

**Attention: Information No Longer Current
(Alert archived November 2011)**

Alert #14

Title: Update on Federal Race and Ethnicity Reporting Changes

Prepared: July 2002

Type: Pending regulation

Summary

In October 1997 the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) issued new standards for federal data collection of race and ethnicity. Since that time, federal agencies have been working to develop standards for aggregate reporting, such as for IPEDS Completions, Enrollment, Graduation Rate, and Staff surveys. Although various proposals have been offered, no decision has been made. Furthermore, a target date for such a decision has not been announced. Until it is, institutions should not take any further actions.

Current Status

The new federal guidelines will allow students and employees to indicate more than one racial category, using the following five categories as a minimum (more detail will be allowed within each category): American Indian or Alaska Native, Asian, Black or African American, Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander, and White. The American Indian or Alaska Native category has been changed to include individuals from South American and Central American countries. In addition, students and employees will choose one ethnicity using the following two categories as a minimum: "Hispanic or Latino" and "Not Hispanic or Latino." "Multiracial" or "Multiethnic" will not be acceptable response categories. The aggregate reporting requirements for individuals who choose more than one race have not been determined./p>

Implications for Institutions

Institutions should not make any further changes at this time in forms, databases, or computer programs until a final decision has been made. After the collection and reporting processes have been finalized by the federal government, collection instruments (e.g., for admissions, registration, and employees) will need to be updated, and students and employees may need to be re-surveyed. Changes will be needed in databases (allowing for all possible combinations of race and ethnicity categories), and computer programs used to generate reports will need to be updated. In addition, a mechanism for retaining "old" codes should be created for internal crosswalk purposes and for Graduation Rate Survey (GRS) cohorts that have matriculated but

**Attention: Information No Longer Current
(Alert archived November 2011)**

not yet reached 150% of normal time to award. Coordination among a number of offices (e.g., Admissions, Registrar, Human Resources, Information Technology, and Institutional Research) will be necessary.

Timeline

October 1997 - OMB Federal Register Notice on Revisions to the Standards for the Classification of Federal Data on Race and Ethnicity.

Unknown - The date for a final decision on guidelines for IPEDS reporting has not been determined.

Additional Resources

- [Alert #6](#), New Federal Standards for Racial and Ethnic Data Collection and Reporting (April 1998)
- OMB's Revisions to the Standards for the Classification of Federal Data on Race and Ethnicity: <http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/fedreg/ombdir15.html>

Author: Mary Sapp, Carol Fuller

Coordinated by the Higher Education Data Policy Committee. All opinions expressed herein do not necessarily reflect the official position of the Association for Institutional Research.