

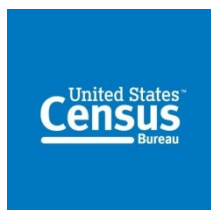
# **ACS RESEARCH & EVALUATION ANALYSIS PLAN**

**Field Test on Revised and New Definition of  
College/University Student Housing  
RS16-2-0199**

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**Research & Evaluation Analysis Plan (REAP) Template Revision Log**

*The Author should update this log with their revision history*

<b>Version No.</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Revision Description</b>	<b>Author</b>
0.1	2/2/2017	Initial Draft	ACSO GQ
0.2	2/9/2017	Second Draft	ACSO GQ
	2/10/2017	Final	ACSO GQ

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## 1. Introduction

In both the Decennial Census and the American Community Survey (ACS), people are counted using either the housing unit (HU) or the group quarters (GQ) method. The choice of method affects the enumeration approach, data collected, population estimates, and subsequent sampling for later surveys. In the HU method, one form goes to a housing unit, and that form collects information on everyone in that unit, including their relationships to each other. In the GQ Paper and Pencil Interviewing (PAPI) method, each individual completes the questionnaire only about himself or herself.

In the past, most college/university student housing has been counted using the GQ method. The ACS Field Representatives (FRs) collect information about the college/university student housing facility from the GQ Contact Person. This person provides the FR with a list of students living in the facility. Students in residence halls and fraternity or sorority houses are generally asked to fill out their own individual forms. However, the types of places where students live are changing. There are increasingly more unique arrangements, including apartments and apartment-style housing, especially near or off campus. Assignment of this apartment-style housing where students live to either the HU or GQ enumeration method is based on whether the housing fits the GQ definition<sup>1</sup> for college/university student housing.

Since the 2010 Census, the Census Bureau's GQ Working Group has continued to tackle many issues related to collecting data at GQ facilities. One of the most challenging GQ facilities to define has been college/university student housing. In September 2014, the GQ Working Group created a team to address issues that the FRs were experiencing regarding the classification of college/university student housing. Specifically, apartment-style student housing. The FRs asked for clearer instructions or more examples in the FR manual regarding the classification of this GQ type. The team approached the Census Bureau's Center for Survey Measurement (CSM) to research the suitability of the current definition and to make recommendations.

The CSM conducted 12 interviews with college/university administrators and with private owners of student housing across the United States. These expert interviews were very useful in helping the team revise the definition for College/University Student Housing to address the issue of apartment-style housing that are both on and off campus and create a new student housing definition that addresses the issue with privately-owned student housing. The revised and new definitions will provide clarity for the field staff, respondents, and stakeholders who have been asking for clarity given the changes in student housing. The current and revised definitions are as follows:

The current definition for college/university student housing includes both university-owned and privately-owned student housing. However, 'privately owned student housing is quickly becoming an integral sector in real estate...' <sup>2</sup> and the comfort and amenities offered mirror that of high-end apartment

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<sup>1</sup> College/University Student Housing:

Includes residence halls and dormitories, which house college and university students in a group living arrangement. These facilities are owned, leased, or managed either by a college, university, or seminary, or by a private entity or organization. Fraternity and sorority housing recognized by the college or university are included as college student housing.

Students attending the U.S. Naval Academy, the U.S. Military Academy (West Point), the U.S. Coast Guard Academy, and the U.S. Air Force Academy are counted in military group quarters.

<sup>2</sup><http://www.cnbc.com/2016/09/01/student-housing-ups-the-ante-on-amenities.html>

buildings. Lest one key difference, in apartment-style student housing, renters typically lease by the bed, not by the unit. Therefore, the current definition for college/university student housing has been divided into two unique GQ type codes: GQ Type 501 University Student Housing (college/university owned/leased/managed) and GQ Type 502 College/University Student Housing (privately owned/leased/managed). Below is the current definition and the proposed definitions:

**Current Definition:**

**GQ type 501 -- College/University Student Housing:** Includes residence halls and dormitories, which house college and university students in a group living arrangement. These facilities are owned, leased, or managed either by a college, university, or seminary, or by a private entity or organization. Fraternity and sorority housing recognized by the college or university are included as college student housing.

Students attending the U.S. Naval Academy, the U.S. Military Academy (West Point), the U.S. Coast Guard Academy, and the U.S. Air Force Academy are counted in military group quarters.

**Revised Definition:**

**GQ type 501 -- College/University Student Housing (college/university owned/leased/managed):** College/university student housing includes residence halls, and other buildings, including apartment-style student housing, designed primarily to house college and university students in a group living arrangement either on or off campus. These facilities are owned, leased, or managed either by a college, university, or seminary, and fraternity and sorority housing recognized by the college or university are included as college student housing.

Students attending the U.S. Naval Academy, the U.S. Military Academy (West Point), the U.S. Coast Guard Academy, and the U.S. Air Force Academy are counted in military group quarters.

**New Definition:**

**GQ type 502 -- College/University Student Housing (privately owned/leased/managed):** College/University student housing includes privately-owned, leased, or managed buildings designed primarily to house college and university students in a group living arrangement either on or off campus. This category includes apartment-style student housing. Residents typically enter into single-liability leases (“by the bed”).

## 2. Research Questions and Methodology

As colleges and universities change to keep pace with students, they are increasingly offering different types of living arrangements, including apartment-style living in residence halls and dormitories. With this in mind, it is important to differentiate between residence hall and dormitory apartment-style living arrangements (group quarters) and apartments where the occupants are independent of one another (housing units). Housing units, are places where occupants live independently from other occupants in the living quarters and, thus, do not live in group living arrangements.

In order for apartment-style living arrangements to be deemed or classified as college/university student housing (i.e. a GQ), occupants must be living in residence halls and dormitories that have group living arrangements. Group living arrangements are generally situations where many residents share rooms, bathrooms and common areas. Apartment-style living in residence halls and dormitories on and off college/university campuses may be one type of group living arrangement where students commonly share the living room, bathroom, dining room, and kitchen. Distinguishing between a group quarters and housing unit has proven increasingly difficult for FRs in recent survey years. Hence, the need to explore ways to revise the current definition to meet the reality of what FRs are experiencing in the field.

Numerous intradivisional meetings were held to identify the varying characteristics of college/university student housing to determine whether such housing should be placed in the GQ or HU universe. It was decided to present the revised and new definitions for college/university student housing to the contact person at a sample of college/university student housing facilities. It is hypothesized that the introduction of the revised definition will show the need for the new definition of college/university student housing (privately-owned/managed).

The specific research questions developed for this test are based on discussions held by the GQ Definitions Working Group. We will attempt to address these five questions:

1. Did the number and type of GQ type changes change when the new definitions for GQ types 501 and 502 were used?
2. How often do GQ to HU conversions represent privately owned student housing?
3. For cases where the GQ was converted to a HU, would the FR have done something different if they had the new GQ type 502 available to them?
4. Did the updated definitions help the FR and GQ Contact Person classify the facility? Are any changes needed?
5. How often did the FR and Contact Person classification match with a HQ assessment of the facility based on the debriefing questions?

A field test of the new college/university student housing definition will be carried out during the February, March, and April 2017 interview panels. In each panel, 40 GQs will be selected to be interviewed about the new and revised definitions (see Section 3 below) from four different Regional Offices (Atlanta, Los Angeles, Philadelphia, and New York); bringing the total to 120 GQs interviewed over the three-month period. The GQs were selected because their website have a management company other than the school it is associated with, their names contain the word apartment, or they are not attached to the schools they are associated with. The GQ contact person will be shown the revised (GQ type 501) and new (GQ type 502) definitions and asked to classify the facility. The addition of GQ type 502 will be evaluated using a one-group, post-test only, quasi-experimental design (Shadish, Cook, & Campbell, 2002). We are using a design with only one treatment and post-test because there was no

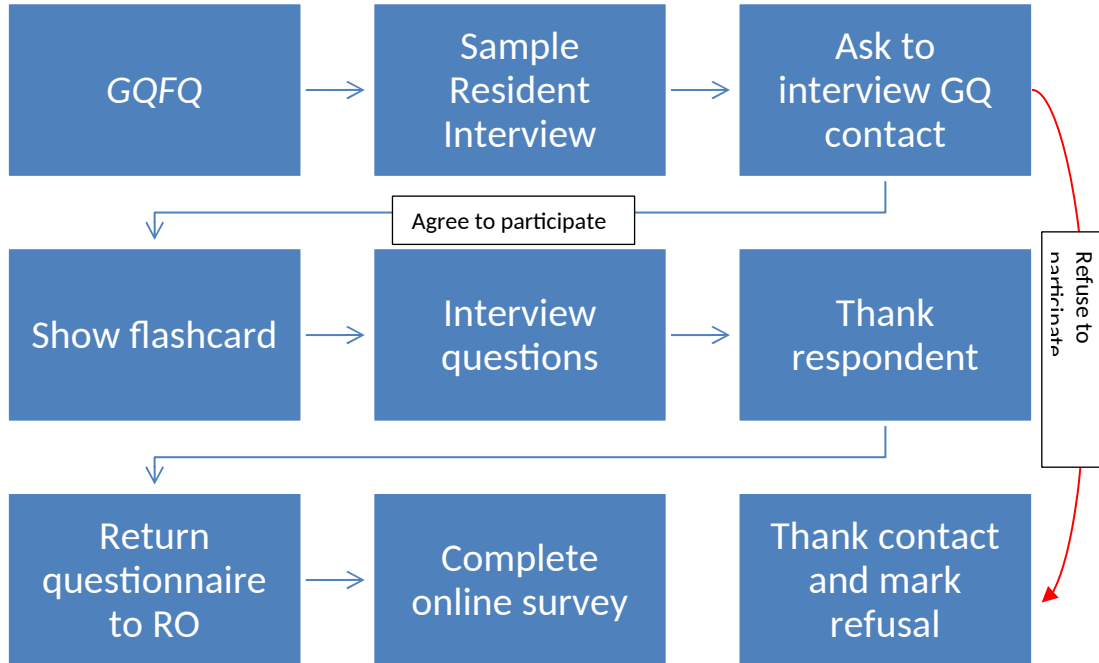
comparable pretest or control group. The data collected from these interviews will be used to determine whether or not the GQ will be classified as expected due to the new definitions by the frequency and the accuracy of their selections. In addition, FRs will complete a four question survey to provide quantitative and qualitative feedback on their experience using the new materials and definitions. The research questions will be addressed using the data collected at the sample GQs and by analyzing the feedback from the FRs.

### 3. Data Collection Procedures

FRs will first conduct the GQ-level interview using normal procedures. After the GQ-level interview is completed, the FR will ask the contact person if they would be willing to help the Census Bureau improve the current definition for college/university student housing by participating in a brief interview. The FR will explain to the contact person that the interview will last approximately 10 minutes and state the importance of classifying college/university student housing correctly. For instance, city planners often use Census data in planning building/facility needs, and also funding. If the contact person agrees to the interview, the FR will:

- 1) Give the contact person a flashcard containing the new and revised definitions.
- 2) Ask the questions as worded on the debriefing form, following the skip patterns.
- 3) At the end of the interview, thank the respondent.
- 4) Return the questionnaire to the Regional Office via the pre-addressed envelope within three business days of the interview.
- 5) Complete the FR On-line Debriefing survey. The FR debriefing survey consists of four short questions:
  - A five-point rating scale asking about the ease of explaining the definition of the two GQ types,
  - Another five-point rating scale asking about the degree of difficulty for comprehension by the contact person,
  - An open-ended question asking for detailed description of additional problems, and
  - A question asking if the GQ is on or off campus.

If the contact person declines the interview, the FR will thank the contact person, mark refusal on the Census Use Only section of the ACS-GQ Contact Person Debriefing Form, and ask the contact person the reason for declining the interview. See below for the process graph.



#### 4. Potential Actions

We anticipate that adding GQ type 502, privately-owned student housing, as a college housing definition will decrease the likelihood of confusion for the respondents when identifying their GQ. If the field test supports our expectations, the results will provide support for efforts to include the new category moving forward for the ACS and the 2020 Census.

## 5. Major Schedule Tasks

Tasks (minimum required)	Planned Start (mm/dd/yy)	Planned Completion (mm/dd/yy)	To Be Tracked in MAS (Y/N)?
Author drafts REAP, obtains CR feedback, updates and distributes Final REAP	12/2/16	2/10/2017	Y
College Housing – Test (Production)	2/1/17	5/9/17	Y
PM/Author conducts research activities	5/10/17	6/9/17	Y
Author drafts initial report, obtains CR feedback, updates and obtains final report sign off by the CRs and Division Chief*	6/12/17	8/2/17	Y
Author develops presentation and conducts briefing to R&E WG**	8/3/17	8/16/17	Y
Author provides recommendation	8/31/2017	8/31/2017	Y

\* If there are ACS cost data reflected in the report, the author must obtain sign off by ACSO for the included cost data.

\*\* Presentation is done after the first round of the report review. The R&E Advisory Group will be invited to the R&E Work Group meeting for the briefing.

## 6. Project Oversight

This is a Tier 4 project that will be overseen by the ADC.

## 7. References

- a. Work Request ID: RS16-2-0199
- b. Holzberg, Jessica L. (2015). Findings and Recommendations from Group Quarters (GQ) Student Housing Qualitative Interviews. (Internal Report)
- c. Morten, Jeremy; Flanigan, Tim; and Park, Hyunjoo (2006). Assessment of Group Quarters Definitions and Classifications, Task 2.1 Final Report. (RTI Project Number: 0209182.006)
- d. Shadish; Cook; Cambell (2002). Experimental and Quasi-Experimental Designs for Generalized Causal Inference. Boston: Houghton Mifflin. ISBN 0-395-61556-9.

**8. Research & Evaluation Analysis Plan Approvals:**

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Approval Date

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Author: Nicole Butler, ACSO

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**Critical Reviewers**

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Approval Date

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Critical Reviewer: David Raglin, ACSO

Approval Date

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Approval Date

**Project Management**

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Approval Date

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Division Authority (ACSO) : Jennifer Reichert

Approval Date

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