

Human Resources (HR) Standard Occupational Classification (SOC) System 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.

The purpose of this tutorial is to provide an overview of the 2018 Standard Occupational Classification System. After completing this tutorial, you will be able to:

- Describe the Standard Occupational Classification System and its structure, and
- Explain where to find additional resources and job aids to help institutions report HR data to IPEDS.

The Standard Occupational Classification System, or SOC (pronounced “sock”), is designed to reflect the current occupational structure of the United States. It is used by federal statistical agencies to classify workers and jobs into occupational categories for the purpose of collecting, calculating, analyzing, or disseminating data. The occupational categories in the IPEDS HR component were changed in 2012-13 to better align with the SOC system.

The SOC is a tiered occupational classification system with four levels: major group, minor group, broad occupation, and detailed occupation. The 23 major groups are broken down into 98 minor groups, followed by 459 broad occupations, and finally 867 detailed occupations.

For example, the detailed occupation of “Education Administrators, Postsecondary” flows down from the major group “Management Occupations.” Each detailed SOC occupation has a unique title, code, and definition.

The six-digit SOC codes help identify occupational levels. The first two digits correspond to the major group; the third digit indicates the minor group; the fourth and fifth digits indicate the broad occupation; and the sixth digit corresponds to the detailed occupation. Institutions are not required to manually code and report all occupations to IPEDS at the detailed SOC level. However, while coding at the 6-digit level is not required, it can make categorization more precise and provide supporting documentation if there are questions about why a given job was classified in a specific IPEDS category.

Definitions of detailed occupations describe workers who perform similar job duties. The definitions do not attempt to describe all aspects of an occupation, but the first sentence describes the duties that all workers must perform. Some definitions may also have special statements, such as “may,” “include,” and/or “exclude.” The “may” statement describes tasks that workers in an occupation may, but are not required, to perform; while “includes” and “excludes” statements provide more detail on who counts in an occupational category. Finally, many occupations have one or more “illustrative examples,” which are job titles classified in only that occupation.

Additional information about the SOC System, including links to the SOC Classification Principles and Coding Guidelines, is available in the IPEDS HR/SOC Information Center on the IPEDS HR Survey web page at <https://nces.ed.gov/ipeds/survey-components/3>. Here you will find other reporting resources and job aides to assist institutions with reporting data using the SOC system.

This concludes our discussion of Part H, New Hires on the IPEDS HR Survey. You should know:

- How to use the Standard Occupational Classification System to complete the IPEDS HR Survey, and
- Where to find additional resources and job aids to help complete the IPEDS HR Survey.

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.