



## Custom Research FAQs

### What is a custom research project and who is it meant for?

A custom research project is tailored to the specific needs of our partner and is designed from the start just for that partner. The design process is highly collaborative, the execution handled by a dedicated analyst, and outcome formats tailored to the partner's needs.

Custom research projects are designed for partners whose needs are not met by other National Student Clearinghouse products. They are not intended to replace or supplant other services offered by the Clearinghouse. For example, performing a standard StudentTracker match through custom research would be more costly than subscribing to StudentTracker and it would require its own contracting process as well as take longer to obtain results since the work would be queued behind current custom projects.

### How do I initiate a custom project?

Please [submit the form on our Custom Research page](#). This will start a conversation where we try to understand what you are looking for and can better inform you about what we can do to assist you.

### What will you want to know?

During that first conversation we will want to find out several things from you:

- Who are you/your organization
- What is the nature of your organization
- What kind of project brought you to the Clearinghouse
- What is the core question you want to answer and goal you want to achieve
- Which population do you want to examine
- What is your time frame
- Do you have an existing cohort or data set and, if so, where does the data come from

### How much does a custom project cost?

If you are looking for reporting at an individual level, please see our stepped-pricing scale below. You can download a list of available data elements [here](#).

If your project involves aggregation, analysis, or the like, it will require a combination of analyst hours, IT resources, and data value. The cost is variable, ranging from our minimum of \$10,000 to hundreds of thousands for truly national scale projects.

Basic Return: 1-3 Elements		Full Return: 4-12 Elements		Expanded Return: 13+ Elements			
Tier Size	Tier Cost	Tier Size	Tier Cost	Tier Size	Tier Cost	Number of Additional Elements	Total Tier Unit Cost
1 - 1,000	\$0.25	1 - 1,000	\$1.40	1 - 1,000	\$1.40	2	\$1.47
1,001 - 10,000	\$0.17	1,001 - 10,000	\$1.05	1,001 - 10,000	\$1.05	2	\$1.12
10,001 - 100,000	\$0.09	10,001 - 100,000	\$0.63	10,001 - 100,000	\$0.63	2	\$0.70
100,001 - 1,000,000	\$0.07	100,001 - 1,000,000	\$0.38	100,001 - 1,000,000	\$0.38	2	\$0.45
1,000,001+	\$0.05	1,000,001+	\$0.16	1,000,001+	\$0.16	2	\$0.23
				Additional Element	\$0.035 per additional data element		

## How does the stepped-pricing scale work?

If you are strictly requesting a match and return of a cohort you provide to us, you should use the pricing scale provided in this FAQs. Please note that this is not a sliding scale but a stepped scale, meaning each step will be assessed its tier price. Once the number of records reaches the next tier, that tier's pricing will be used for every record past the threshold number.

**Example 1:** You submit a cohort of 900 individuals. The cost is 900 x 1st tier's per record cost.

**Example 2:** You submit 13,000 individuals. The cost is:

- 1,000 x 1st tier's per record cost (with 1,000 records being the top of the 1st tier)
- + 10,000 x 2nd tier's per record cost (with 10,000 records being the top of the 2nd tier)
- + 3,000 x 3rd tier's per record cost

Using the pricing for the Basic Return option, 13,000 records submitted for matching would cost \$2,220:

- 1,000 x \$0.25 (1st tier)
- + 9,000 x \$0.17 (2nd tier)
- + 3,000 x \$0.09 (3rd tier)

## How long does a custom project take?

All custom research projects require a minimum of one week and are timed from the moment the project starts. Many projects can be finished within 1-2 months, although very large and/or complex projects can require several months to complete. It's important to note that because the Custom Research team tends to run a full schedule, it is not uncommon for it to take 1-2 months before a new project can be started.

## Where does your data come from?

The data maintained by the Clearinghouse comes predominately from postsecondary institutions across the United States. The Clearinghouse holds data covering approximately 97% of all postsecondary institutions in the country.<sup>1</sup>

Additionally, some data for aggregate reporting is available from the graduation records of participating high schools and school systems around the country. The graduation status of approximately 80% of high schools graduates have been reported to the Clearinghouse for analysis.<sup>1</sup>

## Can you provide me with a list of every person who attended "X" school in "Y" year?

We cannot provide individual level data to third parties without the explicit permission of the data owner.

## Why are some elements designated as low reporting or narrow collection?

The Clearinghouse collects data from a wide variety of postsecondary institutions via a number of channels. Some of these channels include a significant number of optional data elements. As a result, the response rate varies by element and, in some cases, may be lower than preferred for your request. If so, we will reach out to you to discuss the element and its usefulness to your project. You can download a list of available data elements [here](#).

## How do you size populations for a project?

Typically, our projects are conducted at the following size scales:

- Individuals
- Individual institutions
- Groupings of institutions
- Metro areas
- Regions
- States
- Nationwide

These are the most common populations, but we may be able to accommodate your needs should they fall outside of the above categories.

<sup>1</sup> Coverage statistics are as of the publication date of this FAQs.