Academic Libraries (AL)
Libraries Sharing Resources
Tutorial Script
2024-25 Data Collection

This tutorial discusses how to report data for the Academic Libraries IPEDS survey component for institutions sharing all or partial resources.

A library consortium is any local, statewide, regional, or interstate cooperative association of libraries that provides for the systematic and effective coordination of the resources of schools, public, academic, and special libraries and information centers, for improving services to the clientele of such libraries. While many libraries that share resources belong to a library consortium, some do not. The purpose of library consortia can include:

- Cost reduction through group purchasing
- Professional development for library staff
- Resource sharing (content, technology, expertise, and funding)
- Networking, information sharing, mass communication
- Building shared integrated library management and cataloging systems.

A library consortium can be multitype, almost any type of library can participate (e.g., public libraries). For IPEDS purposes, academic libraries that share an administrative unit are NOT considered a consortium (see definition of branch and independent libraries). The following guidance applies to all libraries sharing resources.

For libraries sharing all resources, two different types of reporting relationships may be established, a parent/child relationship or a main/branch library relationship. In both types of reporting relationships, the main or central library will report collections and expenditures information for itself and the branch libraries combined. However, parent/child relationships can only be established for main and branch libraries located at different institutions (with different IPEDS Unit IDs).

Main branch library relationships are established for libraries on campuses with the same IPEDS unit IDs.

Libraries sharing partial resources must report their own collections and expenditures data. For example, several libraries may pool money to purchase a collection of e-books that all the institutions will have access to. In this case, each institution will report the number of e-book units that it has access to as part of its collection. Even though it may seem like the collection is overstated, IPEDS has decided that this method of reporting is crucial for determining accurate total access counts rather than just collection counts.

For more information on the material presented in this tutorial, please contact the IPEDS Help Desk.