

Institutional Characteristics (IC)

Overview

Tutorial Script

2024-25 Data Collection

On behalf of the National Center for Education Statistics, NCES, and the Association for Institutional Research, AIR, welcome to this tutorial on the IPEDS Institutional Characteristics survey component, also called IC.

The purpose of this tutorial is to provide an overview of the IC characteristics survey component. At the conclusion of this tutorial, you will know the:

- Purpose and importance of the IC survey component;
- Relationship between the IC survey and other IPEDS survey components; and
- Type of data items collected on the IPEDS IC survey.

Institutional characteristics data are the foundation of the entire IPEDS system.

The purpose of the IC survey component is to collect descriptive information about the institution, such as the institution's control or affiliation, calendar system, level of degrees and awards offered, types of programs, student services, athletic association participation, and information on other campuses. Responses to the IC survey component determine applicability and version of the remaining IPEDS survey components. It is very important that all information is reported correctly.

IC opens at Registration in early August and remains open through the fall collection period. Institutions are encouraged, but not required, to complete the IC component during the Keyholder Registration period. Because responses to the IC survey component determine applicability and version of the remaining IPEDS survey components; this component must be locked before beginning the Fall survey components.

Data collected through IPEDS surveys provide a basis for postsecondary education policy analysis and consumer information. Any institution receiving Title IV federal financial aid is required to submit data to IPEDS, including the IC survey component. Non-compliance can result in warnings and costly fines or even loss of Title IV funding. Annually, NCES is required to provide the Office of Federal Student Aid, FSA, with a list of Title IV institutions that did not complete their IPEDS surveys. Consequently, FSA then sends out fine letters and warnings to the non-compliant institutions. More information about fines levied by the U.S. Department of Education can be found by following the link on the screen to the statutory requirements page.

For some of the items on IC, context boxes are provided so keyholders may provide text to explain or clarify data entries. Notes from the context boxes may be displayed on College Navigator.

Much of the basic information about an institution that is displayed on the College Navigator website

comes from IC. College Navigator was developed to provide comparable information to the public about postsecondary institutions and is used by students, parents, counselors, researchers and administrators from other institutions, and others. It is always a good idea to begin the IPEDS reporting cycle early and seek help, when needed, from the IPEDS Help Desk. The knowledgeable Help Desk staff are eager to help. However, response time may be longer near the end of the collection cycle.

In addition, the IPEDS Report Your Data webpage contains a variety of Reporting Tools to help you learn more about IPEDS survey components. It includes tutorials, taxonomies, frequently asked questions, a link to the glossary, data tip sheets, an archive of survey instruments, and other relevant information.

This concludes the tutorial for the IC survey component. If you have questions about reporting your institution's 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.