

**Attention: Information No Longer Current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

Alert #25

Title: 2005 Revision of the Carnegie Classification

Prepared: September, 2004

Type: Informational

Summary

The Carnegie Classification of Institutions of Higher Education, first published in 1973 and last revised in 2000, is undergoing a major revision. The new classification system will be released in 2005. Changes include revisions to the familiar classification scheme, as well as introducing new classification schemes.

Current Status

The Carnegie Foundation has issued a preliminary outline of the planned changes to its classification system. A summary appears below, and more details are available on the Carnegie Classification Web pages (<http://www.carnegiefoundation.org/classification/future.htm>).

The universe of institutions will be defined as degree-granting, Title-IV eligible institutions as represented in the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) data collection. To the extent possible, multi-campus institutions or systems will be classified separately if listed separately in IPEDS.

The IPEDS will be the primary data source, supplemented by data from the National Science Foundation (NSF), The College Board, and the Common Data Set Exchange (<http://www.highered.org/cdsx>), using the most current data available. The Carnegie Foundation will also gather data directly from institutions that elect to participate in the development of new measures.

An explicit measure of research activity will be restored to the traditional classification framework, but it will take the form of an index based on multiple data sources. This revision will also introduce subcategories for two-year colleges, which in the past constituted a single category.

There will also be several new classifications. Most will be "comprehensive" classifications, meaning all eligible institutions will be included. Two of these new comprehensive schemes

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focus on instructional programs (one for undergraduate and one for graduate); two focus on the student profile; and one focuses on size and setting. Thus there will be six independent comprehensive classification schemes, and each institution will have six classifications. The operative metaphor is lenses: look through one lens, and certain similarities are revealed; changing lenses reveals other commonalities and differences.

There will also be two "elective" classification schemes, which will be voluntary. The intent of the elective schemes is to identify certain institutional commitments that are not represented in the national data, and to develop new approaches to documenting this work. One elective scheme focuses on service, outreach, and community engagement. The other identifies various institutional efforts to assess and improve undergraduate teaching and learning. This work will be developmental in nature and is expected to continue beyond 2005. Although participation will be open to all institutions, expressions of special interest in this work can be submitted by e-mail to classification@carnegiefoundation.org by December 31, 2004 (please specify "Elective classification" in the subject line).

These preliminary plans are subject to change, in response to testing and feedback from the higher education community.

The Carnegie Classification Web site will also feature an interactive tool that will allow users to examine the intersections of the multiple classifications, enabling more flexible and sophisticated identification of commonalities and differences among institutions.

To stay informed about new developments, interested parties can join the Classification mailing list (http://www.carnegiefoundation.org/classification/classification_mailing-list.htm). Feedback is welcome. Send comments and suggestions to classification@carnegiefoundation.org. Please specify "2005 feedback" in the subject line, and be sure to include your name, title, and affiliation in the body of your message.

Implications for Institutions

The Carnegie Classification is widely used by researchers, institutional personnel, and others to identify groups of roughly comparable institutions. Although it is not a ranking system, many institutions are concerned about how they are identified in the Classification and which institutions are identified as their peers.

The Classification is also used for other purposes. For example, *U.S. News and World Report* bases its rankings universe and comparison groups on selected categories of the Carnegie Classification. (It is not known whether they will continue to do so after the 2005 revision.)

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Accurate, timely, and complete responses to IPEDS and other data collections are essential. Missing data or bad data may cause an institution to be excluded, misclassified, or assigned to an "unclassifiable" category on one or more classification schemes.

Timeline (subject to change)

April 2004 -- A letter describing the upcoming changes was sent to college and university presidents. See <http://www.carnegiefoundation.org/Classification/downloads.htm>.

June 2004 -- A presentation was made to the Washington Higher Education Secretariat. See <http://www.carnegiefoundation.org/Classification/downloads.htm>.

November 2004 -- Proposed categories and definitions will be released for the comprehensive classifications. These will be refined during the next several months in response to feedback and testing.

Late fall 2004 -- Plans for the elective schemes will be finalized.

Early summer 2005 -- Preliminary versions of the new classification schemes will be released.

Fall 2005 -- Final versions of the new classifications will be released.

Additional Resources

Classification home page: <http://www.carnegiefoundation.org/classification>

Classification Downloads: <http://www.carnegiefoundation.org/Classification/downloads.htm>

Classification Future Plans: <http://www.carnegiefoundation.org/classification/future.htm>

Classification Mailing List signup:
http://www.carnegiefoundation.org/classification/classification_mailing-list.htm

Common Data Set Exchange: <http://www.highered.org/cdsx>

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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.

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