

ACES (Admitted Class Evaluation Service) Completion Study Guide

January 2025

Table of Contents

ACES Overview	1
Completion Study Overview	1
Submission Overview	1
Getting Started – Account Registration	1
Password Reset	3
Logging In	4
Create a Study	4
Check Study Request Status	19
Retrieve Study Results	20
ACES Technical Support	20

ACES Overview

Admitted Class Evaluation Service™ (ACES) is a free online service for higher education institutions that predicts how admitted students will perform at your institution generally and how successful they can be in specific classes. ACES helps you answer important questions about the assessments you use to admit and place students at your institution.

Completion Study Overview

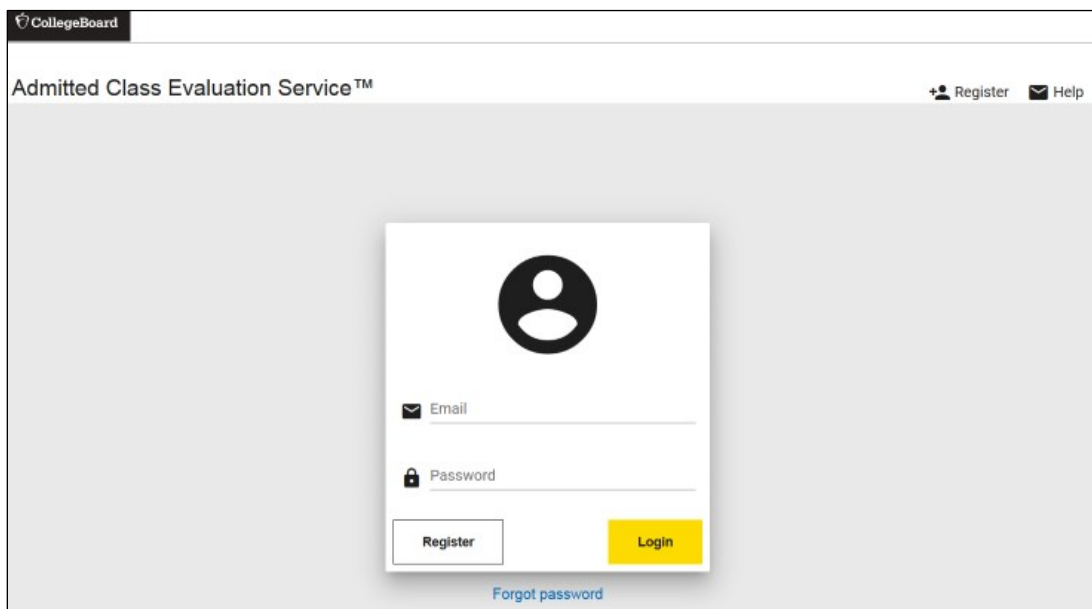
Evaluate a selection of relevant predictors and the likelihood of students completing a degree at your institution, as well as identify those at high risk for not completing a degree.

Submission Overview

Your first step will be to register for an account with ACES. You will then design your study and prepare your data file for submission. Before submitting data and finalizing your study, you will be required to sign the data sharing agreement on the ACES portal. Your data sharing agreement will be valid for two years. Once your agreement is signed and your study and data file are complete, you will be able to submit your request. You will be notified via email when your report is ready.

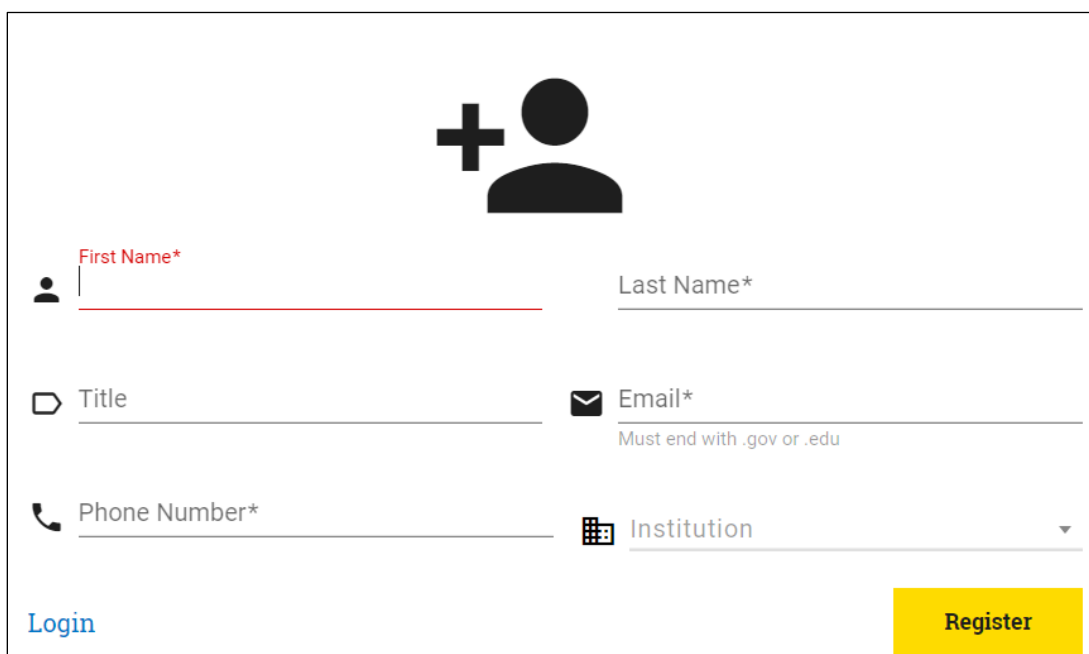
Getting Started – Account Registration

1. Navigate to <https://acesportal.collegeboard.org>.
2. Click “REGISTER” on the login page.



The screenshot shows the ACES portal login page. At the top left is the CollegeBoard logo. The main header reads "Admitted Class Evaluation Service™". In the top right corner, there are links for "Register" (with a person icon) and "Help" (with an envelope icon). The central focus is a white login box containing a large black person icon. Below the icon are two input fields: "Email" with an envelope icon and "Password" with a lock icon. At the bottom of the box are two buttons: a white "Register" button and a yellow "Login" button. Below the login box, there is a blue link that says "Forgot password".

3. Fill out the appropriate information (name, title, email, phone number, and institution (drop-down menu)).
 - a. *Email*: Must be a .gov or .edu address.
 - b. *Institution*: If you are from a university system, not one specific institution, please select “non-institution user” and type in the name of your university system in the box provided.

A registration form interface with a large black icon of a person with a plus sign above their head at the top center. Below the icon are several input fields: 'First Name*' with a red underline, 'Last Name*' with a grey underline, 'Title' with a grey underline, 'Email*' with a grey underline and a note 'Must end with .gov or .edu', 'Phone Number*' with a grey underline, and 'Institution' with a grey underline and a dropdown arrow. At the bottom left is a blue 'Login' link, and at the bottom right is a yellow 'Register' button.

First Name*

Last Name*

Title

Email*

Must end with .gov or .edu

Phone Number*

Institution

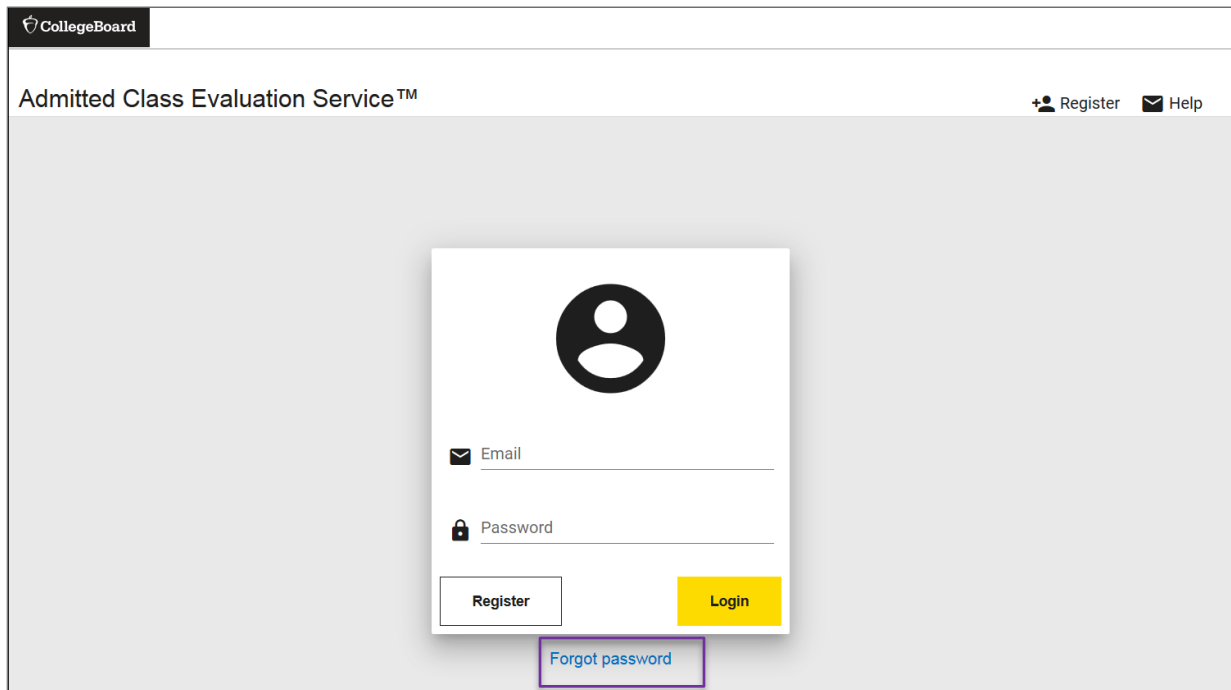
Login

Register

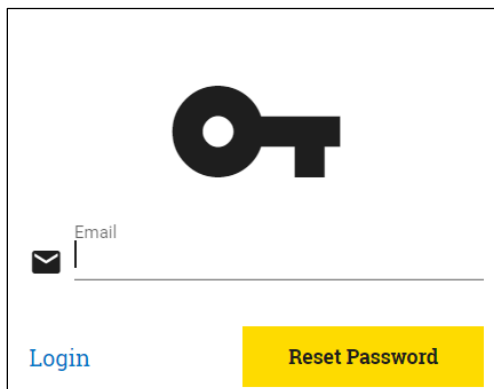
4. Click “REGISTER.”
5. Upon registering, an “Account created!” message will appear.
6. Within a few minutes, you should receive a confirmation email.
 - a. Please check your spam/junk folder if you do not see your confirmation email in your inbox.
7. Click on the link within the confirmation email to activate the account and create a new password.
 - a. Your password must be at least eight characters and contain at least one number, uppercase letter, and symbol (!, ?, @, *).

Password Reset

1. Click on “FORGOT PASSWORD” on the login page.



2. Enter your registered email address.



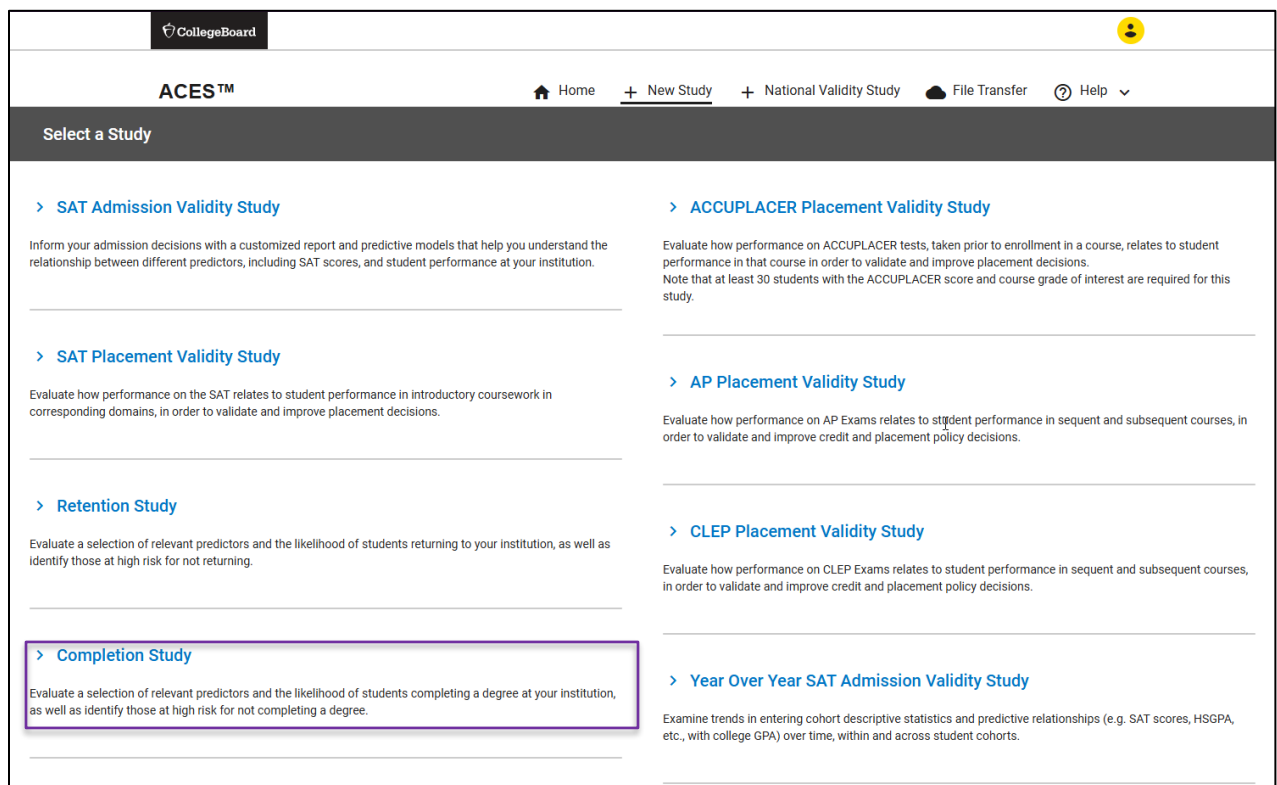
3. Click on “RESET PASSWORD.”
4. Open password reset link via email.
5. Create and confirm a new password.
 - a. Remember your password must contain at least 8 characters, at least one number, one uppercase letter, and one symbol.
6. Login with your new password.

Logging In

1. Navigate to the login page: <https://acesportal.collegeboard.org>.
2. Enter your registered email and password.
3. Click “LOGIN.”

Create a Study

1. From the home screen, navigate to the “New Study” section.
2. Select “Completion Study.”
 - a. When you request a study for the first time, you will be prompted to choose whether you are a two year or a four-year institution. You will only need to indicate this information the first time you use the system as it will save your choice for future study requests.



- b. When you request a study for the first time, you will be prompted to provide answers to **security questions**. These questions will be asked in the event you need to reset your encryption key (see below). You will be provided with a list of options for each of the three questions. If you need to reset your password, you will be asked these three questions, and need to provide the exact responses you gave.

The screenshot shows a web form titled "Configure Security Questions". At the top, a paragraph explains that data will be encrypted and that three security questions are required for password resets. Below this is a scrollable list of questions. The first question is "What was the name of your elementary school?". The second question is "What was your grandfather's (on your mother's side) first name?". The third question is "What was the first name of your favorite childhood friend?". The fourth question is "What is your grandmother's (on your mother's side) maiden name?". The fifth question is "What was your favorite vacation place as a child?". Below the list are input fields for "Question *" and "Answer *". At the bottom left, it says "Step 2 of 3". At the bottom right, there is a "Set Questions" button.

- c. Once you have selected your **three security questions** and provided responses, you will be given an **Encryption Key**. **KEEP THIS KEY FOR YOUR RECORDS.** It is required for you to download and open your data files. This key is unique to you and linked to your account.

The screenshot shows a dialog box titled "Encryption Key" with a close button (X) in the top right corner. The text inside the dialog box reads: "Please copy this and store it in a secure location. Only your pass code can be used to open the files you download. You will need to use an application that supports AES-256 encryption (e.g. WinZip, 7-zip, Keka). If you forget your passcode, you can reset it from your user account settings at the top right. After reset, all future downloads will be encrypted using the new passcode. Files previously downloaded will not work with new passcodes. Your encryption passcode is:" followed by a text box containing the key "odLDbgGZ4YW". A "Close" button is located at the bottom right of the dialog box.

The files that require the Encryption Key are shown with a “lock” icon on the top right corner of each study results section. You will need to enter this Encryption Key in order to download and open the following data files:

- Original Data File
- Standardized Data Files

The key is not required to download the Data Quality Report, the PDF Completion Report or the Interactive html graphs.

Study Design

Data Submission

Study Results

✓ READY

SEP 26, 2018, 8:13 PM

Original Data File

The original data file submitted.

300.12 KB | completion_data_2017.xlsx

✓ READY

Standardized Data Files

A compressed file containing the standardized data files transformed from your original data.

1.26 KB | harmonized_data.zip

✓ READY

Data Quality Report

A zip file containing the quality assurance reports run against your submitted data.

45.88 KB | qa_reports.zip

⌚ NOT AVAILABLE

Institution Report

Full institution report in PDF format.

⌚ NOT AVAILABLE

Interactive Graphs

Interactive tables and charts to supplement the PDF report.

In the event that you misplace your encryption key, you can reset it under your account settings, click on “**reset key**” and proceed to answer the security challenge questions you answered when obtaining the key.

ACES™

Home

+ New Study

+ National Validity Study

Study History

File Transfer

Password

Change your password

Security

Reset your encryption key

Security Questions

In order to reset your encryption key, you must first answer your security questions. Please submit your answers below.

1

What is the zip code where you grew up?

Answer *

2

What was your favorite vacation place as a child?

Answer *

Close

Submit Answers

RESET

If you are unable to answer your questions, contact the ACES technical support email or toll-free line to have your questions reset. Be prepared to answer questions to confirm your identity.

3. Create a unique study name (e.g., 2020 Completion Study) to help identify your study and add optional secondary contact information to notify others when the study is complete.

Note: Secondary contacts will not receive the study results but will be informed when the study results are available.

1 Study Information

Provide a custom name and optional secondary contacts for this study.

Study Name

Give this study a unique name to distinguish it from other similar studies.

2020 Completion Study for Dean

Study Type

Completion Study

Secondary Contacts (optional)

You will be automatically notified when your study is complete. If desired, include any colleagues you would also like notified of study completion. This will simply be a notification email; results will only be shared with you.

4. Select a data source for the study. You can select from an **existing data** source or submit **new data**. It is important that you review the “Study Design” page and the options available for your study before preparing and submitting your data. Let’s review the page now and return to the data submission later in the guide.

2 Data Submission Selection

Associate this study with a data submission.

Your study must be associated with a data submission holding the student data necessary to produce the report. You can either start a new data submission or [reuse one](#) from a previously submitted study that has either been completed or has advanced to the Analysis in Process phase.

It is **not necessary** to begin the data submission prior to completing the Completion Study design. However, when your data submission is complete, any custom predictors or subgroups selected in the design must be present. This also includes students’ ACT scores if you’ve chosen to include [concorded SAT scores](#) in your study.

New Data

Existing Data

5. On the “Specify Cohort and Completion” card, select the 2020 cohort year and associated Completion year criterion.

3

Specify Cohort and Completion Information

Please select the entering class (cohort) that you will be analyzing in your study. Then select the completion year and term as you would like it to appear in your report. As an example, "4th year, 2nd semester" would indicate that students have completed through the end of fourth year (or not) in your file.

Cohort

☒ 2020

☐ 2019

☐ 2018

☐ 2017

Completion to:

Please indicate the year and term as you wish it to appear in your reports.

Criterion *

4th year

6. Select the SAT score(s) to use as predictors.
- a. You must select a SAT Predictor, you may select the “SAT Total” or the SAT Reading and Writing and Math Section option, and optionally provide score points of interest to examine whether completing and non-completing students differ with regard to scoring above or below that score.

4

SAT Predictor

Completion Studies require an SAT score as a predictor.

Select which SAT score(s) you want to use as a predictor(s).

☒ SAT Total (400-1600 scale)

☐ 1. Reading and Writing Section (200-800 scale)
2. Math Section (200-800 scale)

Completion Descriptor (optional)
Changes depending on SAT Score(s) selection above

Additionally, you have the option to include SAT scores in a table of two-category completion descriptors (e.g., scored at or below 1150/scored above 1150). This table can depict student characteristics that may be more common among non-completing/completing students and are sometimes grouped together in interesting ways.

If you would like to include SAT scores in that table, please provide the SAT score your institution would be most interested in examining as a point of differentiation between completing and non-completing students.

Students with a score of _____ or below
400-1600

- b. (Optional) If you would like to include a Completion Descriptor, you can select individual test score(s), and provide particular score points of interest to examine whether completing and non-completing students may differ with regard to scoring above or below those scores (here SAT RW and Math).

4

SAT Predictor

Completion Studies require an SAT score as a predictor.

Select which SAT score(s) you want to use as a predictor(s).

☐ SAT Total (400-1600 scale)

☒ 1. Reading and Writing Section (200-800 scale)
2. Math Section (200-800 scale)

Completion Descriptor (optional)
Changes depending on SAT Score(s) selection above

Additionally, you have the option to include SAT scores in a table of two-category completion descriptors (e.g., scored at or below 1150/scored above 1150). This table can depict student characteristics that may be more common among non-completing/completing students and are sometimes grouped together in interesting ways.

If you would like to include SAT scores in that table, please provide the SAT score(s) your institution would be most interested in examining as a point of differentiation between completing and non-completing students.

RW; Students with a score of _____ or below
200-800

Math; Students with a score of _____ or below
200-800

7. (Optional) Provide ACT Scores.

Are you providing ACT scores?

ACT scores are only used by the ACES system as concordant SAT scores when students do not have official SAT scores on record at the College Board. The ACT scores you provide are concordant to the corresponding SAT scores using the 2018 concordance tables within the ACES system itself.

☒ Yes

☐ No

8. (Optional) Select whether you would like to include a College GPA Predictor. A College GPA completion descriptor may also be created by providing a score points of interest to examine whether completing and non-completing students may differ with regard to scoring above or below this score.

a. College GPA Predictor

5

College GPA Predictor

Optional Step

Completion Studies offer the option to include a college GPA predictor in your study. If you provide a college GPA in your file, ACES can compute a predicted GPA for students and compare that to their actual performance.

Additionally, you have the option to include college GPA in a table of two-category completion descriptors (e.g., earned at or above 1.67/earned below 1.67). This table can depict student characteristics that may be more common among non-completing/completing students and are sometimes grouped together in interesting ways.

If you would like to include college GPA in that table, please provide the college GPA point your institution would be most interested in examining as a point of differentiation between completing and non-completing students.

Select which college GPA you want to use as a predictor.

☐ None

☒ Cumulative GPA (through last term)

☐ Other GPA (to be mapped)

Completion Descriptor (optional) ⓘ

Students with a college GPA of _____ or below

- b. (Optional) Select whether you would like to include a High School GPA Predictor; note whether that measure is recalculated at your institution (Yes/No). If Yes, then indicate whether it includes grades from only select courses (Yes/No), and if it represents a weighted High School GPA, based on course rigor (Yes/No) [not shown in figure]. If you would like to include a Completion Descriptor, you can select the High School GPA value of interest to examine whether completing and noncompleting students may differ with regard to earning a High School GPA above or below those values.

6

High School GPA Predictor

Optional Step

Completion Studies offer the option to include a high school GPA predictor in your study.

Additionally, you have the option to include high school GPA in a table of two-category completion descriptors (e.g., earned at or above 2.33/earned below 2.33). This table can depict student characteristics that may be more common among non-completing/completing students and are sometimes grouped together in interesting ways.

If you would like to include high school GPA in that table, please provide the high school GPA point your institution would be most interested in examining as a point of differentiation between completing and non-completing students.

Do you want to use high school GPA as a predictor?

☐ No

☒ Yes

Is the high school GPA recalculated at your institution?

☐ Yes

☒ No

Completion Descriptor (optional) ⓘ

Students with a high school GPA of _____ or below

9. (Optional) Select up to five additional predictors. Predictors are continuous, numeric variables or dichotomous variables that you determine are indicators of academic success at your institution (for example, admission rating score, or underrepresented minority status). For a Completion study, the custom predictor can be numeric or dichotomous.

7 Additional Completion Predictors from Institution Optional Step

These can be either continuous, numeric predictors OR predictors with two distinct categories. At least 200 students in your sample must have the additional variables in their records. Examples of continuous, numeric predictors include: credit load, GPA in major. Examples of predictors with two distinct categories include: First Generation (Yes/No), Underrepresented Minority (Yes/No), Academic Jeopardy (Yes/No), Undeclared Major (Yes/No), Pell Eligible (Yes/No), where Yes/No are represented as 1/0.

0 of 5 Additional Predictors Selected

☐ Custom Predictor 1 (to be mapped)

☐ Custom Predictor 2 (to be mapped)

☐ Custom Predictor 3 (to be mapped)

☐ Custom Predictor 4 (to be mapped)

☐ Custom Predictor 5 (to be mapped)

10. (Optional) Select up to three subgroups. Subgroups are categorical variables (e.g., 100+ Engineering students) that can be used to further segment and analyze your study results, whenever your submitted subgroup has at least one group with 100+ students.

8 Subgroups Optional Step

Completion studies can break down your results on the basis of subgroups from your own data whenever your submitted subgroup has at least one group with 100+ students (e.g., 100+ Engineering students). You may specify up to three subgroups below, again, using your own data.

0 of 3 Subgroups Selected

☐ Custom Subgroup 1 (to be mapped)

☐ Custom Subgroup 2 (to be mapped)

☐ Custom Subgroup 3 (to be mapped)

11. Returning to the data submission.

- a. If using **existing data**, select the source from the drop-down list.

2 Data Submission Selection

Associate this study with a data submission.

Your study must be associated with a data submission holding the student data necessary to produce the report. You can either start a new data submission or reuse one from a previously submitted study that has either been completed or has advanced to the Analysis in Process phase.

It is **not necessary** to begin the data submission prior to completing the Completion Study design. However, when your data submission is complete, any custom predictors or subgroups selected in the design must be present. This also includes students' ACT scores if you've chosen to include concordant SAT scores in your study.

For a Completion study, the only data that can be reused is data from a previous Completion study, not data submitted for other study types such as SAT Admission Validity, SAT Placement Validity, etc.

- b. If **submitting new data** for this study, select “New Data” and click on the arrow to continue to the data submission page. Your data submission must have the variables you want to include in your study.

2
Data Submission Selection
Associate this study with a data submission.

Your study must be associated with a data submission holding the student data necessary to produce the report. You can either start a new data submission or reuse one from a previously submitted study that has either been completed or has advanced to the Analysis in Process phase.

It is **not necessary** to begin the data submission prior to completing the Completion Study design. However, when your data submission is complete, any custom predictors or subgroups selected in the design must be present. This also includes students' ACT scores if you've chosen to include concorded SAT scores in your study.

New Data
Existing Data

+
BEGIN
Start Data Submission
2020 Completion Study Data
→

c. The following steps will focus on creating a new data submission:

- i. On the data submission page, indicate a name for the data submission and a description. This will help you identify the submission in the future if you want to use this data submission for another study.

1
Submission Information
Provide a name and description for your data submission.

Data Submission Title *
2020 Completion Study for Dean Data

Description

- ii. Upload your data file for submission.

Make sure the file is properly formatted. Microsoft Excel, Comma Separated Value (CSV), SAS Transport (XPORT) or Tab Delimited (.TXT) are acceptable formats. Refer to the [Data Preparation Guide](#) for assistance. It is recommended you use the ACES [Data Template](#) designed for this study whenever possible as this will help facilitate the data submission .

2
Data File Upload

To initiate your submission, please upload your data file. We support Excel, CSV, and SAS Transport files. Consult the ACES Data Preparation Guide for information on how to prepare your data.

[Download a Template](#)

Contact us or use the discussion feature if you need technical assistance.

Drag and drop your files
Or, if you prefer...

CHOOSE A FILE TO UPLOAD

- iii. When you are using a workbook with multiple sheets (ex: Excel document with a number of sheets/tabs) make sure you are selecting the correct data tab. The system is only able to upload a single tab of data.

Select the Excel Spreadsheet you wish to analyze.

Select Sheet ●● ▼

- iv. Once your data file has been successfully uploaded, scroll down to start editing the mapping fields. If you are using the template, most fields will be mapped for you. Note that any columns that do not have data will not require mapping.
- v. Begin by selecting a data element on the left to map to the data source on the right. Click the field, and a drop-down menu will appear.

In the example below, “student_id” is mapped as the student identifier.

3 Identifiers
Variables that uniquely identify individual students within and across institutions.

1 of 1 Required Fields Mapped

Data Element	Data Source
student_id ⓘ	✓ Student Identifier* ⓘ

You will need to map all required variables for your study. Required variables are noted in the data template and the Data Preparation Guide. They are also designated by an asterisk (“*”).

While most fields are straightforward in terms of data mapping, the ACT scores and the custom predictors and subgroups may require more attention. Be aware that the ACT scores are optional and the mapping should directly link ACT score columns in your data by abbreviated field names in the template.

6 ACT Scores Optional Step
Variables holding student ACT scores.

Data Source	Data Element
act_composite ⓘ	✓ ACT Composite Score ⓘ
act_english ⓘ	✓ ACT English Score ⓘ
act_reading ⓘ	✓ ACT Reading Score ⓘ
act_math ⓘ	✓ ACT Math Score ⓘ

Also be aware that for a Completion study, custom predictors can be mapped as either **numeric** or **dichotomous** variables.

Predictors

Optional Step

Custom numeric or dichotomous variables provided by your institution to support specific analytical needs.

Data Source		Data Element
predictor1	→	Numeric Predictor
predictor2	→	Dichotomous Predictor
predictor3	→	Select a data element ▼
Select Column	→	Select a data element ▼
Select Column	→	Select a data element ▼

- vi. Review unmapped variables and decide whether to map them or to add them as extra pass-through variables. To add a variable to the pass-through list, check the box next to it and click the “Add to Passthrough” button.

Unmapped Variables

Unmapped Variables (1)

The variable list below have not been 'mapped'. All variables must be mapped for your data submission to be processed.

Variables

☒ hs_ai_code

Add to Passthrough

Note: Variables added to the pass-through list will not be included or analyzed in the submitted study. **All variables must either be mapped or else be added to the pass-through list.**

- vii. Review your data submission requirements. Once all required variables have been mapped, a check (✓) appears next to that step to indicate you may proceed. The next step is to click on the “**Perform Quality Assurance**” button. This is an automated process that examines your data for the presence of required fields and values, checks for duplicate students or courses, and ensures integrity of the data.

10

Finalize Data Submission

✓

Data Mapping
All data mappings are complete.

✗

Quality Assurance
Once all sections above are complete, you will be able to submit data submission for quality assurance analysis.

✗

Load Data Submission
Once all quality assurance errors have been fixed, if any, you will be able to load your data.

When data mappings are complete, you will be able to analyze your data submission to produce a quality assurance report.

Perform Quality Assurance

10

Finalize Data Submission

✓

Data Mapping
All data mappings are complete.

✓

Quality Assurance (PASS)
PASS: Please view report for a detailed analysis. →

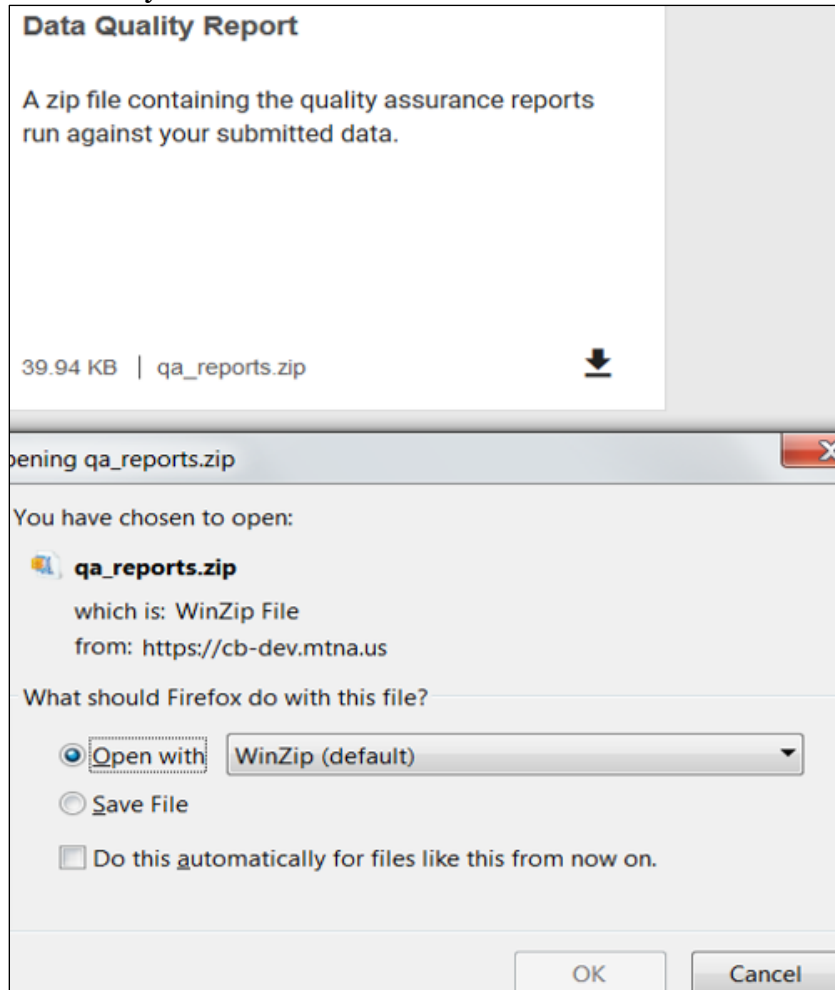
✓

Load Data Submission
Data Submission has been successfully loaded into data warehouse.

Your data submission is complete. If your study design is also complete, you will be able to submit your study for review.

After the quality assurance step is completed and no errors are reported, navigate back to the study design page to finish the rest of the study’s requirements. It is important to note that throughout the data submission process and the data mapping steps, the system is alerting the user about potential **errors** and **warnings**. While the errors may not be critical for the completion of the data submission, the warnings will point out eventual data issues that are critical for the matching process and the final report, such as data field gaps, data completion issues, etc.

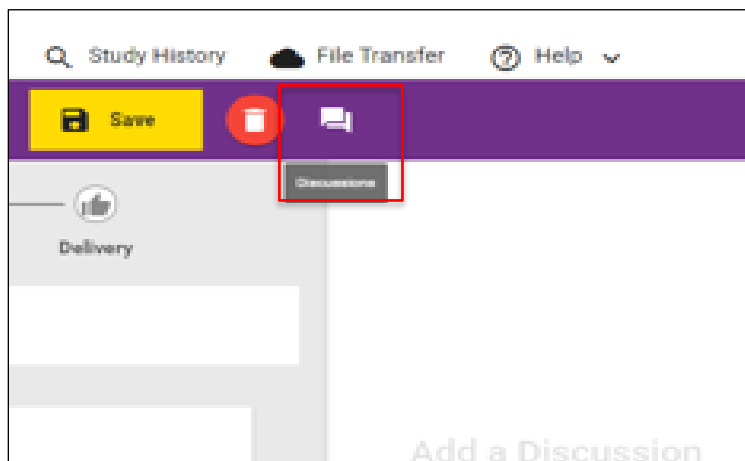
- viii. The user can review the results of the Data Quality Report in the Study Results section. The report can be downloaded as zip file, and the file can be unzipped into a directory of choice.



- ix. The data quality report is a pdf report displaying the field names, percent populated values, frequency distribution of the values, etc. The Quality Assurance sections (summary and details) provide an overview and in-depth perspective of how the data matches the quality standards required.

The summary section shows the counts and percentages of the tests that have **failed** or **passed** in each type of test that has been performed. If the summary indicates that there are some failing tests, more information about the values that have failed can be found in the appropriate detail section.

12. Review all information and ensure the data submission is complete. If at any point during the study design or data submission process you have questions or require assistance, you can use the “Discussion” feature at the top right corner of the screen and technical support will be provided.



13. Select “Submit Study Request.”

9

Review

Review and complete your ACES Study.

Data Submission - In Progress

You will need to finish your data submission before you can submit this study.

[Continue Data Submission](#) →

Study Design

Please complete all sections of the study design.

✓ Study Information

✓ SAT Predictor

✓ Additional Predictors (Optional)

✓ Data Selection

✓ College GPA (Optional)

✓ Subgroups (Optional)

✓ Cohort and Completion

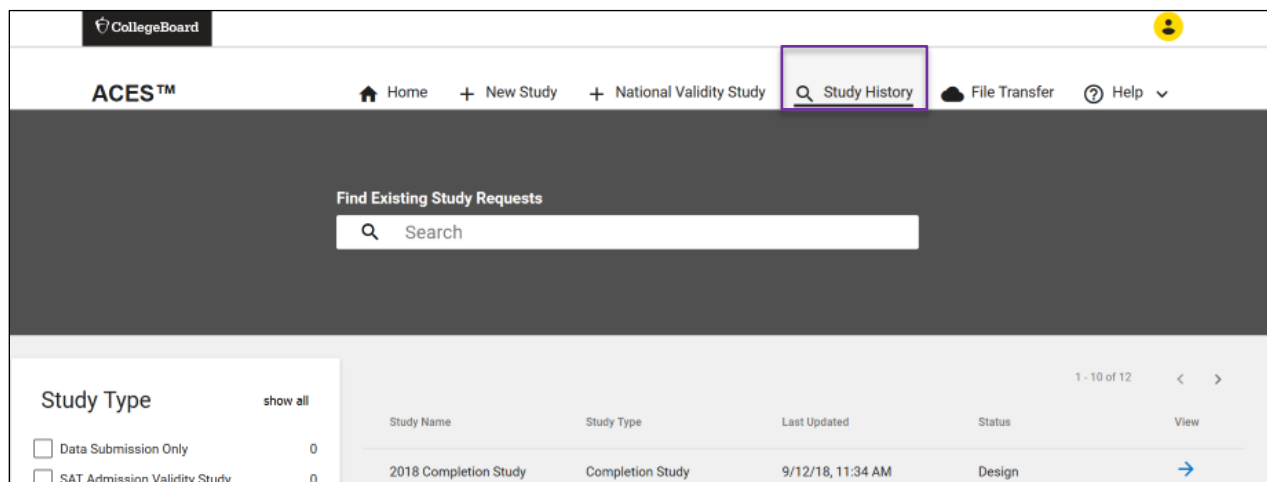
✓ High School GPA (Optional)

[Submit Study Request](#)

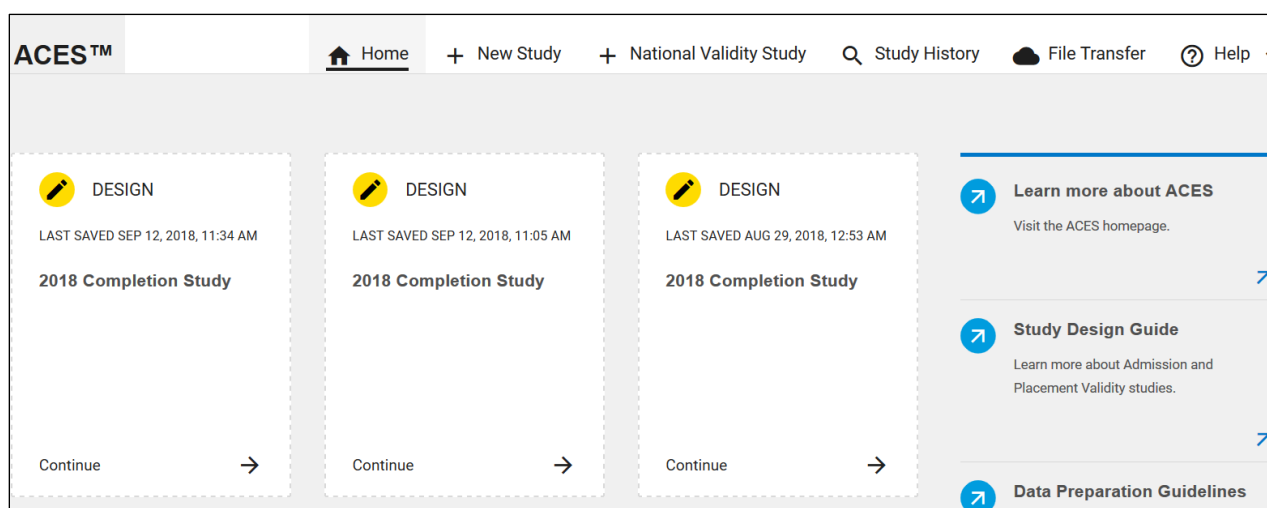
14. You will receive an email when your study request has been reviewed and the analysis has begun. It will take approximately 20 business days to complete your study.

Check Study Request Status

1. Navigate to the home page to see an overview status of your recently submitted studies.
2. For information about previously submitted studies, navigate to the “Study History” tab in the top navigation bar.
3. Select the study to see the status. To filter the list, use the “Study Type” module on the left side.



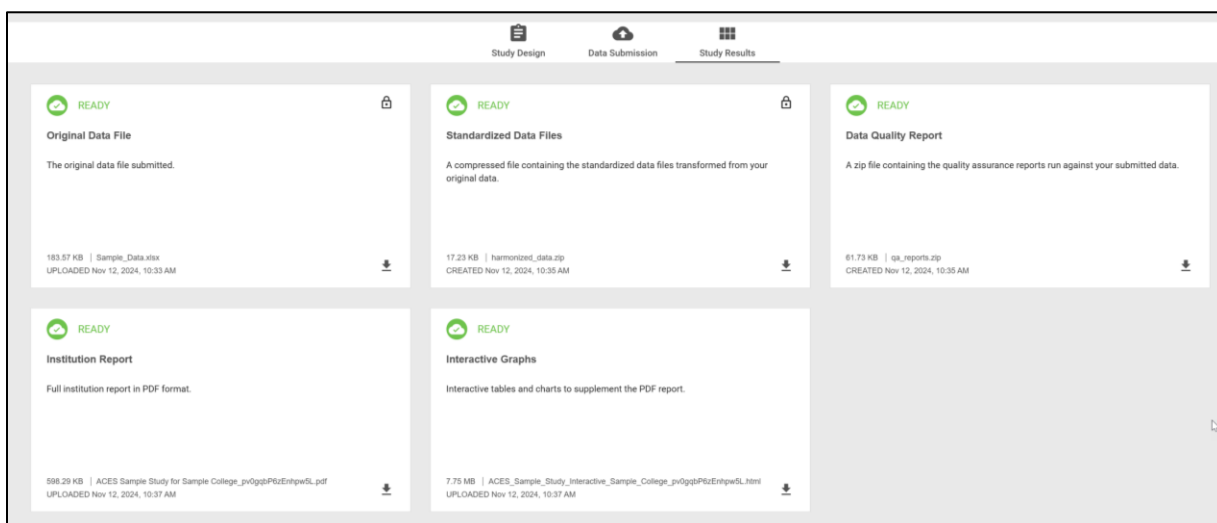
The home page has “cards” for the study history as well. You may continue a study by selecting the study card of choice on the home page.



Retrieve Study Results

4. You will receive an email when your study is complete and study results are available for download.
5. From the home page, scroll down to the “Completed” section.
6. Select “Download Results” and choose the type of report/file in the menu.
 - a. The following types of reports and files will be available for download: Original Data File, Standardized Data Files, Data Quality Reports, Institution (PDF) Report, and Interactive Graphs File. Remember to have your encryption key at the ready in order to access downloaded Original Data or Standardized Data files.

Original and Standardized Data Files as well as the Data Quality Report are available at time of submission or immediately after the completion of the study design and data submission steps. The other files or reports (the Institution Report pdf document and the Interactive Graphs) are available upon the completion of these steps (approximately 20 days after your successful submission). Users are informed about the completion and availability of these documents in the portal via email or by checking back in the system.



ACES Technical Support

Support email: aces-collegeboard@norc.org

Support telephone: 1-800-439-8309

Support hours: Monday-Friday, 9am-5pm EST

General information: collegeboard.org/aces