Focus Populations Options for UTM and Rationale for Selection or Non-selection

Focus Populations Used in 2015-20 QAF Cycle

	Focus Population	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	3 Yr. Avg Benchmark	2018-19	Percent Attained*	Points Recommended
1	Baccalaureate Completer with Associate Degree	112	123	94	110	165	**151%**	5
2	Geographic High Need Area	497	559	504	520	444	**85%**	2
3	Low Income**	721	733	640	698	621	**89%**	2
4	Males	473	476	465	471	445	**94%**	3
5	STEM Undergraduate Degrees	310	321	321	317	286	**90%**	3

Focus Population Recommendations for 2020-25 Cycle

The 2020-25 Cycle requires selection of four focus populations instead of five. In addition, one of the four populations must be selected from a group of three populations identified as among the most disparate postsecondary outcome populations.

The calculation methodology is listed for each focus population. Whenever possible, an analysis of Awards per 100 FTE will be used to further emphasize the quality of support provided by institutions rather than the number of students enrolled.

Recommendations for the Four Focus Populations

The objective in selecting the four focus populations is to identify those groups which provide the strongest potential for achieving the annual benchmarks during the cycle. With that in mind, the following populations are recommended for the 2020-25 Quality Assurance Cycle.

1. Low-Income

One of the populations must be selected from the African American, Hispanic, or Low-Income populations with calculation methodology based on percent awards per 100 FTE. According to IPEDS data, the number of completions for the included ethnic groups are shown in the table below. Although the data here appears to support the Hispanic group, the numbers are so small that minor fluctuations could significantly impact the completion numbers and calculation of the percent of the benchmark attained. For this reason the low-income group represents the best option among the required populations.

Focus Population		2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	3 Yr. Avg Benchmark	2018-19	Percent Attained*	Points Recommended
1	African American	200	168	137	158	137	**87%**	2
2	Hispanic	34	26	27	29	35	**120%**	5
3	Low Income**	721	733	640	698	621	**89%**	2

2. **Baccalaureate Degree Graduates with Previously Earned Associate Degree** *(Univ only)* (Calculation methodology based on number of awards)

This population was used in the previous cycle and attained 151% of the benchmark in 2019-20. These numbers could continue to increase as we identify students who can earn the associate degree after transferring to UTM.

3. High-Need Programs – Undergraduate Degrees* (Calculation methodology based on number of awards)

The High-Need Programs population was also included in the 2015-20 cycle. The group achieved 90% of the benchmark, earning 3 of 5 points, in the 2019-20 report, but with the addition of high need majors in engineering and computer science, the numbers of completions may increase as we progress through the cycle.

*Majors included in the group are Agriculture, Natural Resources, Computer Science, Engineering, Biology, Physical Sciences, and Nursing.

4. Males (Calculation methodology based on percent awards per 100 FTE)

As with the High-Need programs, the Male population was included in the 2015-20 cycle, and achieved 95% of the benchmark, earning 3 of 5 points, in the 2019-20 report. This may provide an opportunity to develop strategies to assist male students in completion of degrees.

Populations not recommended for this cycle:

- **Geographic High Need Area** (Calculation methodology based on percent awards per 100 FTE)

- **SPARC Counties** (Calculation methodology based on percent awards per 100 FTE)

  The geographic high need area did not perform well in 2015-20 with the lowest benchmark attainment percentage of the 5 populations in 2019-20. The SPARC Counties population uses some of the same counties included in the Geographic High Need (Lauderdale, McNairy, Carroll, Decatur, Obion, and Weakley).

- **Historically Underserved Populations Graduate Degrees (Racial Minority or Low-Income)** (Calculation methodology based on percent awards per 100 FTE)
- **Veterans** (self-reported) (Calculation methodology based on percent awards per 100 FTE)
- **High-Need Programs – Graduate Degrees** (Calculation methodology based on number of awards)

  The numbers in these groups are relatively low and minor fluctuations could have a significant negative impact on the results.

- **First Generation** (Calculation methodology based on percent awards per 100 FTE)

  While we have a number of first generation graduates every semester, this group is particularly at-risk and would not represent the best option to achieve maximum funding points.