

Completions (C) Survey Component

Completions vs Completers

Tutorial Script

2024-25 Data Collection

This tutorial discusses the reporting of completions and completers data to IPEDS. The IPEDS Completions survey component collects data on the number of awards conferred by postsecondary institutions, called completions, and on the number of students who earned these awards, called completers. The reference period for reporting data throughout the Completions survey is the 12-month time period beginning July 1st of the previous calendar year and ending June 30th of the current calendar year.

A postsecondary award is a certificate, diploma, or degree that recognizes the completion of a program of study at a postsecondary education institution. Only credit awards conferred as the result of the completion of an academic or occupational/vocational program of study should be reported to IPEDS. The instructional activity for these programs can be measured in clock hours, credit hours, or some other unit of measurement. Do not report non-credit awards, such as informal certificates of completion or merit, or awards conferred for transfer-prep, basic skills, or personal improvement programs. Data on students who complete these awards should not be reported in the IPEDS Completions survey.

One of the main differences between reporting data on completions and reporting data on completers relates to the award levels for each type of reporting. A few of the twelve award levels associated with reporting data on completions (e.g., number of awards) have been combined to form a total of eight award levels associated with reporting data on completers (e.g., number of students).

Specifically,

- Five levels are the same for reporting completions and completers data: awards of less than 300 clock hours, 9 semester or trimester credit hours, or 13 quarter credit hours; awards of 300-899 clock hours, 9-29 semester or trimester credit hours, or 13-44 quarter credit hours; associate's degrees; bachelor's degrees; and master's degrees.
- Postsecondary awards of at least 900 but less than 1,800 clock hours, at least 30 but less than 60 semester or trimester credit hours, or at least 45 but less than 90 quarter credit hours and postsecondary awards of at least 1,800 clock hours, 60 semester or trimester credit hours, or 90 quarter credit hours for completions are combined into one category for reporting completers.
- In addition, all three doctor's degree categories for completions are also combined into one category for completers.
- Finally, postbaccalaureate and post-master's certificates for completions are combined into one category for completers.

When reporting data on the number of completers, data providers will submit data two ways. First, data on all completers by gender and race/ethnicity will be reported. When reporting on all completers, count each student only once, regardless of how many awards he/she earned. The intent is to collect an unduplicated count of the total numbers of completers. Second, data on the number of completers will also be collected by award level and by 1) gender; 2) by race/ethnicity, and 3) by age. Each student should be counted once per level. If a student earned awards at multiple levels, count that student in each level.

When reporting award level, be sure to refer to the cross walk which you can now see on the screen. This will serve as a guide for how to report a student with multiple awards. It will also demonstrate how completions and completers award levels are connected.

For a student who receives a certificate of at least 900 but less than 1,800 clock hours, at least 30 but less than 60 semester or trimester credit hours, or at least 45 but less than 90 quarter credit hours and receives a postsecondary award of at least 1,800 clock hours, 60 semester or trimester credit hours, or 90 quarter credit hours, they would be reported in the completers by level section of the survey as having achieved a postsecondary award, certificate, or diploma of at least 900 clock hours, 30 or more semester or trimester credit hours, or 45 or more quarter credit hours.

In another example, if a student earned a master's degree and a doctor's degree, he/she should be counted once in the master's category and once in the doctor's category. A student who earned two master's degrees should be counted only once. The total number of students reported by gender must equal the total number of students reported by race/ethnicity. Each of the two previously mentioned totals must equal the total number of students reported by age.

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