

Using the Data Collection System Tutorial Script 2024-25 Data Collection

The Data Collection System is password protected. Along with a UserID, keyholders are given a start-up password. When you register, you must create a new password.

You can also create up to 16 additional UserIDs, each with a unique password. Additional users can enter and edit data and verify submissions, but they cannot lock the data. Only the keyholder can lock the data. Additional users must also register.

If you forgot your password, you can use the 'Forgot password' link under the login button on the survey login screen.

NCES simplifies the data submission process by automating some tasks. For example, IPEDS pulls totals from one survey section or component to another when the data that are being collected are from the same population, such as full- time, first-time undergraduate students.

IPEDS calculates most totals, differences, percentages, and rates automatically. Reported values from the prior year are preloaded as a reference point.

The Data Collection System also includes interactive edits designed to catch errors in the data. To log into the Data Collection System, enter your UserID and Password at the top right of the screen.

A navigation menu appears at the top of most screens in the Data Collection System. Clicking on [Surveys](#) in the navigation menu from any other page will return you to this screen.

The [Surveys](#) screen displays the status of all the survey components in the current collection. Below the Status heading, the number of locks that have been applied and the total number of locks that are required are displayed. When all locks have been achieved, the term 'Complete' appears in the Status column.

The [Steps to Locking](#) column displays the steps that can currently be performed on the way to locking a survey component.

Once a survey component is locked, the [Steps to Locking](#) column for that survey component is cleared.

The [Options](#) column contains links to:

- Edit the Institution Identification Information;
- View Data;
- Print Data or GET PDF; and

- View the Resolved Edit Report

At the top of the [Surveys](#) page is the question, “Am I Done?” When all survey components for a collection are locked, the answer will change to Yes!

Follow the [Steps to Locking](#) for **EACH** survey component in the current collection are:

1. Enter data
2. Perform edits
3. Resolve errors (by entering explanations in the edit report, or by correcting data when appropriate)
4. Perform edits again
5. Repeat steps 3 and 4 as needed, until the survey status is clean, and then
6. Lock the survey

Some of the survey status codes that can appear in the [Status](#) column are:

Not Applicable, which means that the content is not relevant to the institution and that the institution is not required to submit that survey component.

NO DATA, in upper case, which means that the screening questions for that survey component have not been answered. The responses to screening questions are required before survey component pages are generated.

No Data, in upper and lower case, which means no data have been entered for that survey component, but the screening questions have been answered.

In the [Status](#) column, the term Has Data indicates that some data have been entered, but the process is NOT complete. The keyholder must run [Perform Edits](#).

The term ‘Edited’ indicates that the Edits have been run. Next, the keyholder goes to the [Edit Report](#) to resolve edit errors.

The term ‘Clean’ indicates that all edit errors have been resolved. The next step is to lock.

The term ‘Locked’ indicates that the data have been successfully submitted by the institution. The final lock must still be applied if more than one is required (by the system level or state level coordinator). This varies from state to state and not all states require a second lock.

The term ‘Complete’ indicates that all locks have been applied.

Data may be keyed or imported into the IPEDS Data Collection System. Uploading data into the Data Collection System may be quicker than inputting the data one field at a time, depending on how much data need to be submitted.

There are two file import formats for all survey components: Fixed Length and Key Value. To enter data, on the [Surveys screen](#), click the Enter Data link under [Steps to Locking](#).

Key the data onto the page, and then save it. Data are saved on a screen-by-screen basis by clicking one of the buttons at the bottom of the screen.

The Save button saves the data and stays on the current screen. Save and Next saves the data and moves to the

next page.

'Next' moves to the next page without saving any data changes, but the system will then ask if the data should be saved.

Unless this is the first page of the survey component, a Previous button appears, allowing users to return to the previous page, if necessary, for editing purposes.

You do not need to complete data entry on a survey component in one sitting; you may leave a session at any time by using the Logout option on the menu bar.

A message stating that the data were saved successfully appears if there are no immediate data problems.

If you wish to upload a file instead of keying in your data, follow these steps:

First, prepare a file following the Import Specifications available under [Survey Materials](#). Then, in the Data Collection System, select [File Upload](#) from the [Tools](#) menu.

Next, use Browse to find the upload file on your computer or institution's network.

Indicate which file type to use and which survey component to upload data for and press the Submit button.

You will be notified if there are problems with the upload. Once your data are uploaded, you must run perform edits, resolve all errors, and lock the component.

Editing the data (whether you have entered it by keying it in or by uploading a file) is an interactive process. Instant feedback lets you know if there are any problems that need to be resolved.

The Data Collection System automatically runs the Screen edits program on the page when '[Save](#)' is clicked. Errors are generated if required data are not provided or if the data provided seem inappropriate or unlikely to be accurate.

Global edits are run when you invoke the 'Perform Edits' function. Global edits compare values on different pages of the survey, or on different survey components.

All of the survey components are edited individually. When there is a problem, an edit icon appears on the screen. Printable edit reports can be generated if you need to research an area that needs further attention.

The IPEDS Help Desk is also available for assistance, if needed.

Once the data have been entered, the survey status will change to 'Has Data'. Now it is time to edit. Click on the Perform Edits link in the [Steps to Locking](#) column. Once the edits have been run, the Survey Status will change to 'Edited.' Now click on 'Resolve Errors' in the [Steps to Locking](#) column. This will take you to the 'Edit Report' screen.

There are three kinds of edit messages:

A Confirmation edit means that the numeric values need to be checked and confirmed or fixed if incorrect. You will be asked to click in a box that confirms that the data you entered are correct.

An Explanation edit asks for an explanation if data are unusual or different from expected values. Your response

should explain, rather than confirm, the data.

And a Fatal edit means the data must be fixed. The report cannot be locked until a Fatal edit is corrected. Any questions about a Fatal error can be answered by the Help Desk. The Help Desk can also override certain Fatal errors.

Here is a screen that shows errors. There is one Fatal error indicated with red X icon, and there are four Explanation errors, indicated with red check mark icons.

The Edit Report lists all current errors for the survey. The errors are generated from two types of edits: Global Edits and Screen Edits.

Screen Edits are performed at the time the data are saved on a page. The edit usually involves only data elements on that page.

Global Edits are performed when you click on the Perform Edits button on the Surveys page. Global edits can compare data from different pages of the same survey or from different survey components.

If there are missing data, Global Edits will not run, as shown in the first error message on the screen.

On the Edit Report, the Description Column describes the edit problem. The Severity Column will indicate whether this is a Fatal, Explanation, or Confirmation error. When the error is Fatal, you must click on 'Back to Survey Data' to fix the problem.

To deal with Explanation or Confirmation errors, click on the Explanation link and correct, confirm the data, or enter an explanation. The Resolved column will change to 'Yes' once Explanation and Confirmation errors are explained and confirmed. Explanations can also be entered from the data screen itself.

Before the data are considered clean and ready to lock, the Resolved column must show Yes for every error.

You can return to the Surveys page by hitting the link at the bottom center of the edits page. As always, instructions are available by clicking the link in the upper right-hand corner.

This slide illustrates that there is a difference between Edit Explanations and Context notes. They have different purposes and different uses.

Edit explanations detail why the entered data are correct, even though the data failed the edit. Please provide clear and comprehensive explanations.

Explanations are required but will NOT be published on any of the IPEDS websites. The Help Desk reads all explanations and will contact you if there are questions.

The following three slides provide appropriate examples of explanations for describing values that are identified as errors but are in fact accurate. For example, there are many plausible reasons for the error displayed on the previous slide, which occurred because the submitted value was not within 20 percent of the prior year's value.

One explanation is that the institution experienced an increase in enrollment. What caused the increase in enrollment? Perhaps it was a result of increased recruitment efforts or, maybe the addition of a popular new program. Use the explanation box to describe the cause, or reason, for this difference in submitted values.

A second example involves a ratio that is correct but is identified as an error. Use the explanation box to describe the various parts of a calculated number, and that the ratio was accurately calculated based on your institution's data. Use the specific data points in the calculation to explain the ratio.

The third, and final example, involves a value that was incorrectly submitted during the previous year's data collection. In addition to explaining that the value was incorrectly submitted, also describe the steps your institution is taking to correct this value in the IPEDS Prior Year Revision system, and any actions or steps you are taking to ensure the accuracy of these values in the future.

Context Boxes allow you to provide additional information about the data you are reporting.

Context notes are optional. The IPEDS system does not require contextual information. However, context notes can be useful and many are published on College Navigator. You may use context boxes to inform users of College Navigator about features of your institution that cannot be described through IPEDS data.

The IPEDS Help Desk reviews all text in Context Boxes for clarity, relevance, and grammar since this information may be made public.

Someone from the Help Desk will contact you if additional clarification is needed.

Context notes should be clear and concise. They should provide factual information that helps explain your institution's data to the general public. Two examples are provided that show appropriate uses of the Context Box.

In the first example, this institution may choose to explain a difference in admissions policies between different programs. This information may be published on College Navigator to provide visitors more context about this institution's admissions rates.

In this second example, EFG University offers multiple levels of tuition and fees for its programs depending on if they are offered through the traditional on-campus format, online education, or evening classes. This information is appropriate as it provides greater context to the tuition and fee prices that appear in IPEDS data.

Context boxes should not be used as opportunities for marketing or advertising, or as a substitute for explanation boxes.

Here, two examples of how not to use context boxes are provided.

The information provided by YZZ University is a marketing statement that contains subjective information. This type of statement is appropriate for an institution's marketing publications, but not for a context box.

In the second example, an institution uses its tuition rates as an advertisement, indicating that the institution offers students the most opportunity for their dollar. Advertising statements such as this, which may or may not be factual, should not be included in context boxes.

Again, context boxes allow you to provide additional information about the data you are reporting and may be published on College Navigator.

Before a survey component can be locked, the survey status must be "Clean." This means that the edits have been run and all errors have been resolved.

Once the component has been locked, it becomes view-only. The data on the screens can be seen, but changes

can no longer be made without contacting the IPEDS Help Desk to unlock it.

A confirmation email will be sent to the keyholder when the component is locked.

An IPEDS state or system coordinator may need to apply a second lock on your institution's data. If so, an email will be sent to that person informing them that you have applied your lock. For compliance purposes, the first lock fulfills the institution's reporting requirements.

Here, all edit errors have been addressed for the IC Header survey component, and the survey status is now "Clean."

The survey component is ready to be locked. To lock, the keyholder clicks on the Lock link in the Steps to Locking column.

Now the survey status shows that the status for IC Header is Complete.

It also shows that the one required lock has been applied. This is indicated by the "1/1" message in parentheses after the word 'Complete'.

There are no longer links in the Steps to Locking column because the locking is finished. By clicking the appropriate link under Options, you can:

- View the data,
- Print the data, or
- View the resolved edit report.

Institutional Characteristics and Completions have some data as noted on the screen. The 12-month Enrollment survey component shows a status of NO DATA. For each of these survey components, you must undertake the same basic steps: enter data, edit data, resolve errors, and lock.

The Help menu provides access to valuable information. You can get to the help menu by selecting the Help option on the menu bar. Please note that there is a Keyholder Handbook available for reference purposes, containing much of the same information as is in this web tutorial. There is also a section that includes tips from veteran keyholders, and a section on key concepts from each of the survey components.

Other information available from the Help menu includes:

Survey materials, including blank forms, instructions, import specifications, and Frequently Asked Questions; Important information about IPEDS, including this year's schedule for reporting, changes to data collection items, tips for using the Data Collection System, procedures for responding to survey components, and statutory requirements for reporting; Frequently Asked Questions about IPEDS and reporting race and ethnicity; A link to a Data Collection System tutorial; The IPEDS glossary; Information about the Classification of Instructional Programs, or CIP, used to classify programs on the Institutional Characteristics and Completions survey components; and a link to the AIR Web site and the IPEDS Data Collection Tutorials, for specific information about completing each IPEDS survey component.