

**Attention: Information No Longer Current
(Alert archived January 2013)**

Alert #21 – Update 5

Title: NCES Announces Final Plan for New IPEDS Categories and Definitions for Classification of Masters, Doctor's and First-Professional Degree Programs for Reporting Enrollment and Completions

Prepared: December 1, 2006

Type: Informational - New Reporting Requirements

Summary

The National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) has announced revised reporting requirements for first-professional degree programs (<http://nces.ed.gov/ipeds/trp15final.asp>). Institutions will report Ph.D. and other research doctor's degrees separately from professional practice doctor's degrees. All master's degrees will be reported in a single category.

The NCES proposes to implement the new definitions and categories in the institutional characteristics and enrollment collections beginning in 2008-09, and in the completions collection beginning in 2009-10 (reporting on awards granted between July 1, 2008, and June 30, 2009). The new reporting requirements will be optional in the first collection year and mandatory thereafter. Questions regarding the changes may be addressed to Elise Miller, IPEDS Program Director, at Elise.Miller@ed.gov. Please include the following e-mail

Current Status

New Categories and Definitions Based on the Technical Review Panel (TRP) recommendations and subsequent comments received:

Definitions of proposed categories:

both pre-professional and professional preparation, equals at least six full-time equivalent academic years.

1. The first-professional degree category will be eliminated.
2. All master's degrees will be reported in a single master's degree award level.

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3. Doctor's degrees will be collected in three categories: research/scholarship, professional practice, and other, as defined below:

Doctor's degree - research/scholarship: A Ph.D. or other doctor's degree that requires advanced work beyond the master's level, including the preparation and defense of a dissertation based on original research, or the planning and execution of an original project demonstrating substantial artistic or scholarly achievement. Some examples of this type of degree may include Ed.D., D.M.A., D.B.A., D.Sc., D.A., or D.M., and others, as designated by the awarding institution.

Doctor's degree - professional practice: A doctor's degree that is conferred upon completion of a program providing the knowledge and skills for the recognition, credential, or license required for professional practice. The degree is awarded after a period of study such that the total time to the degree, including both pre-professional and professional preparation, equals at least six full-time equivalent academic years. Some of these degrees were formerly classified as "first-professional" and may include: Chiropractic (D.C. or D.C.M.); Dentistry (D.D.S. or D.M.D.); Law (L.L.B. or J.D.); Medicine (M.D.); Optometry (O.D.); Osteopathic Medicine (D.O); Pharmacy (Pharm.D.); Podiatry (D.P.M., Pod.D., D.P.); or Veterinary Medicine (D.V.M.), and others, as designated by the awarding institution.

Doctor's degree - other: A doctor's degree that does not meet the definition of a doctor's degree - research/scholarship or a doctor's degree - professional practice.

For any data collections prior to the implementation date for the new categories and definitions, institutions should continue to report data on first-professional degree programs under the existing definition.

Implications for Institutions

All institutions that award doctoral degrees will be required to make changes in program classifications and report each program under the appropriate category of doctoral award. Institutions that award first-professional degrees and certificates will be required to change those classifications and identify the appropriate reporting category for each program. It is up to each institution to decide how its degrees should be classified, therefore, it is possible that degrees with the same designation (e.g. Ed.D.) could be classified differently by different institutions.

These requirements may necessitate making changes in institutional data systems and report formats. Institutions that award first-professional degrees may also want to take steps internally

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to minimize the potential for loss of trend data. There may also be a loss of national or peer institution trend data.

With the elimination of the first-professional level, reporting guidelines will need to be revised. Instructions will be needed on how to report students currently categorized as first-professional who are in programs that do not require an undergraduate degree. For example, in the future, should they be reported as undergraduate students or as graduate students, or as undergraduates for a certain period and then as graduate students, and, if the latter, how/when to change the level).

Timeline

April 2004 - NCES posted a notice seeking comments on first-professional degree reporting in IPEDS (<http://nces.ed.gov/ipeds/trp7.asp>).

July 2005 - NCES posted a notice seeking additional comments on first-professional degree reporting in IPEDS (<http://nces.ed.gov/ipeds/trp7update.asp>).

Fall 2005 - TRP meeting to discuss first-professional degree reporting in IPEDS.

February, 2006 - NCES posted a notice seeking comments on first-professional degree reporting in IPEDS (<http://nces.ed.gov/ipeds/TRP15a.asp>).

August 25, 2006 - NCES deadline for final comment to be submitted to Elise Miller, IPEDS Program Director, at Elise.Miller@ed.gov.

October 31, 2006 - NCES Final Plan for New Categories and Definitions for Classification of First-professional Enrollment and Degree Reporting in IPEDS
<http://nces.ed.gov/ipeds/trp15fu.asp>

Fall 2008 - NCES begins implementation of the new reporting requirements in 2008-09 (institutional characteristics and enrollment) and 2009-10 (completions). As with all changes to IPEDS, the first collection year will be optional; in the second year, use of the new definition will be mandatory.

Additional Resources

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The NCES notice of the new IPEDS categories and definitions for reporting enrollment and completions in master's and doctor's degree programs is available at:

<http://nces.ed.gov/ipeds/trp15fu.asp>

Comprehensive information about IPEDS is available at: <http://nces.ed.gov/ipeds>.

Related AIR Alerts

[AIR Alert # 21](#): NCES Requests Comments Regarding Proposed IPEDS Changes (May 2004).

[AIR Alert # 21 Update 1](#): Proposals and Plans for IPEDS Changes (October 2004)

[AIR Alert # 21 Update 2](#): NCES Requests Additional Comments Regarding First-Professional Enrollment and Degree Reporting in IPEDS

[AIR Alert # 21 Update 3](#): NCES Requests Additional Comments Regarding First-Professional Enrollment and Degree Reporting in IPEDS

[AIR Alert # 21 Update 4](#): NCES Requests Additional Comments Regarding First-Professional Enrollment and Degree Reporting in IPEDS

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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.