

Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System Institutional Characteristics Tuition versus Cost of Attendance Tutorial Script 2023-24 Data Collection Cycle

On behalf of the Institute of Education Sciences', IES, National Center for Education Statistics, NCEES, and the Association for Institutional Research, AIR, welcome to this tutorial on the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System Institutional Characteristics survey component, also called IPEDS IC. The purpose of this tutorial is to explain the difference between tuition and required fees, and cost of attendance for reporting data to IPEDS.

After completing this tutorial, you will be able to:

- Define Tuition and Required Fees for IPEDS reporting purposes;
- List the cost of attendance components collected on the IPEDS IC survey;
- Discuss how the cost of attendance data collected are used; and
- Describe the similarities and differences in cost of attendance data to IPEDS by academic and program reporters.

The IPEDS Glossary defines *Tuition* as “The amount of money charged to students for instructional services. Tuition may be charged per term, per course, or per credit.” *Required fees* are defined as “Fixed sum charged to students for items not covered by tuition and required of such a large proportion of all students that the student who does not pay the charge is an exception.”

Tuition and required fees are only one portion of total cost of attendance, which also includes food and housing, books and supplies, and other expenses. Cost of attendance for average net price includes the amount of tuition and fees, food and housing, books and supplies, and other expenses that a first-time, full-time degree or certificate-seeking undergraduate student can expect to pay to go to college for an academic year.

All institutions provide data on tuition and required fees. They must also indicate whether they charge differently based on student residency; and, if so, must report the tuition for each residency type. But academic and program reporters do not submit the same information.

Academic reporters submit average tuition and required fees for both full-time and part-time undergraduate and graduate students for an academic year, which is typically nine months. For part-time undergraduate and graduate students, academic reporters report the cost per credit hour. Tuition data for selected Doctor's-Professional Practice programs, such as medicine and law, are collected separately. On the other hand, program reporters submit tuition and required fees for their 6 largest programs for the entire length of each program.

Program and academic reporters with first-time, full-time undergraduate students report cost of attendance data. Both reporter types must provide data on different living arrangements, as applicable to their institution. However, academic reporters provide cost of attendance data for a full academic year, while program reporters provide these data only for their largest program based on enrollment. The tuition and fees as well as books and supplies for program reporters are for the entire length of the program, while living and other expenses are reported for one month. However, academic reporters provide cost of attendance data for a full academic year, while program reporters provide these data only for their largest program based on enrollment..

Cost of attendance data reported on the IPEDS survey are used in conjunction with Student Financial Aid Survey data to calculate an institution's average net price. Note revisions to the Institutional Characteristics cost of attendance can only be made in the Student Financial Aid survey component. Cost of attendance revisions cannot be made in the prior year revision system.

For more information on tuition and fees at your institution, contact your institution's Registrar or enrollment services manager. Contact the financial aid office if you have questions about the cost of attendance.

This concludes this tutorial on Institutional Characteristics – Tuition versus Cost of Attendance. You should be able to:

- Recognize and discuss the definitions of tuition and required fees for IPEDS reporting purposes;
- List and differentiate between the cost components reported to IPEDS and the cost of attendance NCES uses to calculate average net price for first-time, full-time students;
- Explain why cost of attendance data is submitted to IPEDS; and
- Describe the similarities and differences between tuition and required fees, and cost of attendance data submitted by academic reporters and program reporters.

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.