

# Want to Become an IPEDS Educator?

Check out advice from seasoned IPEDS Educators on how to position yourself for success as a potential IPEDS Educator. Visit [airweb.org/IPEDSEducator](http://airweb.org/IPEDSEducator) for more information.

## IPEDS Survey Content Knowledge

- Become familiar with all IPEDS surveys and survey cycles and know where the data come from on your campus. In addition, know the business practices on your campus, how the surveys relate to one another, and the importance of a cohort.
- Stay current on changes to IPEDS reporting requirements, ideally as a keyholder or state/system coordinator. Not all IPEDS Educators are current keyholders or state/system coordinators, however, most that aren't currently in one of these roles have been in the past. Additionally, they often supervise or serve as resources and/or mentors to the current keyholder at their institution.
- Be a keyholder or state/system coordinator or help fill out several of the IPEDS surveys. Being an IPEDS Educator is not a task for a new IPEDS keyholder or state/system coordinator. It takes several years or more to become familiar with institutional issues that occur with different IPEDS surveys.
- Learn how survey changes might impact your institution, particularly sectors other than your own (e.g., program reporters, community colleges, and state systems).
- Read through the [TRP Reports/Summaries](#), as they often contain a lot of information that is useful to understanding the IPEDS surveys and potential changes to the surveys.
- Join the [IPEDS Knowledge Exchange](#) and sign up for the [This Week in IPEDS](#) email newsletter.
- Read the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) IPEDS packages that are made publicly available and weigh in/comment during the open comment periods. Announcements regarding packages and open comment periods can be found in [This Week in IPEDS](#).
- Be patient. Thorough knowledge of IPEDS is gained over a period of years.

## IPEDS Tools Content Knowledge

- Develop some level of mastery of the tools found on the IPEDS [Use the Data](#) page for conducting benchmarking and trend analysis on what you feel is the most valuable data collected.
- Challenge yourself to become more familiar with using IPEDS data that are unfamiliar to you. Many people get more experience with IPEDS data by understanding and using data from other sectors. For example, if you primarily work in four-year institutions, take some time to analyze two-year institutions and how the data is similar/different (e.g., graduation rates).

## Presentation Skills

- Enhance your presentation skills by presenting at conferences whenever possible. Research techniques for improving your presentation skills and apply them. Excellent presentation skills are crucial to becoming a successful IPEDS Educator.

- Take advantage of opportunities to present or co-present at AIR events and AIR affiliated organization events about using IPEDS data, overcoming challenges with reporting, or other issues of interest.
- Storytelling is important. Take opportunities to work with IPEDS data submissions, particularly the challenging ones, and develop a library of experiences. Highlight your success stories, including the challenges and how you overcame them. Sharing these stories as an IPEDS Educator makes you authentic and relatable to the participants who attend workshops.
- A good candidate should also have the ability to transmit their knowledge to a wide audience that includes both those familiar with IPEDS and those who are not, and be able to show experience in presentation and/or teaching. IPEDS Educators should also have the ability to meet students where they are and provide a level of both information and reassurance to those who can be overwhelmed by a complex and unfamiliar task.
- Prior teaching experience helps, since those who have taught typically have the ability to present concepts in new or innovative ways.
- Given that IPEDS Educators teach in teams (lead instructors and assistant instructors), being a demonstrated team player is vital.

## Personal Brand

- Take opportunities outside of regular employment to build a personal brand. For example, Blog about higher education or join a [Meet Up Group](#) for a similar profession.
- Consider serving on a committee in an organization outside of your campus/institution. This provides an opportunity to practice working with people you don't interact with on a daily basis, as well as honing skills in collaboration, diplomacy, and leading/following.

## Additional Advice

- The best professional development advice when working with IPEDS is to ask yourself "What are you passionate about in higher education?" Whatever the answer, align that with IPEDS data and make it your goal to be the subject matter expert on that topic for IPEDS. This doesn't happen overnight. However, as opportunities present themselves you can leverage your developed skill set while enjoying it at the same time.
- A strong IPEDS Educator is someone who can show that they have a depth of knowledge about reporting in their sector of postsecondary education. Even better is a depth of knowledge from more than one sector. The best type of experience is to show that you understand extra institutional or extra sector variation in how data are defined and used for reporting.