

# IPEDS Survey Methodology: Web Content

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## Survey Procedures

The IPEDS survey is a web-based data collection since 2000. Each institution's Chief Executive Officer (CEO) appoints a keyholder who is responsible for ensuring that the institution submitted survey data are correct and complete. To access the web-based collection, known as the IPEDS DCS, the keyholder can create UserIDs and password for up to 16 additional survey respondents who could also enter or review data. For many institutions, keyholders also edit and "lock" the data; locking indicates to NCES that the data submitted the accurate, true, and complete.

Many states or systems may have one or more IPEDS coordinators who are responsible for a specified group of institutions to ensure that all data were entered correctly. Some coordinators are responsible for a system of institutions (e.g., SUNY—the State University of New York); others coordinate all or some institutions in a state or jurisdiction. Coordinators may elect to provide different levels of review. For example, some may have review-only data provided by their institutions, while others may have upload data from state or jurisdiction databases, review the data, and/or lock data for their institutions.

In each August, NCES sends letters to CEOs at institutions without preexisting keyholders, requesting that they appoint a keyholder for the current collection year. The package includes a letter for the keyholder and a registration certificate with the institution's UserID for the entire current collection year, along with the temporary password enabling the keyholder to register and establish a permanent password. In addition, NCES sends e-mail messages to keyholders and coordinators who are continuing in their respective roles, providing them with their UserID and a temporary password and requesting that they update or confirm their registration information.

Typically, IPEDS data collection cycles require some follow-up for nonresponse. These activities begin at the end of August of the current collection in an effort to prompt remaining keyholders to register.

NCES sends a follow-up letter to CEOs of institutions whose keyholder has not registered, and also calls institutions to prompt registration. The result of these efforts is the eventual registration of a keyholder or locking coordinator at all institutions. Additional follow-ups with CEOs, coordinators, and keyholders for survey nonresponse are conducted via mail, e-mail, and telephone throughout the collection period. At the beginning of the winter and spring collections (in early December), NCES sends registered keyholders and coordinators e-mail messages alerting them to the collection opening and requesting that they update or confirm their registration contact information, if needed.

The web-based survey component forms offer many features to ensure the quality and timeliness of the data. As indicated above, the DCS requires survey respondents to register before entering data to provide a point of contact between NCES/IPEDS and the institution.

Online data entry forms are tailored to each institution based on characteristics such as institutional control (public, private nonprofit, private for-profit), level of institution (4-year, 2-year, and less-than-2-year), type of awards offered (degree-granting or non-degree-granting), and calendar system (standard academic terms or enrollment by program).

When available, a customized survey form contains preloaded data from previous years for easy reference and comparison purposes. Once the data are entered, either manually or through file upload, the keyholders run edit checks to resolve all errors before locking their data. Once locked, the data are considered submitted, regardless if a coordinator has reviewed the submission.

After the locking process, the IPEDS Help Desk staff conducts its final review. The staff contacts the institution's

keyholder or its coordinator to resolve any remaining questions if any additional problems still exists. When all problems are resolved, the staff migrates the final data to the IPEDS Data Center, where the preliminary data becomes available to other responding institutions for comparison purposes.