



# **Degree Verify Programming & Testing Guide**

**National Student Clearinghouse®**  
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## **EXHIBITS**

- Exhibit I – Data Record Layouts & Report Formats
- Exhibit II – Instructions for Entering Degree Data Elements & Definitions
- Exhibit III – Secure FTP Instructions

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For assistance, contact [implementation@studentclearinghouse.org](mailto:implementation@studentclearinghouse.org).

## **Introduction**

This guide explains how to extract and report degree data for the Clearinghouse's DegreeVerify service. We encourage you to provide as much information as possible so that DegreeVerify can accurately reflect your students' academic accomplishments to prospective employers.

Please follow these steps in developing and testing your programming:

- Read this guide and all exhibits thoroughly.
- Before you begin programming, contact your Clearinghouse New Service coordinator to address any issues or questions.
- Review the DegreeVerify process and data elements with staff members at your institution to promote awareness and ensure all necessary data is captured accurately.
- After your program is written and you have verified the accuracy of the data in the file, submit your initial DegreeVerify file to the Clearinghouse.
- Upon receipt of your file, the Clearinghouse will perform a variety of edit checks and contact you with the results and/or questions. If your code requires modification, you will need to submit a new file.
- Once all questions and discrepancies are resolved, your degree verification data will be loaded into our database. We will conduct a start-up call to review how your office staff should use the Clearinghouse Web site. At the conclusion of the call, your institution will be officially "live" with DegreeVerify!

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### **Which Student Populations Should Be Reported?**

Your institution's initial DegreeVerify file is an historic report of all the degrees conferred by your institution that are available in an electronic format. If the data is maintained in multiple legacy systems, you can submit multiple reports. Subsequent reports reflect your most recent degree recipients. You may find it helpful to use a posting date or similar mechanism in your database to ensure late conferrals are captured in your reports.

### **How Should Degrees Conferred Simultaneously Be Reported?**

If a student receives, for example, a Bachelor of Arts and a Bachelor of Science degree at the same time, you should report them as separate detail records in your file.

### **How Should Records Without Birth Dates Be Reported?**

Leave the "Date of Birth" field blank, allowing the appropriate number of filler spaces (see Exhibit I).

### **How Should Students Without Social Security Numbers Be Reported?**

Enter "NO SSN" in the field followed by trailing spaces.

### **How Should DegreeVerify Reports Be Submitted?**

Schools must create a secure FTP account with the Clearinghouse in order to submit enrollment or degree files via the Internet. If you already have a secure FTP account, you can use it to submit your DegreeVerify file (see Exhibit III for secure FTP instructions). For more information, visit [www.studentclearinghouse.org/ftps/default.htm](http://www.studentclearinghouse.org/ftps/default.htm).

### **When Should DegreeVerify Reports Be Sent?**

During the implementation process, your New Service coordinator will work with you to establish a reporting schedule that correlates to your institution's conferral periods. We suggest that you submit a degree file after each conferral period, once the majority of degrees have been posted. An additional degree file can be sent for the term as soon as all degrees are posted.

### **Do I Still Need to Report Graduated Statuses On My Enrollment files?**

No! During the implementation process, let your New Service coordinator know that you would like the Clearinghouse to use your degree files to generate Graduated (G) statuses for your degree recipients.

### **Questions?**

If you have a question or need assistance, contact your New Service coordinator at [implementation@studentclearinghouse.org](mailto:implementation@studentclearinghouse.org).

## **EXHIBIT I**

### **Data Record Layouts & Report Formats**

The following are the transmission and data record layout requirements for submitting files to the Clearinghouse for your institution's DegreeVerify service.

#### **Transmitting Files**

You will use your Clearinghouse secure FTP account to transmit your DegreeVerify reports. Key features of the secure FTP system are:

- Employs an easy-to-use Web browser interface so users can quickly and securely send and receive files.
- Stores files using the U.S. federal encryption standard, FIPS 140-2 validated AES encryption.
- Eliminates the need to encrypt or compress data files or enter complicated FTP line commands prior to file transmission.
- Allows users with automated environments to use no- or low-cost secure FTP clients to exchange files over encrypted FTPS and SSH connections.

#### **General Requirements**

- Your data file should contain:
  1. One header record
  2. Individual student detail records
  3. One trailer record
- File Name = School Code and Branch Code with a two letter file extension (12345600.DV).
- All dates must be valid and formatted as YYYYMMDD (full year, month, day).
- We prefer but do not require that student records be presented in Social Security number order.
- In the type column of the data record layouts, "N" is used to indicate numeric values and "AN" is used to indicate alphanumeric values.
- Name suffixes (e.g., Jr, Sr, III) have an assigned field. If your system includes them as part of the last name, you should parse the suffix from the last name and move it into the suffix field.
- Fields containing no value (aka, "fillers") should be filled with spaces, as indicated in the comments column of the data record layout table.
- If multiple degrees are awarded, each degree and its associated majors, etc., should be reported as a separate detail record.
- Your file should be formatted according to the data element layout in a flat file using trailing spaces/filler to create fixed length records of 3840 bytes each.

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- A variable length file can be created using "\$" as the delimiter (i.e., insert a "\$" after each data element and as a placeholder for each blank field). Each field must be separated with this delimiter, including fields left blank and filler space. Carriage returns or line feeds act as the record separator.

### **Questions?**

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## Header Record Layout

Total Header Record Length is 3840 Bytes

Field Name	Length	Start	Stop	Req'd	Type	Comments
Record Type	3	1	3	Yes	AN	Value is "DH1"
School Code	6	4	9	Yes	N	Dept. of Education "FICE" code (OPE ID)
Branch Code	2	10	11	Yes	N	School branch code suffix or 00, if none
Official School Name	80	12	91	Yes	AN	Institution's official name
Filler	15	92	106	Yes	AN	Space fill
Standard Report Flag	1	107	107	Yes	AN	Value is "D" (Degree verification transmission)
Transmission Date	8	108	115	Yes	N	Date transmission was reported by school (YYYYMMDD)
Degree Period	80	116	195	Yes	AN	Time period for which degree population is being reported (e.g., History 1980-1998, Spring 2000, Summer 2002, etc.).  <i>*Note: This is for informational purposes only. Individual degree award dates are indicated in each detail record.</i>
Filler	3645	196	3840	Yes	AN	Space fill

The type codes in this document are "N" numeric and "AN" alpha numeric.

**Detail Record Layout**

Each Detail Record must be 3840 Bytes in Length

Field Name	Length	Start	Stop	Req'd	Type	Comments
Record Type	3	1	3	Yes	AN	Value for each detail record is "DD1"
Student SSN	9	4	12	Yes	N	Numbers only, no hyphens. If no SSN is available, fill with "NO SSN" followed by trailing spaces.
First Name	40	13	52	Yes	AN	Student's first name
Middle Name	40	53	92	No	AN	Student's middle name or, if full name is not available, middle initial. If no value, space fill.
Last Name	40	93	132	Yes	AN	Student's last name
Name Suffix	5	133	137	No	AN	e.g., III, JR, SR, etc. Space fill if not applicable.
Previous Last Name	40	138	177	No	AN	Student's previous last name. Space fill if not applicable.
Previous First Name	40	178	217	No	AN	Student's previous first name. Space fill if not applicable.
Date of Birth	8	218	225	Yes	N	Date student was born entered as YYYYMMDD. If unknown, space fill.
Filler	79	226	304	Yes	AN	Space fill
Degree Level Indicator	1	305	305	No	AN	The type of degree earned by the student. Valid values are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• "A"=Associate's</li> <li>• "B"=Bachelor's</li> <li>• "M"=Master's</li> <li>• "D"=Doctorate</li> <li>• "P"=Professional</li> <li>• "C"=Certificate</li> <li>• "R"=Credential</li> </ul> Space fill if not applicable.
Degree, Certificate, or Credential Title	80	306	385	Yes	AN	e.g., BA, BS, M. Ed., MS, Bachelor's of Arts, Associate's; Bachelor's of Science, Certificate, etc. (see also Exhibit II)
School/College/Division Awarding Degree	50	386	435	No	AN	The name of the school, college or division awarding the degree (e.g., School of Engineering, School of Business Management, etc.). Space fill if not applicable
Joint Institution/College/School/Division Name	60	436	495	No	AN	If degree is jointly awarded, name of joint school, college, division, or institution. Space fill if not applicable.
Date Degree, Credential, or Certificate Awarded	8	496	503	Yes	N	YYYYMMDD. If day is unknown, enter "00" for DD.
Filler	80	504	583	Yes	AN	Space fill

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**Detail Record Layout (cont'd)**

<b>Field Name</b>	<b>Length</b>	<b>Start</b>	<b>Stop</b>	<b>Req'd</b>	<b>Type</b>	<b>Comments</b>
Major Course of Study 1	80	584	663	Yes	AN	e.g., History. Fill with "NOT APPLICABLE," if appropriate. (See also Exhibit II.)
Major Course of Study 2	80	664	743	No	AN	e.g., Political Science. Space fill if not applicable.
Major Course of Study 3	80	744	823	No	AN	e.g., Communications. Space fill if not applicable.
Major Course of Study 4	80	824	903	No	AN	e.g., Sociology. Space fill if not applicable.
Filler	160	904	1063	Yes	AN	Space fill
Minor Course of Study 1	80	1064	1143	No	AN	e.g., Computer Science. Space fill if not applicable. (See also Exhibit II.)
Minor Course of Study 2	80	1144	1223	No	AN	e.g., Philosophy. Space fill if not applicable.
Minor Course of Study 3	80	1224	1303	No	AN	e.g., Mathematics. Space fill if not applicable.
Minor Course of Study 4	80	1304	1383	No	AN	e.g., Linguistics. Space fill if not applicable.
Filler	160	1384	1543	Yes	AN	Space fill
Major Option 1	80	1544	1623	No	AN	e.g., Criminal Justice Option. (See also Exhibit II.)
Major Option 2	80	1624	1703	No	AN	e.g., Western European Option. Space fill if not applicable.
Filler	160	1704	1863	Yes	AN	Space fill
Major Concentration 1	80	1864	1943	No	AN	e.g., Public Communications Concentration. Space fill if not applicable. (See also Exhibit II.)
Major Concentration 2	80	1944	2023	No	AN	e.g., Russian Culture Concentration. Space fill if not applicable.
Major Concentration 3	80	2024	2103	No	AN	e.g., French Concentration. Space fill if not applicable.
Filler	280	2104	2383	Yes	AN	Space fill
NCES CIP Code for Major 1	6	2384	2389	No	N	Appropriate NCES CIP code for major, if available. Do not enter decimal points ("."). Space fill if not applicable. (See also Exhibit II.)
NCES CIP Code for Major 2	6	2390	2395	No	N	Appropriate NCES CIP code for major, if available. Do not enter decimal points ("."). Space fill if not applicable.
NCES CIP Code for Major 3	6	2396	2401	No	N	Appropriate NCES CIP code for major, if available. Do not enter decimal points ("."). Space fill if not applicable.

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**Detail Record Layout (cont'd)**

Field Name	Length	Start	Stop	Req'd	Type	Comments
NCES CIP Code for Major 4	6	2402	2407	No	N	Appropriate NCES CIP code for major, if available. Do not enter decimal points ("."). Space fill if not applicable.
Filler	20	2408	2427	Yes	AN	Space fill
NCES CIP Code for Minor 1	6	2428	2433	No	N	Appropriate NCES CIP code for minor, if available. Do not enter decimal points ("."). Space fill if not applicable.
NCES CIP Code for Minor 2	6	2434	2439	No	N	Appropriate NCES CIP code for minor, if available. Do not enter decimal points ("."). Space fill if not applicable.
NCES CIP Code for Minor 3	6	2440	2445	No	N	Appropriate NCES CIP code for minor, if available. Do not enter decimal points ("."). Space fill if not applicable.
NCES CIP Code for Minor 4	6	2446	2451	No	N	Appropriate NCES CIP code for minor, if available. Do not enter decimal points ("."). Space fill if not applicable.
Filler	120	2452	2571	Yes	N	Space fill
Academic Honors	50	2572	2621	No	AN	e.g., Cum Laude, Summa Cum Laude, Magna Cum Laude, etc. Space fill if not applicable.
Filler	196	2622	2817	Yes	AN	Space fill
Honors Program	50	2818	2867	No	AN	Title of honors program. Space fill if not applicable.
Filler	100	2868	2967	Yes	AN	Space fill
Other Honors	150	2968	3117	No	AN	Name of other honors (e.g., Phi Beta Kappa, etc.) Space fill if not applicable. (See also Exhibit II.)
Attendance From Date	8	3118	3125	No	N	YYYYMMDD. If day is unknown, enter "00" for DD. Space fill if not applicable. (See also Exhibit II.)
Attendance To Date	8	3126	3133	No	N	YYYYMMDD. If day is unknown, enter "00" for DD. Space fill if not applicable.
FERPA Block	1	3134	3134	Yes	AN	"Y" or "N" (see also Exhibit II)
School Financial Block	1	3135	3135	No	AN	"Y" or "N"; space fill if not applicable. (See also Exhibit II.)
Filler	100	3136	3235	Yes	AN	Space fill
Name of Institution Granting Degree	50	3236	3285	No	AN	Name of institution granting degree, if it is different than the school named in the header record (to reflect historical institution name changes). Space fill if not applicable. (See also Exhibit II.)
Filler	555	3286	3840	Yes	AN	Space fill

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### Trailer Record Layout

Total Trailer Record Length is 3840 Bytes.

Field Name	Length	Start	Stop	Req'd	Type	Comments
Record Type	3	1	3	Yes	AN	Value is "DT1"
Total Record Count	10	4	13	Yes	N	Total count equals the number of student detail records plus two (the header and trailer records are included in the total)
Filler	3827	14	3840	Yes	AN	Space fill

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## **EXHIBIT II**

### **Definitions & Instructions for Entering Degree Data Elements**

- **Degree, Certificate or Credential Title (Required Data Element):** The name of the degree conferred by your institution. Generally accepted abbreviations (e.g., BA) or the full degree title (e.g., Bachelor of Arts) can be used. If a certificate or credential has been awarded, indicate certificate or credential and use the “Major Course of Study 1” field to indicate the subject area.
- **Major Courses of Study 1 to 4 (Required Data Element):** The official names of any and all major courses of study associated with the student's degree. At least one Major Course of Study is required. If your institution does not have majors, enter “NOT APPLICABLE” in “Major Course of Study 1” to indicate to employers that the absence of a value is not an error, then space fill the “Major Courses of Study 2 to 4” fields.
- **Minor Courses of Study 1 to 4:** The official names of any and all minor courses of study associated with the student's degree title, if applicable.
- **Major Options 1 and 2:** The official names of any and all major options associated with the student's degree title, if applicable. At many institutions, options indicate the focus of the major according to specific areas of study required by the major department (e.g., engineering majors may be required to select either a mechanical engineering or structural engineering option).
- **Major Concentrations 1 to 3:** The official names of any and all major concentrations associated with the student's degree title, if applicable. At many institutions, concentrations indicate the subject area the student focused on within the major itself (e.g., a math major may have an applied math concentration even though this area of concentration is not required to pursue a math major).
- **NCES CIP Codes for Majors/Minors:** The National Center for Education Statistics Classification of Instructional Programs (NCES CIP) codes associated with any major or minor courses of study, if available. Space fill these fields if the codes are not available.
- **Other Honors:** The name of other honors, such as Phi Beta Kappa, that the student received and that would be beneficial to include with the degree confirmation. You can include as many entries in the "Other Honors" field that its 150-character space will allow.
- **Attendance From and To Dates:** The period of time that the student attended your institution in order to receive a degree, if available. These fields require eight-digit dates in the YYYYMMDD format. If the exact dates are not available, enter the four-digit year, two-digit month, and "00" for the two-digit day (e.g., report May 2000 as 20000500).

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- **FERPA Block (Required Data Element):** If the student requested a block on his/her directory information, enter a "Y" in this field. If no block was requested, enter an "N."
- **School Financial Block:** If your institution does not verify degree information due to outstanding student financial obligations, enter a "Y" in this field. Otherwise, enter an "N" or a space.
- **Name of Institution Granting Degree:** As a result of institutional name changes or mergers, the current name of your institution may be different than the name on the student's degree. If so, enter the name of the institution as it appeared on the student's degree in this field.

## **EXHIBIT III** **Secure FTP Instructions**

### **Establishing a secure FTP Account**

The National Student Clearinghouse supports secure FTP to safely and securely collect, store, manage, and distribute sensitive information between your organization and the Clearinghouse. More information is available on our Web site at [www.studentclearinghouse.org/ftps](http://www.studentclearinghouse.org/ftps).

You must establish a Clearinghouse secure FTP account at least two business days before you expect to send your first file. To open an account, please submit the online secure FTP Access Form located on our Web site at [www.studentclearinghouse.org/ftps/secure\\_ftp.htm](http://www.studentclearinghouse.org/ftps/secure_ftp.htm). Make sure you click the “Colleges & Universities Secure FTP Access Form” link. Within two business days, we will contact your designated secure FTP contact with your password and answer any technical questions.

### **Compressing Your File**

You may want to compress your file to minimize secure FTP transmission time. The Clearinghouse will uncompress your file using PKZIP version 2.02T. If you plan to use a different compression utility, contact [secureftp@studentclearinghouse.org](mailto:secureftp@studentclearinghouse.org) to determine its compatibility.

### **Transmitting Your Files via secure FTP**

Secure FTP supports the following methods of securely exchanging files with the Clearinghouse:

- Web browser interface
- FTP over SSH (SFTP)
- FTP over SSL (FTPS)

The Web browser interface is a quick, easy method of manually transmitting files. For the Web browser interface, follow the instructions below or refer to our online secure FTP User Guide at [www.studentclearinghouse.org/ftps/pdfs/SecureFTP\\_UserGuide.pdf](http://www.studentclearinghouse.org/ftps/pdfs/SecureFTP_UserGuide.pdf).

1. From a web browser, go to <https://ftps.nslc.org> (you may want to bookmark this site)
2. Enter your Clearinghouse username and password.
  - Username is NOT case sensitive; password IS case sensitive.
  - Your account will be suspended if you attempt to log in too many times with an incorrect password.
  - If you are logging in for the first time, you may be prompted to change your password. The password rules are:
    - i. Minimum length is six characters
    - ii. Must contain at least one alphabetical and one numerical character
    - iii. Must not resemble your user name
3. Once you are logged in, select “Upload a File Now” and follow the prompts.

For automated environments, please refer to the secure FTP Automation Guide at [www.studentclearinghouse.org/ftps/pdfs/SecureFTP\\_Automation.pdf](http://www.studentclearinghouse.org/ftps/pdfs/SecureFTP_Automation.pdf).

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### **Secure FTP File Receipt Confirmation**

The Clearinghouse will send a file receipt confirmation to the email address you entered on the online secure FTP Access Form. If you do not receive a confirmation email within 24 hours of transmission, contact us.

### **Questions?**

If you have any questions, or need assistance with secure FTP, contact Clearinghouse technical support at [secureftp@studentclearinghouse.org](mailto:secureftp@studentclearinghouse.org).

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