IC Header Overview
Tutorial Script
2022-23 Data Collection Cycle

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 Header survey component, also called IC Header.

The IC Header component collects descriptive information about the institution, such as the institution's control or affiliation, calendar system, level of degrees and awards offered, and types of programs. IC Header questions were previously found in the Institutional Characteristics survey component. Responses to the IC Header component determine applicability and version of the remaining IPEDS survey components. It is very important that all information is reported correctly.

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

Any institution receiving Title IV federal financial aid is required to submit data to IPEDS, including the IC Header survey component. NCES is required to annually provide the Office of Federal Student Aid, FSA, with a list of Title IV institutions that did not complete their IPEDS surveys. FSA then sends out fine letters and warnings to the non-compliant institutions. Non compliance can result in warnings and costly fine or even loss of Title IV funding. More information can be found by following the link on the screen to the statutory requirements page..

For some of the items on IC Header, 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 Header. 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 Resources page contains 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 Header survey component.