degree auditing process, your team will sort your SCND students into the three categories above—(1) those eligible for a degree, (2) near-completers, and (3) those who do not fit into either category.

After the initial audit, use this decision tree (Figure 2.0) to guide your team's next steps.



Degree Mining Tool

Another term for degree auditing is *mining*. The term *degree mining* reinforces the idea that institutions already have unawarded credentials within their student data and “mining” for them will yield something valuable for students and institutions. Drawing on extensive experience and practical insights learned through DWD, IHEP, in conjunction with LXStudio, created the [Degree Mining Tool \(DMT\)](#). The DMT is a free online tool that provides step-by-step, easy-to-understand instructions that walk the user through technical resources to identify and award earned credentials or reengage stopped-out students. Leverage the DMT to streamline your team’s degree auditing process.



As your team(s) conducts degree audits, ensure all team members are tracking auditing results in the same way, either through your institution’s SIS or a document on a shared drive. Consistent data collection will smooth the student reengagement process and allow you to explore trends and unearth barriers to completion, which will help inform future efforts to support students. To view a full list of recommended tracking fields, see the [appendix](#).

? REFLECTION QUESTIONS

AUDIT DEGREES

- Can you leverage the Degree Mining Tool to create efficiencies in your degree auditing process?
- How is your team(s) tracking degree audit results? Is each team member using the same method?

*For a full list of reflection questions, see the [appendix](#).

DEGREE AUDITING SPOTLIGHT

Much of degree reclamation work happens in the degree auditing phase. In these webinars, glean insights from three practitioners who have implemented degree audits:

- [Steve Linden](#), registrar at Oakland Community College in Michigan and Wesley Beddard, associate vice president for programs at the North Carolina Community College System
- [Regina Randall](#), registrar at Columbus State Community College in Ohio

STEP 7: COMMUNICATE WITH NEAR-COMPLETERS

After auditing student records, contact stopped-out students regarding reenrollment and/or update reverse transfer students who have remaining credits to complete.

AR LOCATING NEAR-COMPLETERS

To locate stopped-out students for reengagement, your team should:

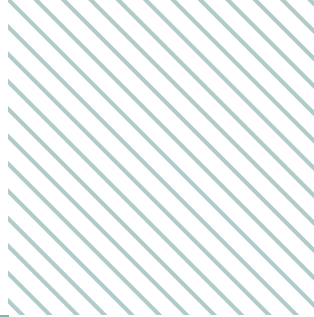
- Add flags to student records indicating to staff which students are stopped out and who could potentially be reengaged.
- Leverage services like [PeopleFinder](#) or [AlumniFinder](#) to find contact information when current information is outdated.
- Hold events and engage local press and partners to create word of mouth to reach stopped-out students in the community.
- Use your institution's websites, social media accounts, and newsletters to build awareness about adult reengagement efforts.

COMMUNICATING WITH NEAR-COMPLETERS

Best practices for drafting messaging to reengage stopped-out students include:

- Communicate the benefits of returning to complete a degree. For example, include the average salary for individuals in your region who hold degrees relevant to your student population.
- Be specific when describing how your institution will support their reenrollment and journey to completion.
- Leverage data to customize messaging such as including a former student's degree program or how many credits a former student has left to complete.
- Develop a clear, concise, and consistent brand across various communication channels.
- Include multiple rounds of outreach across various platforms in your outreach campaign.
- Include students, ideally stopped-out students from your institution who returned, in your outreach campaign design process. They are well positioned to help your team design an effective campaign.

Remember to collect data through the communication process using either your institution's SIS or a document on a shared drive to track where students are in the reengagement process and assess which communication methods are most effective. To view a full list of recommended tracking fields, see the [appendix](#).



Reengaging Stopped-out Students Spotlight

Effective outreach campaigns are crucial to reengaging near-completers. In these webinars, hear from the practitioners below as they share their experiences planning, developing, and implementing successful campaigns:

- Jessica Gibson, senior director of adult learner initiatives with the Tennessee Higher Education Commission and Julie Szeltner, senior director of adult programs and services at College Now Greater Cleveland share [outreach and communication strategies](#) from their experiences reengaging adult students.
- Stephanie Bullock, project coordinator for Complete 2 Compete with the Mississippi Institutions of Higher Learning, outlines her experience implementing an [outreach campaign to reengage stopped-out students](#), including mailings, emails, social media posts, and local media coverage.
- Eric Greene, vice president for strategy, relations, and communications, and Nikki Jewell, dean of enrollment services and financial aid at Kellogg Community College in Michigan outline [communications campaigns](#) they developed during COVID-19 to engage and reengage adult learners.
- Kate Mahar, dean of innovation and strategic initiatives at Shasta College in California, shares [communication planning](#), workflow process, and communication examples.

RT COMMUNICATING WITH REVERSE TRANSFER NEAR-COMPLETERS

Your team previously located potential reverse transfer students, asked for consent for data sharing purposes, and received a response. Your consortium team also established which partner institution (the two-year or four-year) is tasked with communicating directly with students and what methods of communication to use, such as email, phone calls, or mailers.

After degree audits are conducted, update students who are not yet eligible for a degree through reverse transfer with details about how they could become eligible in the future. For instance, the message should include a list of any missing degree requirements, when and how to send an updated transcript for review and contact information for reverse transfer advising.

See the [Confer Degrees section](#) for details on communication with reverse transfer students who are found to be eligible for a degree.

? REFLECTION QUESTIONS

COMMUNICATE WITH NEAR-COMPLETERS

- How are you tracking communication with near-completer students?
- How will you leverage data to tailor messaging to your target student population(s)?

**For a full list of reflection questions, see the [appendix](#).*

STEP 8: REENROLL NEAR-COMPLETERS

AR ADULT REENGAGEMENT ONLY

The reenrollment process includes academic advising; addressing institutional holds; identifying academic and non-academic support needs; and continued support after the student reenrolls. In this section, your team will also find common barriers to reenrollment and potential solutions.

AR Academic Advising—Advising staff should be trained to work with adult and returning students. In meetings with students, advisors should focus on students' desired career pathway and how it does, or does not, align with the degree their academic record was audited against. After considering academic and career implications, advisors should determine if the degree map needs to change to reflect these goals, including whether course substitutions and credit for prior learning would make the path to degree more efficient. These meetings should conclude with the advisor ensuring that returning students clearly understand what courses they need to complete to graduate.



Many potential returning students may be working full time, could be parents, and may be juggling both caregiving and working. Make access to an advisor and other student supports as easy as possible for returning students. Consider having advisor availability some early morning, evening, and weekend hours. Offer both in-person and virtual appointment options and ensure parenting students understand their children are welcome on campus in student services offices.

Institutional Holds—Address any holds that potential returning students have on their accounts. The institution can resolve many types of holds, such as financial holds, library holds, or holds for insufficient/incomplete paperwork. Advising staff should work with other campus offices to find institution-driven solutions so students can reenroll.



Academic and Non-academic Supports—Advisors should address both academic and non-academic challenges in their student sessions. They should assist returning students with navigating various supports, such as financial aid, tutoring, or the campus foodbank, early in the reenrollment process. Ideally, advisors also would be able to make referrals to community-based organizations or local government for services and resources like clothing banks, child care vouchers, housing assistance, or emergency grants.

Continued Support—Advisors should use the data collection system your team(s) already established to continue tracking the progress of students who reenroll. Implement a case management approach that includes regular communication and check-in points with returning students until they complete. In this approach, advisors are the students' primary point of contact on campus and act as navigators for any assistance students may need.

COMMON REENROLLMENT BARRIERS AND POTENTIAL SOLUTIONS

DWD institutions have identified potential solutions to common barriers to reenrollment and persistence. These barriers were identified through data collected during degree auditing and interviews at institutional research sites.

BARRIERS	SOLUTIONS
Academic	
Developmental coursework (e.g., math, reading, and English) or gateway courses (e.g., college-level math)	Peer tutoring; summer bridge programs; supplemental academic supports; co-requisites
General education requirements (e.g., oral communications)	Changes in curriculum or pedagogy
Unique institutional requirements (e.g., wellness or computer literacy requirement)	Removing or altering unique institutional requirements
General academic challenges	Regularly train faculty and advisors on requirements; use an intrusive advising model; leverage technology to track student progress
Non-Academic	
Financial challenges	Institutional debt forgiveness; fundraising/scaling student financial aid; embedding basic needs support
Class accessibility	Different modality options; classes outside of traditional times (evening, early morning, weekend)
Bureaucracy	Advisors acting as navigators; reform policy and practice
Isolation	Adult student-friendly campus culture; programs focused on adults; adult cohorts/learning communities/groups; advisors trained on adult learners

Policy and Practice Change – Leverage the data your team has accumulated throughout the reengagement process to analyze which barriers are most significant at your institution. Use this new evidence to drive policy and practice change on your campus that will remove barriers to reenrollment and persistence for returning students—and smooth pathways to completion for current and future students.



ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

[“It’s Just the Right Thing to Do for Students”: Aiding the Community by Serving Students with Some College, but No Degree](#)

This case study about Shasta College in California, a DWD participating institution, offers insights into how a higher education institution can better support its students and the surrounding community by identifying institutionally driven barriers to completion and supporting the successful return of formerly enrolled students.

[Implementing Degrees When Due within a Complex Institutional and Policy Context](#)

This case study about Anoka-Ramsey Community College in Minnesota, a DWD participating institution, offers insights into how a suburban community college develops and adopts an initiative to reach SCND students in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic.

[Reengagement Investment Calculator](#)

This IHEP calculator tool equips you with the cost/revenue information needed to help make the case for using debt forgiveness as a strategy at your institution to reenroll adult learners who stopped out. Although this tool relies on best-case-scenario assumptions regarding reenrollment and sustained progress, you can use the calculations to set a baseline and begin the conversation on initiating a debt-forgiveness program.



REFLECTION QUESTIONS

REENROLL NEAR-COMPLETERS

- How will your team resolve institutional holds, such as financial holds, library holds, or holds for incomplete paperwork, so students can reenroll?
- What process will your team implement to monitor student progress through the reengagement process?
- How will your team address common reenrollment barriers at your institution?

*For a full list of reflection questions, see the [appendix](#).



REENROLLMENT SPOTLIGHT

In order to successfully reenroll adult students, institutions need to offer programs that align with their needs. [This webinar](#) features Buffy Tanner, director of innovation and special projects at Shasta College in California, outlining programs at her college specifically designed for working adults.

Student institutional debt is a common barrier to reenrollment for stopped-out students. In [this webinar](#), learn about initiatives implemented by the Detroit Regional Chamber, Cleveland State University, and Kalamazoo Valley Community College using debt forgiveness and resolution to reengage adult students.

STEP 9: CONFER DEGREES

Students may be conferred degrees through degree reclamation if they were identified as eligible for a degree after an audit, or near-completers who reenrolled to finish the remaining credits needed for a degree. Students identified as eligible without reenrolling may have unresolved holds on their account like a financial hold, library hold, or hold for insufficient paperwork. Staff should work with other campus offices to resolve holds so degrees can be conferred. Holds should have been resolved for near-completers prior to reenrollment.

Before conferring degrees, determine:

- Will you use an opt-in or opt-out process for degree conferral? If your team is considering an opt-out process, see the [Eligible Student Opt-Out Graduation Communication Example](#) in the appendix for ideas.
- Will fees related to graduation be waived for students graduating through adult reengagement and/or reverse transfer strategies? If yes, ensure that fees are not triggered for students through the conferral process your team implements.

Begin the degree conferral process by notifying students that they have qualified for a degree. The communication should include:

- Information on how any unaddressed holds can be resolved, if applicable
- Timeline for the opt-in or opt-out process
- Verification of how names should appear on the diploma
- Information about potential impact on private scholarships
- Information about potential impact on immigration status

If possible, set up a flag in your SIS indicating that the degree was conferred through reverse transfer or adult reengagement, for use in future analysis of the impact and effectiveness of your team's degree reclamation strategies.

RT

After degree conferral, two-year institutions should send an updated transcript back to their four-year partners, so institution records are up to date.



REFLECTION QUESTIONS

CONFER DEGREES

- Will your institution waive graduation fees for students completing through degree reclamation strategies?
- Is your current graduation process opt-in or opt-out?
- How will you notify students that they are eligible for a degree?

*For a full list of reflection questions, see the [appendix](#).



OPT-OUT GRADUATION PROCESS SPOTLIGHT

Opt-out degree awarding strategies increase reverse transfer degree attainment rates. This [webinar](#) features Nora Morris, dean of research and evaluation at Anoka-Ramsey Community College and Buffy Tanner, interim associate dean of student services at Shasta College sharing their institutions' journeys moving to an opt-out graduation process.

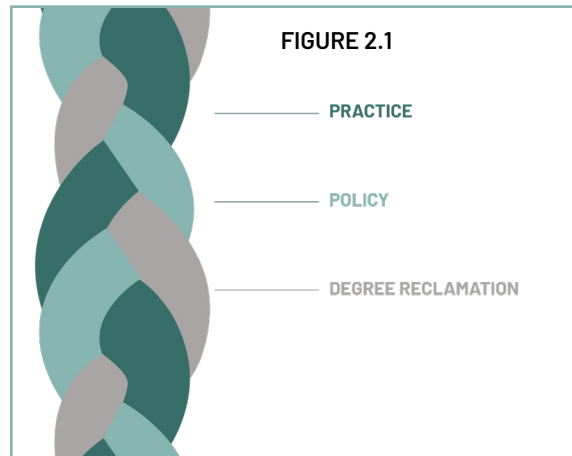
STEP 10: SUSTAIN DEGREE RECLAMATION STRATEGIES

Change can be hard to implement, and even harder to sustain. Maximize the sustainability of degree reclamation efforts by embedding them into routines, policies and practices, and institutional goals and expectations. In this section, your team will create an action plan to sustain your degree reclamation work and expand support over time.

Integrating Degree Reclamation

The key to ensuring degree reclamation work continues is to integrate it into your institution's routine processes (Figure 2.1). For example:

- Create a work plan to ensure adult reengagement and/or reverse transfer cycles occur every semester or every year.
- Establish reoccurring meetings with your team(s), campus stakeholders, community partners, and state or regional leadership.
- Set up a shared drive for team members to share documents and serve as a repository for degree reclamation knowledge.
- Designate a lead who will champion degree reclamation in the short and long term.
- Align your degree reclamation efforts with your institution's strategic plan.



Driving Policy Change

Your team(s) learned about common policy and practice barriers to degree reclamation in the [Policy and Practice Change](#) section of this playbook. You have been tracking policy and practice change needs on your campus during implementation. The next step is to align these needs with your institution's strategic plan so you can make a clear case for change.

Review your institution's strategic plan and use a rating system—such as 1=not aligned, 2=somewhat aligned, 3=perfectly aligned—to assess how the policy and practice changes you have identified align with other institutional priorities and commitments detailed in the strategic plan. Note that your institution may or may not have specific equity goals outlined in its strategic plan. Regardless, capture equity implications when assessing your proposed policy changes.

Use this example of mapping institutional policies onto the strategic plan (Figure 2.2).

FIGURE 2.2

POLICY	ALIGNMENT WITH STRATEGIC PLAN	STEPS TO IMPROVE ALIGNMENT	EQUITY CONSIDERATIONS
<p>The college charges a \$75 graduation fee to cover the expenses related to verifying degree eligibility and helping to defray the cost of commencement.</p>	<p>1(not aligned)</p> <p>This policy is not aligned with the institution’s goal in the strategic plan to eliminate student barriers to degree completion because it creates a financial obstacle that may discourage students from applying for graduation.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Analyze the resources generated by the graduation fee. 2. Based on this analysis, consider the potential of eliminating the fee. 3. If total elimination of the fee is not feasible, consider an alternative source of funding. One option might be to embed this fee (or a smaller amount) as part of the general student fee that is not a barrier at the end of students’ journeys. 	<p>This fee is not equitable and could be seen as a regressive tax, in that students from low-income backgrounds are charged a higher percentage of their income than wealthier students. This results in a fee that is a disproportionately large hurdle to degree completion for our most economically disadvantaged students.</p>

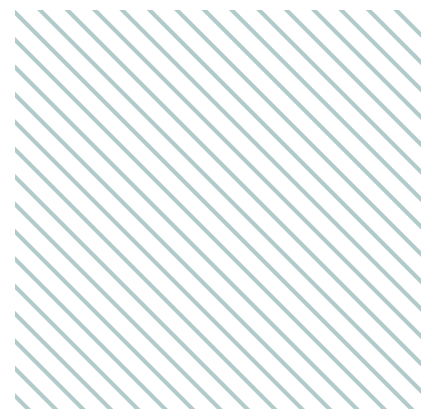
Leveraging Student Voice and Data

One of the most critical tools for communicating the value of degree reclamation is highlighting the experiences and voices of students whose lives have been changed for the better. Student voices can be used to enhance outreach to other students, presentations and social media, print materials, and reports to various stakeholders and funders. Reach out to students who either reenrolled or received a degree through your efforts and ask them to provide written or video testimonials responding to question prompts. Ideally, testimonials should reflect the diverse student profiles and perspectives in your campus community.

Many stakeholders will also want to see quantitative evidence that proves your efforts are worth investments of time, money, and resources. Consider how your degree reclamation data align with your institution’s overall goals. Beyond traditional outcomes like enrollment and graduation, could your team include other data, such as credit completion, GPA increases, or student debt resolution?

Percentages and numbers are useful talking points, but the context around those numbers is important. When sharing data, establish the following:

- **Change over time** – Set a baseline prior to implementation and then illustrate how your efforts have made an impact over time.
- **Comparison groups** – Compare students engaged in your degree reclamation efforts to postsecondary outcomes of other groups, such as your overall student body, region, or state.
- **Disaggregated data** – Identify equity gaps and outcomes for specific groups of students by using disaggregated data.



INSTITUTIONAL LEADERSHIP SUPPORT

Gaining support from senior leadership will help you continue meaningful degree reclamation efforts on your campus. Arrange a meeting with leadership to communicate the importance of integrating degree reclamation into strategic planning, continuous improvement, and organizational culture. In addition to making the connection between degree reclamation and institutional priorities, share outcomes from your efforts and include stories about impact on students' lives. Use your data as evidence for policy and practice change, and advocate for the need to sustain the work, including funding, staffing, and attention.

REGIONAL AND STATE LEADERSHIP SUPPORT

While looking for partners to broaden support for your team's degree reclamation efforts, connect with regional or state-level nonprofits that have missions to increase completion, your state's government higher education agency, and/or your community college or university system office. Read the [Regional and State Leadership](#) section of this playbook to see how partnering with one of these agencies can help expand and sustain your degree reclamation efforts.



REFLECTION QUESTIONS

SUSTAIN DEGREE RECLAMATION STRATEGIES

- How will your team(s) connect degree reclamation to your institution's goals, plans, and culture?
- How will your team(s) leverage data and student stories to gain internal and external support for your efforts?

**For a full list of reflection questions, see the [appendix](#).*



STORYTELLING SPOTLIGHT

Data and student voice in storytelling can be a powerful tool to gain support for your degree reclamation efforts. These videos feature practitioners sharing how they leveraged data and student stories to gain support for their efforts and one student testimonial example.

PRESENTATIONS

- Allison Hoffman, assistant vice president of admissions and student success, and Egon Heidendal, assistant vice president for institutional research and effectiveness, at Northwest Missouri State University share the final report they created for institutional leaders regarding their DWD efforts.
- Katie Dawson, assistant vice president of academic innovation and learning at the University of Louisiana System, shares LA Complete's annual report.

STUDENT TESTIMONIAL

- The Mobile Area Education Foundation (MAEF), a nonprofit dedicated to improving public schools and increasing college access and completion in the Mobile, Alabama region, participated in DWD. One of MAEF's employees, Janice Rivers, shares her story of stopping out, returning, and completing her degree.

REGIONAL AND STATE LEADERSHIP

Regional and state leaders can play a vital role in future degree reclamation efforts by developing and leading a community of practice. Within DWD, almost every state with participating institutions had at least one state liaison from a regional or state-level nonprofit, state government higher education agency, or a community college or university system office.

Degree reclamation communities of practice consist of higher education institutions and other stakeholders interested in increasing enrollment, persistence, and completion through degree reclamation strategies. State or regional leaders can support degree reclamation by coordinating regular state- or region-wide meetings; advocating for alignment and support; facilitating data collection, sharing, and analysis; monitoring campus progress across the state or region; and amplifying promising practices.



ADVOCATING FOR ALIGNMENT AND SUPPORT

Depending on the role a regional and/or state leader occupies, this person may be able to assist communities of practice in advocating for:

- Higher education system or state policy and practice change
- Higher education system or state funding support
- Support from other regional, system, or state stakeholders, including those external to higher education

FACILITATING DATA COLLECTION, SHARING, AND ANALYSIS

Measuring the progress of your community of practice is important to assessing your impact and continuously improving. Collaborate with other institutions in the community of practice to determine what you want to learn through your collective efforts and what data and analysis are necessary to meet those objectives.

AMPLIFYING PROMISING PRACTICES

Data collection and analysis, combined with stakeholder engagement, will help you identify promising practices. Once identified, these practices can be shared through white papers, annual reports, op-eds, news articles, press releases, conference presentations, and so on.

Examples of amplifying promising practices within DWD include:

- [2020 Annual Report: Now, More Than Ever](#)
- [College Now Reconnects Students with Learning](#)
- [Complete LA's Annual Report 2019-2020](#)
- [Lack of Broadband Access is a Hidden Barrier to Our Pandemic Recovery](#)
- [Missouri's Degrees When Due white paper](#)



REFLECTION QUESTIONS

REGIONAL AND STATE LEADERSHIP

- How can you support degree reclamation efforts in your state or region?
- How can you leverage data to drive policy change in your state or region?
- What methods can you use to amplify promising degree reclamation efforts in your state or region?

**For a full list of reflection questions, see the [appendix](#).*



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Degrees When Due State Liaisons and Institutions

Over three years, more than 40 state liaisons and close to 200 institutions participated in DWD. Without their participation, this initiative and the resources and research it has produced would not have been possible. Most of these institutions participated during the COVID-19 pandemic. We thank institutions that persisted in implementing DWD throughout this challenging time and the DWD state liaisons who offered them resources, support, and encouragement. For a full list of DWD state liaison organizations and participating institutions, [visit our website](#).

Degrees When Due Research Team

The DWD research team assisted IHEP with the design and implementation of DWD's research agenda, including research related to increasing attainment, equity, and capacity change.

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FOR MORE INFORMATION, VISIT: WWW.IHEP.ORG/INITIATIVE/DEGREES-WHEN-DUE

APPENDIX

RESOURCES

CALIFORNIA DATA WORKSHOP #1 ACTIVITY GUIDE

ACTIVITY #1: GETTING TO KNOW YOUR STOPPED-OUT STUDENTS

This activity will serve as a group introduction and overview of the activity structure for the day. At this time, designate the following roles:

1. Notetaker
2. Timekeeper
3. Technology Facilitator: Sharing Excel and Screen
4. Group Facilitator

In this activity, participants will examine and discuss only their stopped-out student data. One person should share their screen to show your institution's workbook. In this workbook, look for your respective institution's tab. The fields highlighted in yellow should be filled in with your stopped-out student data. These data include:

- Percentage by race/ethnicity
- Percentage by Pell recipient status
- Percentage by full-time enrollment
- Percentage by adult (25-64 years old) student

Discuss the following:

1. Describe your institution's typical stopped-out student.
2. Did anything surprise you about this population?
 - a. Was this what you expected?
 - b. Is this a population that might be underrepresented at your institution?
3. Who is less likely to be part of this population?
 - a. What assumptions did you have about these students?
 - b. Did these data confirm these assumptions or dispel them?



ACTIVITY #2: EQUITY ANALYSIS

In our previous activity you discussed your typical stopped-out student. Now, compare these students to your institution's general student body. In your Excel workbook, IHEP has provided IPEDS data for your institution on the following:

- 3-year average fall enrollment (2016–2018) by race/ethnicity
- 3-year average percentage of Pell recipients
- 3-year average percentage of students enrolled full time
- 3-year average percentage of adult (25–64 years old) fall enrollment

Refer to your Excel workbook on screen to look at the points above and how they compare to your stopped-out students. The data points have been converted to bar graphs. Blue bars represent your general institution population. Orange bars represent your stopped-out students. You will notice that some are similar, while some points may differ.

Discuss the following:

1. Your stopped-out students and general student population may be similar, but there may be some categories that show clear differences. Start by comparing differences in ethnic/racial groups.
 - a. What is the largest ethnic/racial group, and what is the largest ethnic/racial group in your stopped-out student population?
 - b. Is there a large percentage difference for any one ethnic/racial group?
 - i. If so—what might be contributing to the difference?
2. Now look at your second graph which includes Pell, adult students, and attendance status.
 - a. Your stopped-out students may differ more here from your overall student body. Which category has the biggest difference?
 - b. What types of supports might be most useful for your stopped-out student population?
3. Based on this conversation, describe your typical stopped-out student compared to a student in your general student body.

ACTIVITY #3: MODIFYING YOUR STOPPED-OUT STUDENT GROUP

Your stopped-out student population meets certain credit thresholds. Consider the number of students that are part of this population and who they are. What does this mean for your institution?

Discuss the following:

1. Looking at the number of your stopped-out students, does your institution have the capacity to reengage them?
2. Should you add more students to this pool?
 - a. Should your credit thresholds be modified to include more students?
3. What challenges do you see in modifying this population? Is this something you should consider doing?
4. Are there certain groups within this population that need particular support, such as veterans, undocumented students, or those with financial holds?
 - a. Are there other characteristics you should keep in mind when trying to serve these students through degree reclamation?

CALIFORNIA DATA WORKSHOP #2

ACTIVITY GUIDE

ACTIVITY #1: DETERMINING ELIGIBILITY

This activity will serve as a group introduction and overview of the activity structure for the day. At this time, designate the following roles:

1. Notetaker
2. Timekeeper
3. Technology Facilitator: Sharing Excel and Screen
4. Group Facilitator

In this activity, you will examine what constitutes degree eligibility. Ask your group the following questions to determine if students have been overlooked:

- When you determined which students were eligible for a degree, did you:
 - Consider degrees other than those for the program of study in students' records?
 - Consider class substitutions for certain required courses?
 - Consider whether changing a student's catalog year would make a difference in eligibility?
 - Consider if there is a common requirement or class preventing students from graduating, like a computer literacy class or swim test? If so, could that be modified or eliminated?
- Have you considered other types of degrees/programs?
 - Are some students only being considered for an associate's degree meant for transfer? Is that their plan or would an applied associate's degree also meet their goals?
 - Have you established a program of study specific to adult or returning students? If not, is this something to consider for the future?



ACTIVITY #2: NON-ACADEMIC BARRIERS

What happens when you try to confer degrees to students? What non-academic barriers exist that prevent students from receiving those degrees? Discuss the following questions:

- What non-academic barriers exist at your institution?
- Are there less obvious barriers you could have overlooked?
- Consider the following types of barriers during your discussion:

Financial

- Graduation fees
- Financial holds
- Scholarship eligibility

Administrative

- Institutional policies
- State requirements
- Incomplete paperwork/graduation application
- Invalid contact information
- Disciplinary/conduct violation

External

- Student residency status

ACTIVITY #3: CREATING EQUITABLE SOLUTIONS

Who is part of your eligible student population? As in workshop #1, consider what this population looks like compared to your general student population. Do these students resemble those in your current student body or are there differences? Are there unique characteristics to consider for this population (scholarship eligibility, veteran status, undocumented status).

Now, considering what you discussed earlier, do your non-academic barriers disproportionately impact certain eligible student populations?

CALIFORNIA DATA WORKSHOP #3

ACTIVITY GUIDE

ACTIVITY #1: GETTING TO KNOW YOUR POTENTIAL COMPLETERS

In this activity, we examine the characteristics of your near-completers using race/ethnicity, Pell recipient status, age, and enrollment (part- or full-time).

Designate the following roles:

1. Notetaker
2. Timekeeper
3. Technology Facilitator: Sharing Excel and Screen
4. Group Facilitator

The individual assigned to share their screen should bring up your institution's tab from the workbook provided in the workshop invitation. You will be using the data you entered in the yellow highlighted cells for near-completers and comparison data from your institution's general student body. Your institution's general student body data are labeled "institution or institutional average" and those cells are not highlighted. The workbook charts allow you to compare your student body data to the near-completer data you entered.

These data include disaggregation by:

- Percentage by race/ethnicity
- Percentage by Pell recipient status
- Percentage by full-time enrollment
- Percentage by adult (25–64 years old) student

Discuss the following:

1. Describe your institution's typical near-completer.
 - a. Did anything surprise you about this population?
2. Compare your near-completer data to your institution's general student body.
 - a. What is the largest ethnic/racial group of near-completers; and what is the largest ethnic/racial group of your overall student body?
 - b. Is there a large percentage difference for any one ethnic/racial group?
 - i. If so—what might be contributing to the difference?
 - c. Looking at Pell recipients, adults, and full-time enrollment—which category has the biggest difference between your general student body and near-completers?
 - i. What types of supports do you think might be most useful for near-completers at your institution?
3. Describe your typical near-completer student compared to your general student body.

ACTIVITY #2: IMPACT ON ENROLLMENT AND COMPLETION

This activity will help you examine the potential impact that implementing and sustaining degree reclamation processes can have on enrollment and completion metrics, as well as on attainment goals.

Keep the same roles assigned in activity #1.

For this activity, you will be using your total institutional enrollment average (cell D4) and total institutional completion average (cell A31), along with your total eligible students (cell D6) and total near-completers (D7), to make predictions regarding how implementing and sustaining degree reclamation strategies may impact your institutional enrollment and completion metrics.

Discuss the following:

1. If you added your total near-completers to your total institutional enrollment average, by what percentage does your enrollment average increase?
 - a. Do you have a sense of how many near-completers have reenrolled thus far, after being contacted? How does that impact your prediction of increased institutional enrollment?
 - b. Do you think there are any changes you can make in policy or practice to increase your reenrollment yield?
2. If you added your total eligible students to your total institutional completion average, by what percentage would your completion average increase?
 - a. Do you have a sense of how many eligible students have been conferred degrees? How does that impact your prediction of increased institutional completion?
 - b. Do you think there are any changes you can make in policy or practice to increase your conferral yield?
3. If your near-completers reenrolled and persisted to completion, how would your institutional completion rate increase over time?

STORYTELLING WITH DATA

CAMPUS BRAINSTORMING ACTIVITY

WHO IS YOUR AUDIENCE?

Your audience may be institutional leadership, a potential funder, the community at large, a potential partner, or stopped-out students themselves.

WHAT STORY DO YOU WANT TO TELL?

Think about what happened during your degree reclamation implementation that would be important for your audience to know. What does your audience care about? Consider your audience when framing the story.

HOW DO YOU WANT TO TELL YOUR STORY?

What medium will you use to tell your degree reclamation story? It could be a final report, presentation, op-ed, press release, video, etc. Do you want to include elements like data visuals or a student testimonial in your story? Will your medium allow you to include these elements?

WHEN ARE YOU TELLING YOUR STORY?

Consider your institution's context, such as its current strategic plan, time in the academic year, policies, practices, funding, capacity, etc. How does your degree reclamation story align with current affairs on and off-campus?

WHAT DATA ARE IMPORTANT TO TELLING YOUR DEGREE RECLAMATION STORY?

Think about the data you have collected and analyzed so far during implementation, as well as other data your team can access. This might be information related to your stopped-out students, barriers to reenrollment, or outcomes from your efforts. What data would be helpful in telling your campus' story of degree reclamation?

REVERSE TRANSFER STUDENT COMMUNICATION EXAMPLE

DEGREES WHEN DUE: TEMPLATE EXAMPLE

Dear _____,

Congratulations! You may be eligible for an associate's degree!

Our records show that you have attended _____ and successfully completed credits toward an associate's degree. Those credits, along with your _____ coursework, may bring you very close to an associate's degree. Having an associate's degree already in hand while you are pursuing your bachelor's degree can be an asset to you.

_____ will do most of the work for you. Simply authorize _____ to release your transcript to _____ and it will be evaluated to determine if you have completed an associate's degree. If you have not completed an associate's degree, you will be informed of how many credits are needed to complete the degree requirements. Due to your hard work, this could be the quickest way to an associate's degree!

Just:

- a. Click the following link _____
- b. Fill out the enclosed transcript release form and send to:

- c. Drop it off in person to _____

We will process your request at any time, but we ask that you complete this form by _____ in order to be included in the current round of degree reviews.

If you have questions regarding this, you can call _____. You may also visit the resources section of _____ for response to Frequently Asked Questions about this process.

Sincerely,

AUTHORIZATION TO RELEASE UNIVERSITY TRANSCRIPT

Name:		(Inst) ID # or last 4 digits of SS#:	
Date of Birth (mm/dd/yyyy):		List any other names used while attending (institution):	
Address:		Email:	
City:	State:	Zip:	Current Phone Number:
College to Send the Transcript to:			
Purpose: Reverse Associate Degree Award Review			

AUTHORIZATION TO RELEASE ACADEMIC RECORDS

I hereby authorize _____ to share my student records and contact information with _____ as deemed necessary by each institution for the purpose of degree auditing and evaluation until my program completion at _____. I give permission for _____ to evaluate my academic records and apply my university coursework in order to determine if I have enough credits to complete an associate's degree. I further authorize to award me an associate's degree if I qualify for a degree.

Degrees for which I would like to be considered based on my academic record (Check all that apply):

Associate's Degree for the following major(s): _____

Associate of Arts in Liberal Arts

Associate of Science in General Studies

Associate of Technical Studies

Other



ELIGIBLE STUDENT OPT-OUT GRADUATION COMMUNICATION EXAMPLE

DEGREES WHEN DUE TEMPLATE

Dear _____,

_____ recently engaged in a process to help institutions identify and award degrees to students who have stopped out of higher education but are eligible, or just shy of being eligible, for an associate's degree. The college conducted degree audits over a 10-year period of students that attended the university but left prior to earning their bachelor's degree. As a result of our degree audits, we discovered that you have met all requirements for an associate's degree.

In recognition of this accomplishment, I am pleased to inform you that we will post the associate's degree on your transcript, include your name in the _____ commencement program, and mail your diploma in _____.

Your name will appear on the diploma as: _____

If your name has changed or you would like your name to appear differently than what is noted here, please make changes on the attached card and sign and return to us by _____. We intend to award your degree unless we hear differently from you.

In honor of your graduation, you are also invited to attend the spring commencement ceremony in _____. Participation in the commencement program, which is _____, is optional and not required for you to receive your diploma. There is no graduation fee for associate's degree recipients; however, students that participate in the ceremony are required to purchase their own cap and gown. For more information on the commencement ceremony, go to _____.

Why is receiving your degree important? If you are planning to attend another college, your associate's degree may help complete requirements towards a bachelor's degree. You are also an alumnus of the college and can take advantage of alumni benefits _____.

If you should have any questions regarding this letter, please contact one of our graduation auditors _____ and refer to this letter in your correspondence. Congratulations on your achievement!

Sincerely,

Registrar

RECOMMENDED DATA COLLECTION FIELDS

We recommend that you use the following fields to track students through adult reengagement and reverse transfer at your institution. The first portion of the list applies to both adult reengagement and reverse transfer, and the second portion is specific to reverse transfer. Ideally, your team will track these fields in your institution's SIS or other database; however, a spreadsheet on a shared drive will also work.

- Student ID
- First Name
- Middle Name or Initial
- Last Name
- Address
- Phone Number
- Email
- Race/Ethnicity
- Gender
- Date of Birth
- Age (during semester of data pull)
- Pell Grant Recipient (any semester)
- Grade Point Average
- Cumulative Institutional Credits (as of file creation)
- Cumulative Transfer Credits (as of file creation)
- Existing Awards Conferred
- Existing Holds on Student Account
- Any Other Student Characteristics Available (like first-generation student or veteran)
- Program Enrolled in Prior to Stop Out or Transfer
- Degree Audit Conducted (yes/no)
- Status After Audit (academically eligible for a degree or near-completer)
- Student Communication Attempts
- Academically Eligible Students
 - Non-Academic Barriers (like financial holds or missing paperwork)
 - Degree Information
 - Degree Classification of Instructional Program (CIP)
 - Degree Conferred
 - Date Degree Conferred
 - Reason for Non-conferral
- Near-Completer Students
 - Academic Barriers (like unique institutional or general education requirements)
 - Credits Remaining
 - Non-Academic Barriers (like financial holds or missing paperwork)
 - Reenrollment Status
 - Degree Conferral

RT REVERSE TRANSFER

- Student ID (unique per student)
- Institutional Student ID (only of the institution receiving the file)
- Potential Awarding Two-Year Institution
- Office of Postsecondary Education (OPE) Code of the Potential Awarding Institution
- Last Date of Attendance at Two-Year Institution
- Last Date of Attendance at Four-Year Institution
- Name of Four-Year Institution of Current Enrollment
- Office of Postsecondary Education (OPE) Code of Student's Current Institution of Enrollment
- Current Major/Program of Study
- Credits Earned at Potential Associate's-Awarding Institution
- Institutional Residency Requirement Met (yes/no)
- Student Consent to Share Transcript (yes/no)

PLAYBOOK REFLECTION QUESTIONS

Using the following questions, reflect on your team's progress implementing degree reclamation and on areas for improvement.

ESTABLISH YOUR TEAM(S)

- Have all team(s) roles been filled?
- If not, how does your team(s) plan to gain buy-in and fill the remaining roles?

BUILD AN EQUITY FRAMEWORK

- Why are equity terms and concepts important to degree reclamation work?
- What student populations will your team(s) center its degree reclamation efforts on?

INVENTORY INSTITUTIONAL POLICIES AND PRACTICES

- How do degree reclamation efforts align with your institution's policies or practices to close equity gaps in attainment?
- What institutional, system, and state incentives or resources can support your team's degree reclamation implementation?
- Which external partnerships would be beneficial in supporting your team's degree reclamation efforts?

DIG INTO THE DATA

- Is your team(s) versed on the U.S. Department of Education's guidance on student privacy? If not, is professional development needed or can support be found from others within your institution?
- What data source will you use and who will be responsible for pulling and matching the data?
- Does your institution already have an account with the National Student Clearinghouse?
- Which constraints will your team(s) use to determine which students to reengage?

SHARE TRANSCRIPTS AND OBTAIN STUDENT CONSENT

- Which transcript sharing method will your team(s) use?
- Will your institution waive transcript fees for students participating in reverse transfer?
- Does your institution use an opt-in or opt-out policy to obtain student consent for transcript sharing?

AUDIT DEGREES

- Can you leverage the Degree Mining Tool to create efficiencies in your degree auditing process?
- How is your team(s) tracking degree audit results? Is each team member using the same method?



COMMUNICATE WITH NEAR-COMPLETERS

- How are you tracking communication with near-completer students?
- How will you leverage data to tailor messaging to your target student population(s)?

REENROLL NEAR-COMPLETERS

- How will your team(s) ensure students receive the academic and non-academic supports they need during the reenrollment process?
- What process will your team(s) implement to monitor student progress? Will there be a primary point of communication for students?
- How will your team(s) address common reenrollment barriers at your institution?

CONFER DEGREES

- Does your institution have capacity to waive graduation fees for students completing through degree reclamation strategies?
- Is your current graduation process opt-in or opt-out? What are the pros and cons of that approach?
- How will you notify students that they are eligible for a degree?

SUSTAIN DEGREE RECLAMATION STRATEGIES

- How will your team(s) connect degree reclamation to your institution's goals, plans, and culture?
- How will your team(s) leverage data and student stories to gain internal and external support for your efforts?

REGIONAL AND STATE LEADERSHIP

- How can you support degree reclamation efforts in your state or region?
- How can you leverage data to drive policy change in your state or region?
- What methods can you use to amplify promising degree reclamation efforts in your state or region?

