

Network Member Application Content Guide

Thank you for your interest in joining the First Scholars Network!

Getting Started

The Readiness and Progress Audit is a diagnostic tool that collects data on the ways your institution serves first-generation students and is utilized throughout the First Scholars Network experience to collect longitudinal progress data to better learn how your institution is working to strengthen and scale institutional infrastructure and resources for first-generation students.

As part of a comprehensive application process to join the First Scholars Network, the Readiness and Progress Audit asks you to share institutional data, detail campus-wide efforts to support first-generation students, and demonstrate institutional buy-in from leadership.

IMPORTANT: We recommend that you take the survey in one sitting. Please review this guide before starting the application.

Application Content

Complete the application to the best of your ability but please understand that **it is not a requirement for your institution to be actively pursuing each area** to be considered for selection. We look forward to learning more about the great efforts you and your colleagues are leading!

The list provided here is not comprehensive, but is meant to guide application completion.

Eligibility

In order to be considered, **institutions must be a NASPA institutional member.**

Institutional Membership: If you are unsure of your institution's membership status, you may consider asking your institution's Vice President for Student Affairs or another senior leader from your institution. It is often the executive assistant to the VPSA who maintains this information. Please reach out to firstscholars@naspa.org if you cannot locate the information internally.

Institutional Characteristics

- Type (i.e. Public, 4-year, Private, 2-year)
- Characteristics that describe your institution (i.e. Minority-Serving institution, Hispanic-Serving Institution, etc.)
- NASPA Region

Leadership Team

- **Primary contacts:** Two currently employed faculty and/or staff who will serve on your institution's leadership team for this initiative. They guide the day-to-day work and participate in all aspects of the First Scholars Network experience. At least one must have an individual NASPA membership profile;
- **Cabinet-level leader:** This representative typically has oversight and management of first-generation student initiatives on campus, including financial responsibility, decision-making authority, and is a conduit to, and responsible for maintaining communication with institutional leadership;
- **Institution's President or Chancellor:** the most senior institutional leader with final decision-making authority. The president or chancellor will champion the institutional support of first-generation student success, and will be involved in the First Scholars Network experience.

Institutional Data Points

- Institutional definition for a first-generation undergraduate student
- Total undergraduate student enrollment (July 1-June 30, as reported to IPEDS)
- Percentage of enrolled undergraduate students who are first-generation
- Total graduate student enrollment (July 1-June 30, as reported to IPEDS)
- Percentage of enrolled graduate students who are first-generation
- Institutional definition of a first-generation graduate or professional school student
- An ability to analyze intersecting identities within the first-generation population
- Self-identification opportunities for first-generation students
- Needs assessment options for both undergraduate and graduate first-generation students
- Demonstrating a return on investment for first-generation students

Programs and Services, and Cross-Campus Collaboration

- Overall first-generation perception, awareness, and programming engagement
- Identified institutional leadership for first-generation efforts
- Steering committee perception and roles (if applicable)

- Three direct examples of how your institution is directly serving first-generation students through programs and services
- Institutional sustainability for first-generation efforts
- Institutional support for scaling first-generation efforts
- Federal TRIO programs at your institution

Institutional communications support and engagement opportunities for first-generation students and their families

- Types of communication available
- Institutional websites that exist devoted to providing information to first-generation students and their family systems (can include social media page, handles, and relevant hashtags)
- Steps your institution has taken to recognize, celebrate, and elevate first-generation students
- Institutional leadership, faculty, and staff connections
- Alumni engagement opportunities

Essay Questions

What is your institution hoping to achieve by joining the First Scholars Network?

Is there a student outcomes metric your institution is hoping to improve through advancing first-generation efforts? *(for example, closing a 10% completion gap between first-generation and continuing-generation students or improving first-to-second year persistence for first-generation students by 3%)*

What challenges or barriers may prevent this success? How do you anticipate overcoming these challenges or barriers? *(Please know that sharing the challenges or barriers will have no influence on the selection process)*

Is there any additional information you would like to share with us?