

Institutional Characteristics (IC) Survey Component Overview Tutorial Script 2022-23 Data Collection Cycle

On behalf of the Institute of Education Sciences', IES, National Center for Education Statistics, NCES, and the Association for Institutional Research, AIR, welcome to this tutorial on the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System, or 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 data are collected through two survey components: Institutional Characteristics Header, or ICH and Institutional Characteristics, or IC.

The purpose of the IC survey is to collect basic descriptive information about the institution such as:

- Mission,
- Student services,
- Pricing information,
- Athletic association participation, and
- Information on other campuses.

It also contains screening questions for other survey components institutions may be required to complete.

The Institutional Characteristics survey component is part of the fall collection of IPEDS surveys, which opens in early September. Keyholders must make sure data entry is completed and finalized by the end of the data collection period in mid-October before they lock the institution's data. IPEDS coordinators have an additional two weeks to review the data and apply a second lock to the survey component.

Data collected through IPEDS surveys provide a basis for postsecondary education policy analysis and consumer information. Any institution participating in, or who has applied to participate in, Title IV federal financial aid programs must submit data to IPEDS, which includes 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, or FSA, with a list of Title IV institutions that did not complete their IPEDS surveys. Consequently, FSA then sends out warning and fine letters to 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.

Pricing information collected on the IC survey component includes published tuition and fee charges and cost of attendance component amounts. This information is used to publish estimated student expenses for the academic year and average net price on College Navigator.

Most of the basic information about an institution displayed on College Navigator comes from the IC survey. College Navigator was developed to provide comparable information to the public about postsecondary institutions and is used by students, parents, and others who help students with postsecondary education decisions.

Context boxes are provided to data reporters for some IC data items published on College Navigator so the institution can provide text to explain or clarify data entries. A new feature added beginning with the 2022-23 collection cycle is a drop-down list of frequently submitted price, cost, and charge context statements such as the “The Cost of Attendance varies by program”.

It is always a good idea to begin the IPEDS reporting cycle early and seek help, when needed. The **Report Your Data** portal has a variety of *Reporting Tools* to help you learn more about IPEDS surveys. It includes tutorials, taxonomies, and other tools and resources such as Data Tip Sheets and FAQs. In addition, knowledgeable Help Desk staff are always eager to provide assistance. Note Help Desk response times may be longer near the end of a data collection cycle.

This concludes the tutorial for the IC survey component. During this presentation, we:

- Explained the purpose and importance of the IPEDS IC survey component;
- Provided a brief discussion on the relationship between the IC survey and other IPEDS survey components; and
- Described the type of data items collected on the IC survey.

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.