

Human Resources (HR) Standard Occupational Classification (SOC) Categories Tutorial Script 2024-25 Data Collection

On behalf of the Institute for Education Sciences', IES, National Center for Education Statistics, NCES, and the Association for Institutional Research, AIR, welcome to this tutorial on the IPEDS Human Resources survey component, also called the HR Survey.

This tutorial discusses the IPEDS HR Survey occupational categories and how they relate to the Standard Occupational Classification, or SOC, System. After you complete this tutorial, you will know:

- Why SOC codes are used to classify occupations for IPEDS reporting purposes; and
- Where to find job aids to help identify the correct SOC occupational category and code to report data to IPEDS.

The U.S. Office of Management and Budget, also called OMB, requires all federal agencies that publish occupational data for statistical purposes to use SOC codes to increase data comparability across federal programs. To meet this requirement, IPEDS HR occupational categories now reflect changes to the 2018 SOC codes. Prior to the 2012-13 reporting period, many occupational categories and definitions in IPEDS remained the same for over twenty years. The IPEDS HR survey is now aligned with the 2018 SOC codes to reflect changes in the workforce over the past decade. More specifically, similar job duties, and in some cases skills, education, and/or training, are now grouped together in accordance with SOC classification principles.

For example, references to “professional” and “non-professional” groups, as well as to previous IPEDS HR Survey sections, such as Employees by Assigned Position and Fall Staff, no longer exist. Instead, data are collected based on two broad classifications disaggregated by employment status (full or part-time). The new classifications are:

- Instructional Staff, which includes the former Primarily Instruction and Instruction categories combined with research and/or public service designations; and
- Non-Instructional Staff, which includes research staff, public service staff, and all other non-instructional occupational categories.

The HR Survey component webpage lists several resources to help institutions identify and report the correct SOC codes to IPEDS. Data reporters may find the [Crosswalk from the IPEDS Human Resources \(HR\) Occupational Categories to the 2018 Standard Occupational Classification \(SOC\) System](#)

[Categories](#), [IPEDS Data Collection System](#) Browse Tool, and the [2024-25 CUPA-HR Administrators Survey Position Descriptions](#) especially helpful. These job aids show the relationship between the IPEDS HR Occupational Categories and the 2018 SOC categories and codes. Additional job aids are available on the IPEDS HR Survey component web page at <https://nces.ed.gov/ipeds/survey-components/3>.

Standard Occupational Classification (SOC) System Structure

The SOC structure includes:

- 23 major groups,
- 98 minor groups,
- 459 broad occupations, and
- 867 detailed occupations.

Most occupational data reported to IPEDS are collected at the major group level. However, IPEDS information is only collected on 22 major groups because military specific occupations are excluded.

The job aids previously referenced highlight three types of relationships or matches between IPEDS HR and SOC occupations.

First, the traditional institutional teaching, research, public service, and library staff designations, and IPEDS HR Education, Library, and Library Support occupations do not align well with the 2018 SOC codes. For example, Postsecondary Teachers 25-1000 may not be the correct SOC code because staff generally regarded by institutions as “faculty” are not only instructional staff but can be research staff and/or public service staff as well. In addition, the SOC codes for IPEDS reporting purposes may vary based on institutional characteristics such as degree-granting status. Therefore, data reporters should read the HR Survey instructions carefully and use the recommended job aids to identify the correct SOC category and code.

Second, some IPEDS HR Survey and SOC occupations such as Management Occupations 11-0000 are direct matches.

Third, and finally, some IPEDS HR occupational categories match multiple SOC categories. For example, the IPEDS category of Computer, Engineering, and Science Occupations includes three SOC occupational groups and SOC codes.

This concludes our discussion of Standard Occupational Classification (SOC) categories. You should be able to:

- Explain why SOC codes are used to classify occupations for IPEDS reporting purposes; and
- Locate job aids needed to match IPEDS HR Survey occupational categories to the correct SOC categories and codes.

If you have questions about reporting data to IPEDS or the IPEDS Data Collection System, contact the IPEDS Data Collection Help Desk at (877) 225-2568 or send an email to Help Desk staff at ipedshelp@rti.org. For assistance using IPEDS data tools, contact the IPEDS Data Use Help Desk at (866) 558-0658 or ipedstools@rti.org. The knowledgeable Help Desk staff is eager to help with data reporting and data use.

Response times may be longer near the end of the collection cycle.