

**AAUDE/AGS Doctoral Education Working Group  
Time to Degree Subcommittee  
Progress Report - April 2017**

**Subcommittee Members:**

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**Discussion of Goals**

- Reduce the number of TTD metrics being collected
  - Current collection has **five** different TTD medians using different enrollment start dates. Institutions are free to submit data for one or all of the metrics. This can make it difficult for an institution to compare itself to its peers if they don't report data for the same TTD metric.
- Improve the collection to make data analyses more robust
  - Make data aggregation easier and more statistically defensible
    - The current collection of TTD **medians** is difficult to aggregate. A simple average of the medians will overweight the importance of medians for small n's. A weighted average of the medians may differ significantly from the simple average that would be produced using unit record data.
  - Improve the ability to customize analyses by allowing the user to include/exclude data that meet certain criteria
    - In comparative analyses, institutions may want to include only those programs that have similar entrance requirements to theirs. Or they may want to exclude records that they consider to be outliers – high or low TTD.
  - Improve the description of the data
    - It may be helpful to have information about the programs being included in comparisons:
      - Whether program requires prior master's degree for admission
      - Expected time to earn master's (if awarded en route to PhD)
      - Whether leaves of absence are subtracted from TTDs
      - Whether continuous enrollment is required
- Configure to allow for analyses across graduate exchange items
- Keep the collection manageable so that participation is not reduced
  - We would like to increase participation and do not want to make the data collection onerous.

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**Preliminary Recommendations**

- Unit record data submission
- Use same student ID for TTD and exit survey
- Add data fields (mostly optional) to give a fuller view of the data and aid in inclusion/exclusion of records for various analyses.
- Reduce the TTD metrics collected from five to two, specifically
  - Time from first enrollment as graduate student in program
  - Time from first enrollment as doctoral student in program
- Allow approved leaves of absence to reduce time to degree
- Create metadata table by program
  - This may be time-consuming initially, but once created would only have to be reviewed each year to see if any updates are needed.

**For further discussion:**

- Additional data fields under discussion:
  - Prior master's
  - Prior master's in field
  - Earned master's en route to PhD
  - Sex
  - Ethnicity
  - Enrolled in joint program
- Beginning and ending dates for TTD calculation