VFA Participation Agreement
2017 (Year 4)

The VFA Participation Agreement is updated and approved by the VFA Oversight Board. This agreement’s terms and conditions supersede any earlier VFA Participation Agreements.

For schedule/deadlines, dues, and other participation information, please visit: http://vfa.aacc.nche.edu/participation/Pages/default.aspx.

VFA PARTICIPATION ELIGIBILITY

VFA Participants must be members of the American Association of Community Colleges (AACC). Additionally, a representative body of one of these institutions – e.g. association, commission, system office, district office, state department of education – can participate in the VFA as a state-level participant. For more information on state-level participation in the VFA, please visit: http://vfa.aacc.nche.edu/participation/Pages/statelevel.aspx.

The member acknowledges that it is receiving value in the form of access to and use of the VFA Measures and the VFA Data Tool and in return AACC and the VFA are receiving value in the form of the participant’s compliance with all the terms and conditions of this agreement.

Participation in the VFA is a voluntary activity. The participant understands and agrees that the American Association of Community Colleges, its officers, employees, and board members, the VFA Oversight Board members, any support and development teams or staff, and VFA contractors have supplied the VFA as a service to participants and bear no responsibility for any errors of fact that appear on a participating college’s profile or any data errors supplied or entered by the college.

TERMS AND CONDITIONS

VFA participants agree to abide by the Terms and Conditions established by this Participation Agreement, by and between the VFA participant and the American Association of Community Colleges.

VFA participants will:

1. Identify and keep updated only one Key Contact who will manage the VFA participation account and carry out all the responsibilities set forth in the VFA User Guide: Key Contact Responsibilities.

   The Key Contact will:

   - Serve as AACC’s main point of contact and will receive full access to the VFA account as well as the ability to input, review, submit, and approve data for public release (publishing).

   - Be responsible for identifying employees of their college or state-wide office to serve as data inputters, data administrators, or other designated VFA roles.
- Ensure that all contacts with designated VFA roles accept and respond accordingly to emails from the VFA.

- Review the participant’s VFA profile page. This page is viewable to the public via the Find VFA Colleges link on the VFA web site. The information displayed on a participant’s profile page includes but is not limited to:

  a. **College (or state-wide entity) information and student demographics.** College (or state-wide entity) name; leadership’s name; location type (e.g. rural, urban, suburban); enrollment; VFA member since date; and type of institution (e.g. multi-college district); race/ethnicity; gender; age; and enrollment status of student population.

  b. **VFA Public Reports.** VFA data approved/published by the participant’s Key Contact or Data Administrator is viewable and accessible to the public from the participant’s profile page.

The information in this college profile is sourced from: Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) and information as required and supplied to the VFA by the participant.

2. Report data at a college level in aggregate. The college is the unit of analysis because it offers the most consistency in providing accountability data and serves for valid benchmarking.

3. Enter the VFA data according to the definitions and methodology in the *VFA Metrics Manual* and processes identified on the web site for data input or upload.

4. Meet the deadlines for data input, review, submission, editing/updating, completing/locking, and publishing data (public release).

5. Submit, review, and complete/lock a **full VFA data set**; if a college is unable to fulfill the data reporting requirements, the college’s Key Contact must notify AACC in advance of beginning data collection with the reason why the data cannot be reported. Completed and locked data will be used in the benchmarking tool of the VFA.

A full set of data includes all of the metrics and measures and the disaggregation of the cohorts as specified below.

**FULL VFA DATA SET**

- Six Year Cohort
  a. Developmental Education Progress Measures
  b. Six-Year Outcomes Measures

- Two Year Cohort
  a. Two-Year Progress & Attainment Measures

- Disaggregation of the Six Year and Two Year Cohorts
  a. Race/Ethnicity; Gender; Age; Pell Status; Enrollment Status (part/full time); and College Ready/Not College Ready

- Career & Technical Education (CTE) Cohort
  a. CTE Measures (if data are available)

**OPTIONAL DATA TO REPORT**
Colleges are not required to report the following metrics for the cohorts but are encouraged to do so:

- Two Year Cohort, Developmental Education Progress Measures
- Six Year Cohort, Two-Year Progress & Attainment Measures
- Adult Basic Education (ABE) Cohort
  a. ABE Measures (if data are available and applicable)

6. Publish all the data that the college has input, by the deadline. By publishing the data, the college affirms that, to the best of its knowledge, the data published are submitted in accordance with the criteria specified in item #3 above. Published data are made public as reports accessible via the participant’s VFA profile page.

*The public reports only show the specified college’s data and do not show disaggregated data. Public reports do not include comparisons to other VFA colleges. Additionally, the data originate with and are supplied by the participant. All data submitted to the VFA are displayed in aggregate and are not displayed as student unit record information.

7. Will only use VFA benchmarking data according to the following terms:
   a. Only for the purposes of institutional analysis and institutional improvement, such as monitoring the outcomes of interventions, practices, and policies of the institution.
   b. Will not use benchmarking data to rank your college or other colleges.
   c. Will present benchmarking data only in aggregate without disclosing the identity (name) of any single college or identify data as belonging to a single institution.
   d. Will not present benchmarking data without a clear indication that the data are not representative of community colleges nationwide.
   e. Will use caution when interpreting disaggregated data—particularly when there is a likelihood of metrics that may be based on a small number of students.
   f. Will not use benchmarking data for any promotional or advertising purposes.
   g. Will properly attribute the source of the data.

8. Learn the VFA measures as defined in the VFA Metrics Manual to determine how these metrics can be used to better understand student outcomes at its colleges, and how to incorporate those metrics into reporting schema and mechanisms, such as:
   - Accountability frameworks, completion efforts, scorecards, performance funding models, etc.
   - Reports to stakeholders and initiatives.
   - Requests from legislatures or local, regional, state, and national stakeholders.

9. Encourage other colleges to use the VFA metrics and to have the VFA metrics adopted or incorporated into any reporting that colleges do.

10. Link to or download the VFA’s resources to your web site, if appropriate.

11. Inform AACC about the ways you are using the VFA and its data and work with AACC to give feedback on new tools and new ways that VFA data can be leveraged.
12. Be listed on VFA materials (print and electronic) as a participant in the VFA, if applicable.

13. Include the VFA logo on the institution’s home page or another appropriate page that is regularly visited by external audiences. The logo will be not more than two clicks off of the institution’s home page. An active link will be maintained from the logo directly to the institution’s VFA profile page hosted on the VFA web site.

AACC will:

1. Maintain the VFA web site as the primary access to all VFA-related activities.

2. Verify the participant’s information and set-up the VFA participant account with the correct permissions for designated user roles at the college.

3. Provide confirmation of account set-up; instructions on account access; and invoices/receipts.

4. Provide access to the VFA participant’s data input process through a secure sign-in on the VFA web site.

5. Provide employees of a district or system office – if the entity serves as the official VFA reporting body for multiple colleges – access to the VFA Data Tool and data for EACH of the colleges within the district or system office that are participating in VFA. *Note that employees of EACH college within the district or system office will only have access to the data tools and data for THEIR college.

6. Update the participant’s profile page upon request from a participant and make additions and/or enhancements to the profile page, including changes to the display of data and information, as it sees relevant.

7. Notify participants of data collection deadlines.

8. Support participants in understanding the data definitions/methodology and in the data collection process.

9. Serve as a steward of the colleges’ data. All efforts to display and report data will be intended to serve the interests of the participating colleges and the community college sector.

10. Not report or maintain student unit record data. Any student unit record data collected and used to generate the VFA measures will neither be stored after processing it, nor reported. Any student level data collected for processing purposes will neither contain Social Security Numbers nor birth dates.

11. Inform the participant’s Key Contact of its intent to use in VFA’s marketing and outreach any case studies or data products created by the participant. AACC will give proper attribution for all products and resources contributed by the participant.

12. Create publicly available reports at an initiative-wide level, using data submitted to the VFA, to provide a better understanding of student outcomes in community colleges; inform and shape accountability across the sector; and provide information for policy and legislative agendas. Reports will provide overview data of the VFA data and analysis of responding colleges, but will not report metrics from individual colleges. Reports will not provide rankings or ratings of colleges participating in the VFA.

13. Maintain, review, and analyze VFA data – from previous and current participants – for the purposes of monitoring and assessing the VFA.
14. Share VFA data with third-party organizations only for the purpose of evaluating the VFA initiative and for initiative planning and assessment.

15. Not allow a third-party organization to independently use or report VFA data without express written permission of AACC or Memorandum of Agreement between each of the participants.

16. Not provide access or log-in credentials to the secure data tool (data input or data outputs) to non-employees or users not designated by the participant. For non-employees of the participant, to which the participant wishes to give log-in credentials, AACC must receive a written (or electronic) request from the participant’s Key Contact.

**AACC and the VFA Participant agree that:**

1. The institution is responsible for the accuracy of its VFA data and for the data that appears on its public profile page, public reports, and on its secured VFA account page.

2. The public disclosure of comparison data of a college to any other single college or colleges is explicitly prohibited.

3. Using VFA data to create rankings of colleges is explicitly prohibited.

4. The VFA data are not intended for commercial use.

5. VFA participants cannot edit, update, change, delete, or add data once a data collection cycle has closed, other than at designated times at which a data collection is re-opened by AACC to correct data.

6. At present, VFA participants cannot submit data for a previous data collection cycle during which it was not a VFA participant.

**Withdrawal or Non-renewal of VFA Participation**

1. A participant may withdraw from VFA participation at any time. After formal notification to the VFA staff at AACC by the institution’s president/CEO/chancellor/provost (“leadership”), the institution will be taken off the VFA Participation List and the institution's profile and the information contained therein will be removed from the VFA web site. The institution will remove the VFA logo from the institution’s web site within one month of submitting notification of their intent to withdraw.

2. When a participant’s leadership is notified by VFA staff that their institution does not meet the conditions outlined in this agreement and does not: a) bring the participant into compliance within 30 days or b) petition the VFA staff for an exception, the participant may be removed from the VFA Participation List and its profile and the information contained therein will be removed from the VFA web site. If removed from the VFA Participation List, the participant will remove the VFA logo from its web site within one month of notification that they have been removed.

3. If a participant is unable to meet the conditions outlined in this document due to unusual or extraordinary circumstances and does not wish to end participation in the VFA, the participant may contact the VFA staff for an appropriate remedy.
4. When a participant withdraws from the VFA or does not renew participation for the following year all institution-level data submitted are securely stored and maintained in the VFA database.
   a. These data are the property of the participant but can be used by AACC in reporting and analysis.
   b. The participant will be able to download a copy of the VFA data submitted and export its data in the available formats up until the account is deactivated and closed.
   c. All approved/published data at the time the participant withdraws or does not renew remains approved/published and available for benchmarking purposes indefinitely.
   d. All approved/published data at the time the participant withdraws or does not renew remains approved/published and available on the participant’s profile page as public reports until the close of the current participation year.

**DUES AND PAYMENT TERMS**

1. Tier One participation in the VFA is included with a college’s AACC membership and there are no additional dues assessed for VFA Tier One participation. Tier Two of the VFA is funded through annual dues paid by participants. Tier Two dues are $1,000 annually per college. For additional information on Tier One and Tier Two participation, go to: [http://vfa.aacc.nche.edu/participation/Pages/default.aspx](http://vfa.aacc.nche.edu/participation/Pages/default.aspx).

2. Dues for state-level participation – for example, by a state department of education, association, commission, or other entity recognized as representative of all the community colleges within the state – are $3,500 annually. For additional information on state-level participation, go to: [http://vfa.aacc.nche.edu/participation/Pages/statelevel](http://vfa.aacc.nche.edu/participation/Pages/statelevel).

3. **Dues Payment Terms.** Dues for Tier Two participation in the VFA are to be received within 30 days of confirmation that your VFA participation has been processed by AACC. Participants have the option to pay online with a credit card at the time of sign-up, or pay by check following sign-up. All participation accounts will be established at the time of participation activation, regardless of payment status.

4. Annual dues are not pro-rated and will be assessed at the same amount regardless of what date during the participation year a participant joins.

5. Refunds upon withdrawal from participation are as follows:
   a. Participants that withdraw from participation or change their participation tier will be issued refunds or adjustments up to 30 days from the date that the participant joins. The join date is when a participation order is created by the participant or by the VFA staff in AACC’s database.
   b. Participation dues will not be refunded because a participant fails to submit data.
   c. Refunds are not issued for any past years of participation.