REVIEW PROTOCOL FOR THE
ACCESS TO HIGHER EDUCATION PRACTICE GUIDE

Screening Criteria

Issue: Time Frame
Relevant to: Screening Criteria
Protocol: **1988–present**

The WWC reviews studies published in the last 20 years. Reviewers should contact the evidence coordinator if they have a study published before then to determine whether it should be reviewed.

Issue: Study Design
Relevant to: Screening Criteria
Protocol: **RCTs, QEDs, and Regression Discontinuity Designs are eligible for review. Correlational and observational studies will be considered for review.**

Regression Discontinuity Designs (RDDs) are eligible for review. Until WWC RDD Standards are disseminated, please make note that the study is an RDD; this will have to be sent for review by an expert in RDDs.

In some cases, observational or correlational data may be used to support a recommendation. Reviewers should document the data used, sample characteristics, analytical procedures, and conclusions of these studies. The panel recognizes that recommendations based on observational or correlational research will likely have a "low" level of evidence.

Issue: Age and/or Grade Range
Relevant to: Screening Criteria
Protocol:
The target grade range for this practice guide is **secondary school (grades 6 through 12 inclusive)**. Studies focusing on postsecondary students may also be considered if there is a clear connection to practices at the secondary school level (check with the evidence coordinator if a study in this grade range is assigned).

REVIEW PROTOCOL FOR THE ACCESS TO HIGHER EDUCATION PRACTICE GUIDE

Issue: Brief Description of Intervention
Relevant to: Screening Criteria
Protocol:
Consideration should be given to **effective strategies that can be used by secondary schools or school districts to increase college enrollment rates and persistence to degree completion for all students, as well as students with traditionally lower rates of college attendance.**

The proposed practice guide will inform educators and administrators about the range of strategies that exist, how the strategies can be implemented, and how implementation should vary for different types of students. Recommendations will be targeted to high school and district administrators and guidance counseling staff, and will focus on changes that high schools and districts can implement directly.

Examples of recommendations and practices include both in-school and out-of-school programs and strategies, such as:
- **Information about Financial Resources:** strategies for helping students find information about, and access to, financial resources to pay for postsecondary education.
- **Curriculum Alignment:** strategies for revising high school curriculum and standards to align with expectations of colleges and universities.
- **Undergraduate Transitions, Retention, and Success:** strategies that prepare students for college in ways that promote effective transitions from secondary school and, ultimately, retention and success in their colleges of choice. These may include technology-based programs.
- **Partnerships with Higher Education Institutions:** examples of effective partnerships between school districts (or individual schools) and postsecondary institutions.
- **Higher Education Counseling, Mentoring, and Peer Development:** effective practices and programs that help inform high school students and their families about college opportunities and processes.

Recommendations will NOT address the following:
- Proposed changes to federal or state financial aid policy
- Whole school reform (e.g., charter schools, vouchers, small schools)
- Efforts by postsecondary institutions to ensure student retention, *unless* the institutions are partnering with secondary schools as part of a larger effort to implement strategies that increase college enrollment and retention

Issue: Key Subgroups
Relevant to: Screening Criteria
Protocol:
Although we will review studies that look at all students, certain key subgroups should be noted. These include students with traditionally lower rates of college attendance or persistence (particularly low-income students, minorities, and potential first-generation college students). Findings for these subgroups should be documented in the SRG.

REVIEW PROTOCOL FOR THE ACCESS TO HIGHER EDUCATION PRACTICE GUIDE

Issue: Location and Language
Relevant to: Screening Criteria
Protocol: Reviews will be restricted to studies conducted **in the United States**.

In general, interventions should be administered in English, but we will consider strategies or practices targeted at English as a Second Language students or English language learners.

Issue: Outcomes and Domains for Multiple Comparisons
Relevant to: Screening Criteria AND Full Review
Protocol:
Eligible outcomes relate to college access, enrollment, and persistence to degree completion. Most outcomes will be measured using survey or transcript/administrative records data. These outcomes should be categorized into the following four domains:

1. High School Academic Performance

    a. High school GPA
    b. Number of Advanced Placement courses taken
    c. Number of college courses (courses for college credit) taken in high school
    d. SAT/ACT scores
    e. High school graduation

2. College Access

    a. Awareness of college application, funding, and/or enrollment requirements
    b. Completion of high school classes linked to postsecondary preparedness or aligned with college curricula
    c. Expectations or aspirations to postsecondary education

3. College Enrollment

    a. Application to at least one postsecondary institution (separately by 2- and 4-year colleges)
    b. Enrollment at a postsecondary institution (separately by 2- and 4-year colleges)

4. College Retention and Success (Persistence to Degree Completion)

    a. College GPA
    b. Enrollment in remedial courses at a postsecondary institution
    c. Years enrolled
    d. Degree completion, including time to degree completion

REVIEW PROTOCOL FOR THE ACCESS TO HIGHER EDUCATION PRACTICE GUIDE

Issue: Description of Intervention
Relevant to: Full Review
Protocol:
Descriptions of interventions should be detailed. Among relevant items, as indicated in **"Brief Description of Intervention: Screening Criteria,"** reviewers should record the following, when possible:

- **Type of service** (e.g., one-on-one or group, financial aid)
- **Intervention location/setting** (e.g., school, district, postsecondary institution, etc.)
- **Timing of intervention** (e.g., before or after school, weekends, summer)
- **Cost per student**
- **Funding for intervention** (funding source, whether that funding is stable or soft)
- **Person who delivers the intervention** (e.g., program staff, administrator, guidance counselor, etc.)
- **Duration and intensity of intervention**
- **Frequency and timing of data collection**

Issue: Baseline Characteristics for QED Equivalence
Relevant to: Full Review
Protocol:
Authors need to demonstrate equivalence on **a minimum of three measures**, including at least one measure of **socioeconomic status (SES),** at baseline. SES measures may include free or reduced-price lunch (FRPL) eligibility, family income, and/or mother's educational attainment. Other measures may include some measure of academic performance, first-generation college status, and/or college expectations.

In addition, if other demographic characteristics (e.g., race) are not balanced, please note this on the Study Review Guide.

Issue: Missing Information
Relevant to: Full Review
Protocol:
Because of the tight timeline for practice guides, authors are typically not contacted as part of the review process. If the **study is missing information necessary to make a rating, rate as "Uncertain" and** <u>note the information that is missing.</u> (If a study is critical for determining the level of evidence for a recommendation, then we may revisit it and contact the author.)

Issue: Study Ratings
Relevant to: Full Review
Protocol:
Ratings include: ***Meets standards, Meets standards with reservations, Does not meet standards, and** Uncertain* (where "uncertain" will be used in cases where an author query would be necessary to determine rating).

Issue: Attrition
Relevant to: Full Review
Protocol:
Studies will be reviewed with attention to evidence that attrition may bias estimates of impacts. However, if the authors are able to present post-attrition evidence of group equivalence on key measures, we may eliminate our concerns about overall or differential attrition. Specifically:

(1) In individual RCTs and well-controlled QEDs, severe overall attrition is defined as greater then 20% loss, and differential attrition from the intervention and comparison groups is defined as being greater than 7% differential loss. However, if attrition exceeds these standards, reviewers should note whether that attrition is a function of the length of the follow-up period.

(2) RCTs with excessive attrition and all QEDs must demonstrate equivalence of the analysis sample. Demonstration of group equivalence is defined as either a well-powered test of equivalence that is non-significant, or a difference between groups of less than one-half of a pooled standard deviation.

(3) RCTs with excessive attrition and all QEDs must make statistical adjustments for baseline differences (e.g., adjusted means, ANCOVAs, gain scores, etc.).

(4) RCTs with excessive attrition and all QEDs that do not demonstrate baseline equivalence do not meet standards, even if they use statistical controls to adjust for baseline differences.

REVIEW PROTOCOL FOR THE ACCESS TO HIGHER EDUCATION PRACTICE GUIDE

Current literature search terms:

Search 1:
    access AND higher education AND program
    AND
    guidance OR mentoring OR tutoring OR remediation OR supplemental instruction
    AND
    high school OR secondary school

Search 2:
    access AND higher education AND program
    AND
    high school OR secondary school

    "access to higher education" and "access to college" in some full-text sources

Search 3:
    list of potential and approved panel members

Search 4:
    access AND (higher education OR college OR postsecondary)
    AND
    enrollment OR persistence
    AND
    strategy OR practice OR intervention OR program OR preparation

Search 5:
    transition to (higher education OR college)

Search 6:
    (high school OR secondary school) partnerships with (higher education OR college or postsecondary)

Search 7:
    (high school OR secondary school) AND (higher education OR college or postsecondary) AND curriculum alignment