



# Noncredit Enrollment and Related Activities

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Noncredit offerings play an important but understudied role in higher education. Institutions use noncredit programming to help meet employers' needs for workforce training and development, prepare students for the rigors of college-level course work, and provide recreational and life-long learning opportunities to their communities. And yet, there is little data available about noncredit activity at the national level because there is no national, publicly available data collection that includes noncredit enrollment.

In 2019, the National Postsecondary Education Cooperative (NPEC) commissioned this report to provide background information on collecting noncredit enrollment data through IPEDS should the topic be selected for a future TRP meeting. The report investigates how prevalent noncredit activity is, how noncredit data are collected and used, and how IPEDS can better meet stakeholders' needs related to noncredit activity. The key elements included an environmental scan, interviews with IPEDS stakeholders, and an analysis of relevant IPEDS data. Based on the findings, the report concludes with five recommendations for potential changes to IPEDS:

- **Recommendation #1: Use the term “noncredit” consistently throughout the IPEDS survey materials.** The terms “noncredit,” “non-credit,” and “not-for-credit” are used in the IPEDS survey materials. Using one term consistently would help avoid confusion and signal the value of noncredit data.
- **Recommendation #2: Raise awareness of the data about staff who teach noncredit through reports and training.** IPEDS data on the number of instructional staff who teach noncredit are not widely used and may have quality issues. NCES could improve quality and utilization by featuring them in reports and emphasizing them in training.
- **Recommendation #3: Clarify the coverage of the Human Resources (HR) component.** Changing the Instructions for the HR component to clarify that institutions should report staff who teach for-credit and noncredit workforce training and pre-collegiate courses, as well as casual staff who teach noncredit courses, could further improve the quality of the HR data.
- **Recommendation #4: Add terms to the IPEDS Glossary to create a reporting framework for noncredit activities.** Suggested terms, such as vocational noncredit course, avocational noncredit course, and pre-collegiate noncredit course, would enable institutions to report noncredit enrollments in meaningful categories.
- **Recommendation #5: Add duplicated headcount enrollment instructional activity for noncredit courses to the 12-month Enrollment (E12) survey component.** Instructional activity data could be used to calculate full-time equivalent (FTE) enrollment for use in per FTE student ratios, and duplicated headcounts would provide a measure of the scope and reach of noncredit activity.

Currently, institutions report only students who are enrolled for credit through the IPEDS Fall Enrollment (FE) and E12 IPEDS survey components, although this includes students in remedial courses if they are determined to be degree-seeking for the purpose of financial aid determinations. Noncredit activities are also excluded from data reported on the Admissions

(ADM), Completions (C), Outcome Measures (OM), and Graduation Rates (GR and GR200) components. However, primarily instructional staff who teach “not-for-credit” are included in the HR component, and revenues and expense associated with noncredit activities are included in the data reported on the Finance survey component. The mismatch between the coverages of the enrollment components and the HR and Finance components leads to inaccuracies in student-to-faculty ratios and per full-time equivalent (FTE) student revenue and expense ratios calculated using IPEDS data.

The effect these issues have on data quality depends, in large part, on the prevalence of noncredit activities at reporting institutions. According to the American Association of Community Colleges (AACC)<sup>1</sup>, there were 5 million students enrolled in noncredit courses at community colleges in 2018, and the General Accountability Office (GAO) reported in 2004 that nearly all community and technical colleges offered some noncredit courses.<sup>2</sup> IPEDS data indicate nearly 100,000 instructional staff teach “not-for-credit” exclusively or in combination with for-credit courses, or about 9.3 percent of all primarily instructional staff at degree-granting institutions with 15 or more full-time staff. However, researchers have noted that FTE enrollment in noncredit courses can be much less than headcount enrollment. Researchers have also identified vocational or occupational training, pre-collegiate or adult basic education, and avocational or recreational courses as the three most common types of noncredit courses, with some identifying employer-sponsored training as a fourth type.

IPEDS stakeholders provided input for this study and included six from reporting institutions, one from an industry association, and one noncredit researcher. Most indicated that their institutions would be able to report fairly detailed noncredit enrollment data, including unduplicated headcounts and student demographics. One interviewee, however, indicated that her institution would be unable to report noncredit enrollment data, one said his institution would not collect the student identifying information necessary to report unduplicated headcounts, and several indicated that their data on avocational offerings and employer-sponsored vocational training might not be reliable. The sample of interviewees for this study was not intended to be representative of any sector, or of postsecondary institutions in general, but the input from these voluntary participants provided a valuable perspective not available from the literature on the subject.

The findings from this study suggest that noncredit activity plays an important role in U.S. higher education that is not captured by any national, publicly available data collection and that information on this activity would be valuable to community colleges, researchers, and policymakers. Furthermore, the exclusion of noncredit enrollment from IPEDS negatively affects the quality of IPEDS data, specifically the calculation of per FTE student ratios using IPEDS data. The recommendations presented in the report are intended to build a framework for the collection of noncredit enrollment data through IPEDS that addresses the issues identified in IPEDS today and will allow for expansion and refinement over time.

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<sup>1</sup> American Association of Community Colleges. (2018, March). *Fast Facts 2018*.

<sup>2</sup> Bellis, D. (2004). *Public Community Colleges and Technical Schools: Most Schools Use Both Credit and Noncredit Programs for Workforce Development* (GAO-05-04). U.S. Government Accountability Office.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The credit hour is the standardized building block used by postsecondary institutions to assess students' prior learning and progress, as well as to apportion faculty course loads. It is also a cornerstone of state funding mechanisms and federal student aid eligibility requirements (Voorhees & Milam, 2005, p. 5). The strength of the credit hour in facilitating standardization, rigor, and measurement can present an obstacle, however, when institutions seek to meet the rapidly changing educational demands of the twenty-first century.

Noncredit offerings allow institutions to meet these demands flexibly and responsively. Institutions utilize noncredit offerings to respond to local employers' training needs, develop courses that cover emerging in-demand skills, and provide steppingstones that bring students into academic pathways, among many other functions. But the deliberately unstandardized nature of noncredit programming complicates the task of collecting data about these offerings.

The addition of data elements on noncredit enrollment to the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS), the primary source for national, institution-level information about postsecondary education in the United States (U.S.), would add to our understanding of the role noncredit programming plays in our education and workforce development systems and the scope of its effect in students' lives. It is vital, however, that any changes to IPEDS be carefully vetted to ensure that they produce accurate, reliable, and useful information.

In March 2008, IPEDS Technical Review Panel (TRP) #22 recommended adding noncredit enrollment data elements to IPEDS, but its recommendations were never implemented. Returning to the issue in 2019, the National Postsecondary Education Cooperative (NPEC) commissioned this report to provide background information should the topic be revisited in a subsequent TRP meeting.

The report begins by presenting the research questions developed by NPEC and the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) for this research and describing the methodologies used to investigate those questions. Next, it presents findings from three research approaches: an environmental scan, interviews with stakeholders, and an analysis of relevant data from IPEDS. The report concludes with recommendations for potential improvements to IPEDS and brief discussions of the rationales behind them.

## 2. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

NPEC and NCES developed the following research questions to guide this report:

- 1) How prevalent is noncredit activity in U.S. higher education?**
  - a. What are the roles that noncredit activity play in the missions of postsecondary institutions, and of community colleges in particular?
  - b. What is the current level of noncredit enrollment at IPEDS institutions?
  - c. What are the current trends in the prevalence of noncredit activity?

- 2) **How and to what extent are noncredit enrollment data collected and used by postsecondary stakeholders?**
  - a. What is the approach to noncredit activity currently taken by IPEDS, and what are the gaps or limitations of this approach?
  - b. How are data on noncredit activity currently collected and reported, and how do noteworthy data sources and other key stakeholders (i.e., students and families, institutions, state agencies, researchers, and policymakers) define noncredit activity and related concepts?
  - c. How do key stakeholders use data on noncredit activity (e.g., state funding allocation and performance funding mechanisms, federal workforce education accountability mechanisms)?
- 3) **Can IPEDS be modified to better meet key stakeholders' needs related to the collection and reporting of data on noncredit activity?**
  - a. How do the TRP #22 recommendations address key gaps or limitations in the current IPEDS data collection?
  - b. How could IPEDS data elements, definitions, instructions, or FAQs be changed to improve the quality and usefulness of IPEDS data related to noncredit activity (e.g., to reduce misreporting or confusion among data reporters)?
  - c. What are the appropriate mechanisms (e.g., IPEDS, sample surveys) for the collection and reporting of data on noncredit enrollment or other aspects of noncredit activity?

### 3. METHODOLOGY

Three research approaches provided input toward answering the research questions listed above: an environmental scan, interviews with IPEDS stakeholders, and an analysis of relevant IPEDS data. The methodologies and data sources used in each of these research approaches are described in this section. The findings from each are documented in the sections that follow.

**Environmental Scan:** The environmental scan included a review of IPEDS-related background materials and a review of the literature related to noncredit activity. The review of background materials included: the IPEDS survey instruments, instructions, and frequently asked questions (FAQ) sections, as published in the attachments to the Department's March 2019 Federal Register Notice regarding changes to the IPEDS surveys and survey materials (U.S. Department of Education, 2019); the IPEDS *Glossary*; and the report and suggestions from IPEDS TRP #22.

The literature review covered scholarly and influential works from the last 15 to 20 years. Searches, for terms including: "noncredit," "continuing education," "community education," and "adult education," and variations thereof (e.g., "non-credit," "not-for-credit") on the Education Resources Information Center (ERIC), Google Scholar, and ProQuest Research Database provided the foundation for the review. Works cited in the studies found through these searches aided in the identification of additional materials and verification of the completeness of the scan. The search criteria emphasized peer-reviewed studies, but reports from government agencies, industry associations, and non-profit organizations also received

consideration. A search for other national data collections that include noncredit enrollment data was conducted, and relevant materials from one collection of interest were reviewed.

**IPEDS Data Analysis:** The analysis is based on population data about primarily instructional staff who teach not-for-credit from the Human Resources (HR) component of the 2017-18 IPEDS data collection, which represent staffing levels as of November 1, 2017. These data are analyzed to explore the prevalence of noncredit activity nationally and state-by-state. The state-by-state data are presented with information on state funding and data collection policies gathered through the environmental scan.

**Interviews with stakeholders:** Recognized professionals in the higher education community provided input through nine informational telephone interviews. The purposive sample included seven institutions, districts, or state agencies in a variety of sectors such as public or private, for profit or not, and 2 or 4 years and are referred to as institutional interviews in this report. Most of the potential interviewees invited to participate in institutional interviews were Institutional Research (IR) administrators. In some cases, the original invitees referred their invitations to administrators in their institutions' workforce training divisions. The institutional interviewees responded to a common discussion guide (see appendix, Section C).

A representative from a national association that administers a relevant data collection and a nationally recognized scholar on noncredit activity also participated in interviews. Separate discussion guides were tailored for each of these two respondents.

Representatives of the following stakeholder types participated in interviews:

- Institutional Researchers and Administrators
  - Public 2-year institutions (2 interviews)
  - Public 2-year districts (1 interview)
  - Public 2-year state system (1 interview)
  - Public 4-year institutions (1 interview)
  - Private not-for-profit, less-than-2-year institutions (1 interview)
  - Private for-profit, 2-year or less institutions (1 interview)
- Noncredit enrollment researcher or expert (1 interview)
- National association related to noncredit education (1 interview)

## **4. FINDINGS FROM THE ENVIRONMENTAL SCAN**

This section presents the findings from the environmental scan. The first two subsections cover background materials: the IPEDS survey materials and the report from TRP #22, and they are summarized together. The second two subsections cover the literature review and materials from a national data collection identified during the scan which are summarized together.

## A. IPEDS Survey Materials

This subsection describes findings from a review of the IPEDS survey materials for the relevant survey components, including the survey instructions, and FAQs, and the IPEDS *Glossary*. The Fall Enrollment (EF) and 12-month Enrollment (E12) components are discussed first as noncredit enrollment to IPEDS is a central topic of this report. This is followed by discussions of the Human Resources (HR) component, which includes data elements on noncredit activity, and the Finance component, which is germane to the findings from TRP #22. Next, highlights are presented from additional pertinent survey components, along with a review of the IPEDS Glossary, which includes important definitions related to noncredit activity.

**Enrollment Components:** The Instructions for the EF and E12 survey components direct institutions to report: “all students **enrolled for credit** . . . regardless of whether or not they are seeking a degree or certificate.” This includes “students taking remedial courses if the student is degree-seeking for the purpose of student financial aid determination” (“Who to Include”).<sup>3</sup> The EF and E12 Instructions guide institutions to *exclude* students:

- Enrolled exclusively in courses that cannot be applied towards a recognized postsecondary credential;
- Enrolled only in [English as a Second Language (ESL)] programs (programs comprised exclusively of ESL courses);
- Enrolled exclusively in Continuing Education Units (EF and E12 Instructions, “Who to Exclude”).

The FAQs for the EF and E12 components state that students should be considered degree-seeking if they are enrolled in remedial or ESL courses but “have been admitted into an eligible Title-IV program and receive Title-IV aid” or are co-op students taking noncredit courses that are required for attainment of a recognized postsecondary credential (EF FAQ, Question 13).

According to the EF Instructions, reported student-to-faculty ratios should be “based on data your institution is reporting in the IPEDS Human Resources (HR) survey component” (EF Instructions, “Full- and Part-Time Instructional Staff Data,” para. 4). For 4-year institutions with graduate programs, the relevant item on the student-to-faculty ratio worksheet regarding the exclusion of faculty who teach noncredit reads: “Of the full-time instructional staff reported in Line F9, the number teaching exclusively **non-credit** courses” (EF Instructions, 4-year degree-granting institutions, “Part F - Student-to-Faculty Ratio Worksheet”).

**Human Resources Component:** For degree-granting institutions that have 15 or more full-time staff, the Instructions for Part A – Full-time Instructional Staff state that institutions must “report the number of full-time instructional staff at the institutions by faculty status, tenure, status (if applicable), contract length, and medical school status (if applicable) for each of the following functions.” The list of functions includes “Primarily Instruction” with subcategories

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<sup>3</sup> Inclusion of these students is often facilitated through the issuance of “institutional” credit that does not apply toward completion of a recognized postsecondary credential (Romano, Kirshstein, D’Amico, Hom, & Van Noy, 2019, p. 3).

for “Exclusively credit,” Exclusively not-for-credit,” and “Combined credit/not-for-credit.” The instructions for Parts D and E – Part-time Staff, include the same specifications. Reporting staff in these categories is not required for institutions with fewer than 15 full-time staff.

The Coverage section guides institutions to include “adjunct instructional staff” and “staff in workforce development training programs and Adult Basic Education (ABE) programs” (“Who to Include in this Report”). Reporters are directed to exclude “staff whose services are contracted by or donated to the institution” and “casual staff (hired on an ad-hoc or occasional basis to meet short-term needs)” (“Who NOT to Include in this Report”).

The Key Reporting Concepts section clarifies that adjunct instructional staff who “serve in either a temporary or auxiliary capacity to teach academic degree-credit courses, as well as remedial, developmental, or ESL courses, and are paid on a course-by-course basis” should be reported (“Key Reporting Concepts,” How do I report Adjunct Instructional Staff?). Question 2 in the Degree-granting Institutions section of the HR component FAQ adds that “instructional staff who provide instruction in non-credit courses should be included in the HR component.”

NCES added the categories for primarily instructional staff who teach “exclusively credit,” “exclusively not-for-credit,” and “combined credit/not-for-credit” to the Employees by Assigned Position (EAP) section of the HR survey in the 2012-13 IPEDS collection cycle based on recommendations from TRP #31 (Aliyeva, Cody, & Low, 2018, pp. HR-16-21; RTI International, 2010). These data elements represent the only data on the prevalence of noncredit activity collected through IPEDS. However, some experts question the reliability of the data reported by institutions through these data elements based on anecdotal observations and comparison to data from the National Study of Postsecondary Faculty (NSOPF), conducted most recently in 2004 (Anonymous, 2019; National Postsecondary Education Cooperative, 2019).

**Finance Component:** The Instructions for the Finance survey component direct institutions to report revenues and expenses with no exclusions for noncredit activities:

- Include “all operating revenues, nonoperating revenues and other additions for the reporting period” (“Part B – Revenues and Other Additions, Operating Revenues”).
- “Include expenses for both credit and noncredit activities.” (“Part C-1,” Item 01).

All operating revenues includes revenues from tuition and fees, as well as state operating grants. These are two of the most common sources of revenue associated with noncredit activities according to Oleksiw, Kremidas, Johnson-Lewis, and Leke (2007, p. 34).

The Finance Instructions indicate, however, that the 12-month Student Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) enrollment reported on the Finance component and used in the calculation of total expenses per student FTE should be “carried over from the 12-month enrollment survey” (Finance Instructions, “Part C-2,” Lines 20 and 21). As noted above, this measure of FTE enrollment excludes noncredit students.

**Institutional Characteristics (IC) Component:** The IC survey component includes a data element about the types of instruction or programs offered by the institution, with options that include:

- Continuing professional (post baccalaureate only),
- Recreational or avocational (leisure), and
- Adult basic or remedial instruction or high school equivalency (“Part A – Educational Offerings,” Item 1).

**Completions Component:** The Completions Instructions direct institutions to exclude recognized postsecondary credentials “conferred by an entity other than the postsecondary institution (such as the state, or an industry certificate),” or “earned as the result of an avocational, basic skills, residency, or other program not recognized by IPEDS as academic or occupational/vocational” (“What to Exclude”).

**Other Components:** The Instructions for several other components address the exclusion of noncredit students:

- *Admissions (ADM):* Exclude “students who are not enrolled for credit,” including students enrolled only in ESL programs or Continuing Education Units (CEUs) (“Coverage”).
- *Outcome Measures (OM):* “Students must be enrolled in courses creditable toward a degree, diploma, certificate, or other recognized postsecondary credential (“Who to Include in the Cohorts”).
- *Graduation Rate (GR) and 200% Graduation Rate (GR200):* Exclude students “enrolled exclusively in courses that cannot be applied towards a recognized postsecondary credential,” or “enrolled exclusively in Continuing Education Units (CEUs)” (“Who to Exclude from the Cohort”), as well as ESL students if they are not in an academic program or eligible for federal financial aid (FAQ, “Cohort,” Question 5).

**Glossary:** Table 1 presents selected items from the IPEDS *Glossary* relevant to this study (National Center for Education Statistics, 2018). The *Glossary* defines “noncredit course” and “academic program,” but it does not specifically define “noncredit program” or “noncredit activity.” It defines “avocational programs” as personal interest or leisure programs whose intent is not to produce postsecondary credits or lead to a degree in terms of their non-creditability. The related definition for “occupational program” does not address the issue of credit; these programs can be either for credit or non-credit bearing. See Section E of the appendix for a more complete listing of relevant items identified in the *Glossary* and other survey materials (instruments, instructions, and frequently asked questions or FAQs).

**Table 1. Select items from the IPEDS Glossary of Terms related to noncredit activity**

<b>Term</b>	<b>Definition</b>
<b>Academic program</b>	An instructional program leading toward an associate's, bachelor's, master's, doctor's, or first-professional degree or resulting in credits that can be applied to one of these degrees.
<b>Adult basic education</b>	Courses designed primarily for students 16 years of age and older to improve basic skills in reading, writing, and arithmetic. These courses are not intended to be part of a program leading to a high school credential, nor are they part of any academic, occupational, or vocational program at the postsecondary level.
<b>Avocational programs</b>	Instructional programs in personal interest and leisure categories whose expressed intent is not to produce postsecondary credits, nor to lead to a recognized postsecondary credential or an academic degree, nor result in occupationally specific skills.
<b>CEU</b>	One CEU (Continuing Education Unit) is normally defined as 10 clock hours of participation in an organized continuing education experience under responsible sponsorship, capable direction, and qualified instruction.
<b>Clock hour</b>	A period of time consisting of (1) A 50- to 60-minute class, lecture, or recitation in a 60-minute period; (2) A 50- to 60-minute faculty-supervised laboratory, shop training, or internship in a 60-minute period; or (3) Sixty minutes of preparation in a correspondence course (from CFR 34 600.2).
<b>Continuing professional education</b>	Programs and courses designed specifically for individuals who have completed a degree in a professional field (such as law, medicine, dentistry, education, or social work) to obtain additional training in their particular field of study.
<b>Credit</b>	Recognition of attendance or performance in an instructional activity (course or program) that can be applied by a recipient toward the requirements for a postsecondary degree, diploma, certificate, or other recognized postsecondary credential, irrespective of the activity's unit of measurement.
<b>Credit course</b>	A course that, if successfully completed, can be applied toward the number of courses required for achieving a postsecondary degree, diploma, certificate, or other recognized postsecondary credential, irrespective of the activity's unit of measurement.
<b>Instructional activity</b>	The total number of credit and clock hours all students are engaged in during the specified period.
<b>Non-degree-seeking student</b>	A student enrolled in courses for credit who is not recognized by the institution as seeking a degree or recognized postsecondary credential.
<b>Noncredit course</b>	A course or activity having no credit applicable toward a degree, diploma, certificate, or other recognized postsecondary credential.
<b>Occupational program</b>	A program of study consisting of one or more courses, designed to provide the student with sufficient knowledge and skills to perform in a specific occupation.
<b>Program with no recognized postsecondary credential</b>	Any formally organized program with stated educational objectives and well-defined completion requirements that does not lead to a recognized postsecondary credential.
<b>Remedial courses</b>	Instructional courses designed for students deficient in the general competencies necessary for a regular postsecondary curriculum and educational setting.

Source: IPEDS Data Collection System Glossary (National Center for Education Statistics, 2018)

## B. TRP #22: Report and Suggestions

In 2008, the IPEDS TRP convened to “discuss the possibility of collecting noncredit activity within the IPEDS enrollment surveys” (RTI International, 2008, p. 1). The panel identified two data quality issues related to the exclusion of noncredit enrollment data from IPEDS, which the report describes as follows:

The Finance component includes institutional revenues and expenses associated with aggregated credit and noncredit activity. Thus, when calculating indicators such as instructional expenses per full-time equivalent (FTE) enrollment, noncredit activity is included in the numerator but not in the denominator, producing an overestimate.

The Human Resources component includes instructional staff (faculty and non-faculty) totals; however, many instructors in institutions that offer both credit and noncredit activity are involved in both. Additionally, certain courses can contain both credit and noncredit students. These situations may lead to an inaccurate student-to-faculty ratio. (p. 2)

To address these issues, “the panel suggested that IPEDS is the correct collection vehicle for noncredit activity” (p. 2). The panel suggested the addition of noncredit enrollment data elements to the E12 survey in two categories, as shown in table 2.

**Table 2. TRP #22: Suggested classifications and schedule for collection of noncredit activity**

Data element	Credit Activity	Noncredit Activity	
		Workforce Preparation and/or Advancement	Community/Leisure
<b>Instructional Activity in [Clock] Hours</b>	Currently required	Optional—1 year	Optional—1 year
<b>Duplicated Headcount</b>	Currently required	Optional—1 year	Optional—1 year
<b>Unduplicated headcount</b>	Currently required	Optional—3 years	Optional—3 years

Source: TRP #22: Report and Suggestions (RTI International, 2008, Table 1)

NCES did not implement the panel’s suggestions at the time. In 2009, NCES added a data element to collect institutional student-to-faculty ratios to the EF survey, along with a worksheet institutions can use to calculate their student-to-faculty ratios, both of which remain in the survey today (Aliyeva et al., 2018, p. EF-16). The addition of this data element enabled NCES to report student-to-faculty ratios as required by the Higher Education Opportunity Act of 2008, but it did not reconcile the coverages of the enrollment, HR, and Finance components.

In 2019, Romano, Kirshstein, D’Amico, Hom, and Van Noy conducted a study to assess the effect of the mismatched coverages of enrollment and finance components. They concluded that “the addition of noncredit FTEs reduces what would typically be reported as expenditure per FTE student,” but that “there is a significant difference between the states in the study” (p.

13). Their findings suggest that the issue related to the calculation of per FTE student revenue and expense ratios identified by TRP#22 is valid and remains unresolved.

### *Summary: IPEDS Survey Materials and TRP#22 Report and Suggestions*

The reviews of the IPEDS survey materials and the report and suggestions from TRP #22 address the research questions about the IPEDS approach to noncredit, potential gaps in its approach, and how TRP #22 proposed to address them. The approach taken to noncredit activity in IPEDS excludes noncredit enrollment but includes instructional staff, revenues, and expenses associated with noncredit activities (Research Question [RQ] 2a). The exclusion of noncredit enrollment data creates a gap in the information available to stakeholders about the scope of higher education and the number of students served by postsecondary institutions (RQ 2a).

The exclusion of noncredit students from the enrollment components also creates a mismatch in the coverage of the enrollment components, HR component, and Finance component that results in inaccurate per FTE student ratios (RQ 2a). TRP 22# proposed to resolve the coverage mismatches by adding data elements on noncredit enrollment and instructional activity to the E12 component (RQ 3a, 3b, & 3c), but its recommendations were never implemented. The next two subsections look beyond IPEDS to explore the prevalence and roles of noncredit activity and how noncredit enrollment data are collected and used.

## C. Review of the Literature

This subsection presents findings from a review of the literature related to noncredit activities. This literature is limited in comparison to the literature on for-credit activities, but it sheds light on key issues raised by the research questions for this research. Information from the literature is organized by topic beginning with the prevalence of noncredit activity and progressing through: how noncredit activities are defined and categorized, state funding and data collection policies for noncredit activities, and outcomes of noncredit activities.

**Prevalence of Noncredit Activities:** There is no publicly available, national data collection that includes information on the number of students enrolled in noncredit courses and activities (Davaasambuu, Cinelli, D’Alessandro, Hamid, & Audant, 2018, p. 417). In 2018, the American Association of Community Colleges (AACC), reported that there were 5.0 million students enrolled in noncredit courses at community colleges in fall 2017, about 41 percent of all community college students, based on an internal analysis of its member database, which is not publicly available (2018, p. 1). This statistic, reported annually by AACC, has been cited widely as the best available national noncredit enrollment estimate (see Voorhees & Milam, 2005, p. 2; Cronen & Murphy, 2013, p. 2; D’Amico, Morgan, Katsinas, Adair, & Miller, 2017, p. 288).

Additional studies provide further insight into the prevalence of noncredit activities. The General Accounting Office (GAO) reported that most community colleges and technical schools offered some form of noncredit programming during the 2002-03 academic year (Bellis, 2004, p. 6), and 63 percent of responding institutions indicated that fewer than 25 percent of their students enrolled in noncredit occupational training programs (p. 11). Voorhees and Milam (2005) found that noncredit programming makes up 20 percent of all instructional activity at 2-

year, public institutions. D’Amico et al. (2017) reported that 2.8 million students were enrolled in noncredit activities across 33 states whose community college directors provided actual or estimated headcounts (p. 293).

Romano et al. note, however, that the FTE of these enrollments may be substantially less as a proportion of overall FTE enrollment (2019, p. 3). In a similar vein, Xu and Ran (2015) conducted a study of course enrollments in one state, which was not identified by the authors, and found that 38 percent of course enrollments over the six academic years analyzed were in noncredit courses, excluding developmental education (p. 11). Like Romano et al., Xu and Ran noted that “the headcount of noncredit students represented almost 60 percent of all students [at one institution] but only less than 18 percent of full-time equivalent (FTE) students for academic year 2013–2014” (p. 9).

*Definitions and Categories of Noncredit Activities:* The literature on noncredit activities includes numerous efforts to operationalize the concept of noncredit. The IPEDS *Glossary* (2018) defines a noncredit course as “a course or activity having no credit applicable toward a degree, diploma, certificate, or other formal award,” and a consensus has emerged around this definition among academic researchers. However, many of the studies reviewed focused on narrower categories of noncredit activity, such as workforce training, because these categories have unique features or funding and policy considerations.

It is noteworthy that the consensus among researchers on the definition of noncredit activity is not as prevalent among practitioners. For example, Vorhees and Milam (2005) found that while 78 percent of state organizations agreed with the definition that noncredit courses “are not applicable to a degree,” only about half of institutions concurred (p. 6). And Oleksiw et al. (2007, p. 16) and Van Noy, Jacobs, Korey, Bailey, and Hughes (2008, p. 8) observed that states use different definitions for their noncredit offerings. The variations in definitions used by practitioners may relate to whether particular noncredit offerings qualify for specific funding sources, rather than to the concept of noncredit in general. Van Noy et al. (2008) reported that 27 states provide guidelines for defining noncredit activities and noted that “States with contact hour–based or fixed-amount funding have guidelines for what counts as noncredit workforce education for the purposes of funding; those with bundled funding tend to leave definitions up to the discretion of the colleges” (p. 13).

The variation in state and institutional definitions notwithstanding, researchers have developed various typologies for noncredit activities based the primary roles noncredit activities play in higher education, which often have distinct policy considerations and data needs. Table 3 presents six typologies from the literature and groups their elements into three broad categories: vocational, pre-collegiate (including ABD, ESL, and General Educational Development [GED]), and avocational. All six typologies include types for vocational and pre-collegiate noncredit activities, and most include types for avocational programming.

**Table 3. Functional categories of noncredit activities from the literature**

Bellis (2004)	Voorhees & Milam (2005)	Business Roundtable (2009) <sup>1</sup>	D’Amico et al. (2014)	Xu and Ran (2015) <sup>2</sup>	Romano et al. (2019) <sup>3</sup>
<b>Vocational Categories</b>					
Occupational, professional, or technical training	Career and Technical	General workforce skills	Occupational training	Vocational	Vocational
Contract training		Sponsor-specific basic skills	Sponsored occupational (contract) training		Short-term workforce and contract courses
		Sponsor-specific workforce development			
<b>Pre-collegiate Categories</b>					
Below college-level academics (remedial)	Remedial	–	Pre-college remediation	–	Remedial (incl. ESL)
Basic skills		General basic academic skills		ESL	
				ABE	
		GED			
<b>Avocational Categories</b>					
Other	Recreational	–	Personal interest	–	Recreational
	Other				

– Not available: Category not identified or defined in study.

<sup>1</sup> Presented as a theoretical framework.

<sup>2</sup> Based on a single-state study that did not differentiate between employer-sponsored and non-employer-sponsored vocational courses and excluded remedial courses from the noncredit categories.

<sup>3</sup> Stated in definition of noncredit courses, not as part of findings from the study.

In 2014, D’Amico, Morgan, Roberson, and Houchins reported nine unique sets of terms used by researchers to classify noncredit courses from 1998 to 2008 (p. 153), highlighting the lack of consistency in the terminology used to describe noncredit activities. In light of this

inconsistency, the authors analyzed course enrollments at community colleges in an unidentified state to develop a typology of the most common noncredit courses (p. 156). Based on their findings, the authors recommended that future researchers collapse noncredit courses into four categories: occupational training, sponsored occupational training, pre-college remediation, and personal interest (p. 157), as each of the other categories represented less than one percent of enrollments in their dataset (p. 156).

Using this typology in a subsequent national survey of state community college directors, D'Amico et al. (2017) reported they made up 97 percent of noncredit enrollment:

- 29 percent: Occupational Training
- 28 percent: Sponsored Occupational Training
- 29 percent: Pre-college Remediation
- 11 percent: Personal Interest (p. 293)

[State Funding and Data Collection Policies for Noncredit Activities](#): The different types of noncredit activity identified in the literature, as described above, often reflect the various funding mechanisms that support them, as does the collection and reporting of data on noncredit activity. Students in noncredit courses and related activities are generally not eligible for federal grants or loans. Some may receive indirect support from federal workforce training programs, and students in ESL or remedial courses may be eligible for federal financial aid if they are enrolled an eligible program that leads to a certificate or degree (U.S. Department of Education, Federal Student Aid, 2017, vol. 1, pp. 3-6). Students who receive federal aid from these sources are generally excluded from studies of noncredit activities because they are treated as credit students for most purposes.

Several studies have documented the various state and other funding mechanisms for noncredit activity by state. A table summarizing findings from the literature on state-by-state funding and data collection policies for noncredit activities is presented in Section A of the appendix. According to Oleksiw et al. (2007), community colleges in all states generate revenue from tuition and fees and contracts with businesses, while 27 states provide funding for workforce training based on a formula, 16 through matching grants, and 5 through the same mechanisms as credit-bearing programs and colleges (p. 34). Van Noy et al. (2008) found that states provide general funding for noncredit activities through a variety of means including: formulas based on clock hours (11 states), allocations to colleges for designated for workforce training (7 states), and lump sums allocated to institutions (10 states; p. 11). Based on their survey of state community college directors, D'Amico et al. (2017) reported that the funding mechanisms identified by 20 directors who provided relevant responses included: funding based on clock hours (12 states) and lump-sum or performance funding-based (4 states). Fifteen of the directors said they receive funding for self-sponsored occupational training and 7 receive funding for personal interested courses (p. 293).

Due to the role states play in funding noncredit activities and the frequency with which noncredit activities are offered at state-supported community colleges, state data collection and reporting policies are the subject of several studies on noncredit data collection. The

literature suggests that, while collection of data on noncredit activities is common, it is far from universal. Van Noy et al. (2008) reported that 38 states require institutions to report data of some type on noncredit programs, including states that provide general funds support for noncredit activities and some states that do not (p. 30). Sykes, Szuplat, and Decker (2014) conducted a review of 29 state agency websites and found that 23 of those states collect and report data on noncredit enrollment (p. 7). D’Amico et al. (2017) reported that out of 47 respondents on the relevant questions in their survey, 34 indicated state collection of at least some data on noncredit activities, among which enrollment (28 states) and course type (24 states) were the most common (p. 293).

**Outcomes of Noncredit Activities:** Several studies have investigated the extent to which institutions and state agencies track the academic and workforce outcomes of students enrolled in noncredit offerings. Outcomes of interest for vocational programs include licensure, certification, award of CEUs, employment in a related field, and change in wages. For avocational offerings, institutions collect outcome data such as transition to enrollment in credit-bearing courses and granting of credit for non-credit courses through prior-learning assessments or noncredit-to-credit articulation.

In 2014, Sykes et al. reported that only a few of the 29 states they studied have processes in place to report on noncredit outcomes at the state level, and they lacked consistency between each other (p. 12). Van Noy et al. (2008) found that nine states have guidelines for the inclusion of noncredit coursework on students’ transcripts (p.25) and 17 have guidelines for granting credit through prior learning assessments (pp. 27-28). In 2007, Oleksiw et al. reported 15 states have some mechanism for the retroactive awarding of credit for noncredit coursework, although the means for doing so varied from state to state (p. 24).

#### D. Other National Data Collections

The Voluntary Framework of Accountability (VFA), led by the American Association of Community Colleges (AACC), was the only national collection of data that includes elements for ABE and noncredit CTE activities identified in the literature review. According to the VFA’s *Summary Report* (2019a), over 200 colleges reported data through the VFA in 2018 (Executive Summary, para. 1). These data are used in the calculation of various “measures defined to encompass the full breadth of the community college mission and the diversity of students’ goals and educational experiences” (Executive Summary, para. 1). Data reported through the VFA are not publicly available, and metrics for noncredit activities have not been published. Definitions of key terms related to noncredit data elements from the VFA’s *Metrics Manual* are summarized in Section B of the appendix.

The VFA collects two types of data for noncredit on noncredit CTE activities, as described VFA *Metrics Manual* (2019b):

*CTE Non-Credit Profile:* CTE enrollment (duplicated headcount) and completions (pp. 47-49).

*CTE Non-Credit Completer/Leaver Outcomes:* Unduplicated headcount of students who completed a noncredit program or who left the college with at least 180 clock hours (within a two-year period) in a noncredit CTE program (pp. 50-57).

According to the *Metrics Manual* (2019b), “identifying CTE courses [is] at the discretion of the institution but should be informed by a consistent standard such as a state-wide standard for identifying CTE courses/programs or an internal identification schema for determining whether a course/program is CTE” (p. 50). The VFA defines completions for noncredit CTE students as “completion of noncredit experiences/courses that provides training with a labor market value similar to the value of completion of a credit CTE program,” leaving to the institution to evaluate the labor market value of the experiences or courses completed. This approach accommodates variations in how CTE is defined by institutions at the potential expense of the comparability of the data reported among institutions.

#### *Summary: Review of the Literature and Other National Data Collections on Noncredit Activity*

The literature on noncredit activities answers this study’s questions about the prevalence and nature of noncredit activity but leaves others unanswered. Approximately 40 percent of community college students are enrolled in noncredit activities, which are offered at nearly 80 percent of community colleges, if not more. However, because noncredit activities typically entail lower enrollment intensity than academic programs, noncredit may represent less than 20 percent FTE instructional activity (RQ 1b).

There is a consensus among researchers on the definition of noncredit, and recent research has focused on defining categories of noncredit activity that are relevant to policy research (RQ 1a). These categories typically reflect the function of the activity and the various means by which noncredit courses are funded, where states play a central role. Depending on the study, 70 to 80 percent of states collect data on noncredit enrollment, but only around 20 percent of states provide funding based on instructional activity levels, and only a few track noncredit student outcomes (RQ 2b & 2c).

There is interest in tracking both academic transition and workforce outcomes for noncredit students, but the difficulty of obtaining enrollment and wage data has limited efforts to do so, especially across state lines (RQ 2c). While the VFA includes data elements on noncredit enrollment and outcomes at the institutional level, metrics based on those data have not been published, and the data it collects are not publicly available (RQ 2b). With no national, publicly available collection of noncredit enrollment data, questions about noncredit enrollment, trends, and patterns cannot be answered satisfactorily at the national level (RQ 1b & 1c).

## **5. FINDINGS FROM THE IPEDS DATA ANALYSIS**

Given the limited data available on the prevalence of noncredit activity at the national level, IPEDS data on staff who teach not-for-credit are the best indicator for noncredit activity levels nationwide. Tables 4 and 5 present these IPEDS data on the number of staff who teach not-for-

credit, which reflect degree-granting, Title IV institutions in the states and District of Columbia that have 15 or more full-time staff, as reported during the 2017-18 collection cycle.

Table 4 reports the number and percentage of primarily instructional staff who teach any not-for-credit (exclusively not-for-credit or combined credit/not-for-credit) by sector, institutional category, and institution size category. Among all institutions, 9.3 percent of primarily instructional staff members (98,211) teach any not-for-credit. Public 2-year institutions have the largest proportion of primarily instructional staff who teach any not-for-credit, with 12.3 percent (36,845). In all other sectors, less than 10 percent of primarily instructional staff teach any not-for-credit, including 24,594 staff who teach combined credit/not-for-credit at public 4-year or above institutions and 24,655 at private not-for-profit, 4-year or above institutions.

By institutional category, the percentage of primarily instructional staff who teach exclusively not-for-credit is highest among associate's and certificate (7.0 percent) institutions. By institution size category, the highest percentage of staff who teach any not-for-credit (11.4) and who teach combined credit/not-for-credit (8.4) are found in the 10,000 to 19,999 total enrollment category, which is dominated by public 4-year (45.6 percent) and public 2-year (38.7 percent) institutions.

Table 5 presents two related sets of data disaggregated by state and ordered by the percentage of staff who teach any not-for-credit. The left-hand columns show the percentages of primarily instructional staff who teach not-for-credit and the right-hand columns present select, and in some cases summarized, findings from studies on state noncredit funding and data collection policies documented in the literature review (see Section A of the appendix for a full listing of the findings). These studies are not directly comparable to the IPEDS data, but the IPEDS data can provide context for the policy data regarding the prevalence of noncredit activity in each state.

The percentages of primarily instructional staff who teach any not-for-credit range from 37.4 in Wisconsin to 1.2 in Vermont, while Hawaii reports none. More than 25 percent of primarily instructional staff teach any not-for-credit in Wisconsin and Rhode Island, whereas there are 21 states where five percent or less of primarily instructional staff teach any not-for-credit. The top 25 states by proportion of primarily instructional staff who teach any not-for-credit include:

- **10 of 15 states** (67 percent) that a greater percentage of staff who teach not-for-credit than the national average (2.6 percent)
- **10 of 14 states** (71 percent) that include noncredit data in their state data system, as reported by Van Noy et al. (2008 appendix B)
- **12 of 23 states** (52 percent) that collect some form of noncredit enrollment data, as reported by Sykes et al. (2014, table 1)
- **20 of 35 states** (57 percent) that provide state support for noncredit, as reported by Oleksiw et al. (2007, table 15)
- **16 of 28 states** (57 percent) that provide general funds for noncredit, as reported by Van Noy et al. (2008, appendix B)

**Table 4. Number of primarily instructional staff at degree-granting institutions that have 15 or more full-time staff by teaching type and institutional characteristics, fall 2017**

	Grand Total (#)	Exclusively credit (#)	Exclusively not-for- credit (#)	Combined credit/not- for-credit (#)	Exclusively credit (%)	Exclusively not-for- credit (%)	Combined credit/not- for-credit (%)
<i>Grand Total</i>	1,051,940	953,729	27,699	70,512	90.7	2.6	6.7
<b>Sector</b>							
Public 4-year or above	357,980	328,997	4,389	24,594	91.9	1.2	6.9
Private, not-for-profit 4-year or above	315,897	289,729	1,513	24,655	91.7	0.5	7.8
Private, for-profit 4-year or above	62,973	57,915	144	4,914	92.0	0.2	7.8
Public 2-year	298,643	261,798	21,539	15,306	87.7	7.2	5.1
Private, not-for-profit 2-year	3,331	3,219	57	55	96.6	1.7	1.7
Private, for-profit 2-year	13,116	12,071	57	988	92.0	0.4	7.5
<b>Institutional category</b>							
Graduate, no undergraduate degrees	13,668	12,607	192	869	92.2	1.4	6.4
Primarily baccalaureate or above	639,974	589,710	2,933	47,331	92.1	0.5	7.4
Not primarily baccalaureate or above	81,866	73,466	2,564	5,836	89.7	3.1	7.1
Associate's and certificates	316,432	277,946	22,010	16,476	87.8	7.0	5.2
<b>Institution size category</b>							
Under 1,000	68,730	63,964	1,086	3,680	93.1	1.6	5.4
1,000 - 4,999	279,021	253,242	9,760	16,019	90.8	3.5	5.7
5,000 - 9,999	207,100	188,470	4,823	13,807	91.0	2.3	6.7
10,000 - 19,999	235,089	208,303	7,092	19,694	88.6	3.0	8.4
20,000 and above	262,000	239,750	4,938	17,312	91.5	1.9	6.6

Source: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, IPEDS, Spring 2018, Human Resources component (provisional data).

**Table 5. Percentage of instructional staff who teach not-for-credit at degree-granting institutions and state funding and data collection policies from the literature by state**

State	Primarily instructional staff who teach (IPEDS, fall 2017): <sup>1</sup>			State funding and data collection policies			
	Excl. credit (%)	Excl. not-for-credit (%)	Comb. credit/not-for-credit (%)	State collects noncredit enrollment data <sup>2</sup> (Y/N)	State support (formula or matching grant) for noncredit <sup>3</sup> (Y/N)	State general funds for noncredit <sup>4</sup> (Y/N)	State data system includes noncredit <sup>4</sup> (Y/N)
WI	62.6	7.1	30.3	–	X	X	
RI	74.7	0.2	25.1	–			
OR	76.9	4.2	18.8	X	X	X	X
MT	79.4	0.1	20.6		X	X	X
NC	81.7	14.9	3.4	X	X	X	X
OK	82.7	0.2	17.1		X	X	
CO	83.6	1.5	14.9	X	X		
DC	85.2	1.5	13.3				
WV	85.3	0.0	14.6	–	X	X	
IL	87.0	0.5	12.5	X	X	X	X
WA	87.5	1.3	11.3		X		X
NH	87.5	0.0	12.5	X	X		X
WY	87.6	11.3	1.0	X			
TX	88.2	5.1	6.7	–	X	X	
IA	88.7	5.5	5.8	X	X	X	X
FL	88.9	2.5	8.6	X	X	X	X
NJ	89.4	3.4	7.2	X	X	X	X
IN	89.7	0.6	9.7	–			
CA	89.8	2.1	8.2	X	X	X	X
AR	89.8	2.5	7.8	X	X		
NY	90.7	1.5	7.8	–	X		
ID	90.7	4.9	4.3	–	X	X	
NM	91.5	2.7	5.7	–		X	
SD	92.2	0.6	7.2		X	X	
PA	93.3	3.3	3.4	X	X	X	
NV	93.6	6.3	0.0	–			
AL	94.0	2.8	3.2	–	X		
KY	94.6	0.3	5.1	–	X	X	
SC	94.6	3.0	2.4	–	X	X	
LA	94.8	2.4	2.8	–			
GA	95.0	3.1	1.9	X			X
UT	95.2	2.3	2.5	X	X	X	X

State	Primarily instructional staff who teach (IPEDS, fall 2017): <sup>1</sup>			State funding and data collection policies			
	Excl. credit (%)	Excl. not-for-credit (%)	Comb. credit/not-for-credit (%)	State collects noncredit enrollment data <sup>2</sup> (Y/N)	State support (formula or matching grant) for noncredit <sup>3</sup> (Y/N)	State general funds for noncredit <sup>4</sup> (Y/N)	State data system includes noncredit <sup>4</sup> (Y/N)
MA	95.3	1.0	3.7	X	X		
TN	95.6	0.3	4.1	X			
MD	95.8	1.6	2.6	X	X	X	
OH	95.9	0.3	3.8		X		X
MN	96.1	0.6	3.3		X	X	
CT	96.5	2.3	1.2	–			
NE	96.9	1.3	1.8	–	X	X	
DE	96.9	2.8	0.2	–	X		
MI	97.1	0.4	2.5	X	X	X	X
AZ	97.2	0.3	2.5	–		X	
VA	97.4	1.7	0.8	–	X	X	
MS	97.6	2.1	0.4	X	X	X	
MO	97.6	1.7	0.7	X			
ND	98.0	0.2	1.8	X	X	X	
KS	98.1	0.1	1.8	–	X		
ME	98.3	1.0	0.7	–			
AK	98.4	0.3	1.2	X		X	
VT	98.8	0.9	0.3	–			
HI	100.0	0.0	0.0	X			

– Not available

1 U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, IPEDS, Spring 2018, Human Resources component (provisional data).

2 State collected and reported one or more of unduplicated headcount, duplicated headcount, noncredit and credit enrollment combined, or number of hours of noncredit training provided for noncredit enrollments, adapted from Sykes et al. (2014, table 1).

3 States provide community colleges with funding for noncredit occupational programming through a funding formula or matching grants, adapted from Oleksiw et al. (2007, Table 15).

4 State provides general funding support for noncredit education and noncredit data are included in the state data reporting system, as reported by Van Noy et al. (2008, appendix B).

### *Summary: Analysis of IPEDS Data Analysis*

The IPEDS data provide some insight into the prevalence of noncredit activity in U.S. higher education. The percentage of staff who teach not-for-credit by state ranges from 0 to 37 percent and is greater than 15 percent in 7 states (RQ 1). The 25 states with the highest proportions of staff who teach not-for-credit are somewhat more likely to: have more staff who

teach not-for-credit than the national average, fund noncredit activities, collect data on noncredit enrollment, and include noncredit data in their state data systems than other states. However, these data cannot be related to common measures such as enrollment due to factors such as variations in teaching loads and the duration and intensity of noncredit activities (RQ 1b). And as noted in the literature review, some experts have expressed concerns about the accuracy of these data as reported through IPEDS.

## 6. FINDINGS FROM THE INTERVIEWS WITH STAKEHOLDERS

The perspectives of IPEDS stakeholders ground potential changes to IPEDS in the needs of consumers and practitioners and ensure that reporting burdens are justified. Recognized professionals in the higher education community participated in nine interviews for this study, including seven institutional interviews representing varying institutional types and sectors, a representative of a national association that collects data on noncredit activities, and a nationally recognized noncredit researcher. Their insights are summarized below.

### *Institutional Interviews:*

Of the seven institutional interviews, four present an institutional research (IR) perspective, while the other three present the perspective of workforce training divisions that house the majority of noncredit activity at their respective institutions. The institutions are described below, followed by summaries of their interview responses organized by topic.

- Institutional research (IR) administrators
  - **CCD: Community college district** with enrollment in a mix of vocational and avocational noncredit activities that is about 20 percent of total enrollment; offerings include: self-funded and sponsored occupational training, ABE, self-improvement/life enrichment.
  - **PNFP: Private not-for-profit** doctoral university with enrollment under 10,000 and limited continuing education noncredit activity; offerings include: continuing education for faculty, staff, and the community and extracurricular activities for undergraduate students (e.g., athletics, special interest clubs).
  - **FPMO: For-profit management organization** that manages and submits IPEDS data for multiple 2-year or less, private for-profit institutions with enrollment in workforce training activities that is about 10 percent of total enrollment; offerings include: self-funded and contract vocational training and certification examination preparation.
  - **PLGU: Public land-grant university** with enrollment around 25,000 and noncredit enrollment of about 1 to 2 percent of total enrollment; offerings include: continuing professional education, personal enrichment, GED, workshops and seminars offered by academic divisions, and specialized horticultural training.
- Noncredit division administrators
  - **CC1: Large, multi-campus community college (#1)** with enrollment in primarily vocational noncredit activities that is nearly 50 percent of total enrollment; offerings

- include: self-funded and contract workforce training (multiple campuses) and personal interest (main campus only).
- **CC2:** Large, multi-campus **community college (#2)** with enrollment in primarily vocational noncredit activities that is roughly 10 percent of total enrollment; workforce training offerings include: open-enrollment and contract training.
- **CCS:** Statewide technical and **community college system** with enrollment in vocational and avocational noncredit activities that is about 37 percent of for-credit enrollment; offerings include: open-enrollment and customized workforce development, avocational community education, and workforce assessments.

**Definitions of Noncredit:** Some of the interviewees indicated that their institutions have explicit definitions for noncredit activity. Others do not have explicit definitions but are able to identify noncredit students based on student characteristics in their student information systems (SIS). The interviewee from the PNFP indicated that her office's interest is in activities usually characterized as "extracurricular." The interviewee from the FPMO was the only one to mention Title IV eligibility as being central to his institution's definition of noncredit activity.

- **CCD:** Identifies noncredit students in its data system based on the values of two data elements in its state's data system: one based on academic intent (i.e., neither academic nor vocational) and the other on a student's funding source (i.e., neither state nor contract funded).
- **CC1:** Uses the definition from its state coordinating board: "A course that results in the award of continuing education units (CEU), as specified by [the accreditor], or institutional credit;" in general, the interviewee stated that avocational or career advancement and skill upgrading courses tend to be noncredit.
- **CC2:** Identifies noncredit students based on term identifiers in its student information system (SIS) since its noncredit courses are on a different calendar than its credit courses.
- **CCS:** Defines courses as "any structured educational activity sponsored by the college for the personal and professional development of individuals." Workforce development courses (which can be credit or noncredit) are "training and education designed to improve an individual's professional workplace skills," and community education courses are "educational programs organized to provide enrichment to individuals in subjects of social awareness or personal interest."
- **PLGU:** Defines noncredit as: "Courses that do not lead to the completion of a degree" (institutional definition), which may be offered through its agricultural extension or professional education office and are typically, but not always, taken by non-degree seeking students.
- **FPMO:** Identifies noncredit students primarily by the Title IV eligibility status of their programs, although some students in Title IV eligible programs also take noncredit courses (e.g., CPR training for nursing students) and some of its Title IV eligible programs are too short to report through IPEDS.
- **PNFP:** Has noncredit courses, but its IR office does not track enrollment in them and has greater interest in noncredit extracurricular activities that promote student success and sense belongingness.

**Noncredit data collection and reporting:** The community colleges, CCD, CCS, PLGU, and FPMO interviewees all indicated that they have student and course enrollment data that could support reporting enrollment in noncredit courses through IPEDS, with certain limitations. For example, the community colleges, CCD and FPMO do not have complete data on students in contract training courses, and data avocational programming may be less complete than for occupational training. The interviewee from PNFP said her IR office does not have, and would not be able to report, data on noncredit activities.

- **CCD:** The district IR office (and institutions) has access to its institutions' information in the state's data system, which the institutions could use to report noncredit enrollment to IPEDS.
  - The data warehouse includes course enrollment data and some demographic data from the statewide application that nearly all students complete, although some elements of the application may be optional for noncredit students.
  - Enrollment in contract training, and some leisure courses, might not be available.
  - The district IR office does not receive requests for noncredit data or reports.
  - The data are used for course planning at the institutions level.
  - Noncredit enrollment has been flat for the last 8-10 years.
- **CC1:** The workforce training division collects student identifying information and course enrollment data for all noncredit students, which could be used to report headcounts and instructional activity through IPEDS.
  - It collects the data to meet state reporting requirements, but the state requirements only apply to state-supported courses, and the data for other courses are only used on an infrequent, ad hoc basis (e.g., grant applications).
  - The data are used by the state to allocate workforce training funding based on contact hours.
- **CC2:** The college collects comprehensive enrollment and demographic data for self-supported, noncredit vocational programming in its SIS, which could be used to report through IPEDS.
  - Data on avocational programming is less readily available, and enrollment data for contract training courses are not always collected.
  - There is interest in data on students who receive state training grants, but "if it is not through the grant, it is often through employers, so we do not always get all the info, like [social security numbers]."
  - "The work ahead is putting in place more process and reporting" to improve data on noncredit activities.
  - The state provides grants to students for workforce training, but it does not track their enrollment at the college.
  - Enrollment is tied to the economy and has dipped slightly in recent years.
- **CCS:** System institutions enter all noncredit enrollments in a systemwide registration system that the institutions and system office use for noncredit reporting.
  - Course level enrollment data are reliable and unduplicated headcounts could be generated, but student-level data (i.e., demographics) are limited, particularly for community education and customized training.

- System institutions classify courses as credit or noncredit and workforce or community education in the data system based on guidelines provided by CCS; CCS provides training for institutional staff on this process, but attaining consistent classifications is a challenge: “you need some standard definitions so you are getting apples and apples.”
- CCS collects and reports data on the employers of customized training enrollees, including their industry.
- CCS administers industry certification and occupational licensure examinations and reports the number of examinations administered.
- **PLGU:** Noncredit students complete the university application, so “we have everything that we would have for the regular students, including demographics,” but enrollments are handled at the department or program level and might be less reliable.
  - “Noncredit [activities] are not in the vanguard of data collection nor of the utmost importance. They do not drive curriculum or course assessment” and are “regularly excluded” from internal reports.
  - “I don’t think those courses . . . are routinely examined. At the course level, they might be examined for course design, and they might look at establishing institutional connections to support student connections and success.”
- **FPMO:** The organization collects headcount and instructional activity for most noncredit activities in the same SIS used for credit students and could report them through IPEDS.
  - Its data include some demographics, although race/ethnicity data are often missing, and its data are more limited for contract training programs.
  - “The [social security number] is not required, so we are not going to ask for it. In today’s age, it’s a two-way street; [students] don’t want to provide it, and we don’t want to ask for it.”
  - Enrollment has delinked slightly in recent years due to campus closures.
- **PNFP:** The data may be collected somewhere on campus but not through the IR office, but it would be “virtually impossible” for the IR office to obtain the data for IPEDS reporting purposes as “there is no method or procedure to get the data.”

**Benefits and Challenges of Collecting Noncredit Data:** Several of the interviewees mentioned the potential value of raising awareness about noncredit activities. One suggested that reporting data on noncredit activities might be helpful in securing additional funding and another stated that reporting could help bolster the credibility of noncredit vocational training. Others indicated that data on noncredit activities would have little or no value to their institutions.

- **CCD:** Data on noncredit activity reported through IPEDS would help raise awareness of noncredit activities, get recognition for students in noncredit CTE programs, and “frame the value of postsecondary education in light of talk about free college for all.”
  - “20 percent [of students] taking these courses is a big population.”
  - “To the extent that boating courses are seen as meeting the needs of the community, it would be relevant to quantify [them].” Such data could help the district monitor whether its focus on degree attainment is coming “at the cost of not serving the community to try to get students in career pathways.”

- **CC1:** The workforce training division has to “go after grants for additional funding” for noncredit courses, reporting through IPEDS could help it make the case.
  - “We do see students go on to an academic program or training program, but that is not in [our] general reports.”
- **CC2:** The college is “most interested in student workforce outcomes, the certifications that are earned” and focuses on open enrollment courses “because they serve as steppingstones in the credit curriculum.”
  - “If you are capturing noncredit, to what end? Are they transitioning to credit enrollment or employment?”
  - The college is working with a national nonprofit data clearinghouse to match its student records with certifications from independent issuers to track outcomes.
  - Data collected through IPEDS would “be helpful in forcing the conversation” and “fit with reframing higher [education] as more than just degrees.”
- **CCS:** “It would be great to be able to showcase the full range of our offerings.”
  - Noncredit metrics “do not resonate” on the credit side, so CCS is moving toward representing noncredit offerings in terms of credit hours rather than clock hours
  - Reporting noncredit enrollment in a national collection could help establish the “credibility” of workforce education and encourage the inclusion of noncredit workforce education in performance funding models.
  - It would be interesting to see noncredit enrollment for peer institutions in other states, as intrastate comparisons are not always feasible.
  - CCS tracks the number of students trained by industry sector and workforce assessment examinations, which could be interesting at the national level.
  - A business asked a system institution to offer a community education course as a customized training course, an example of how the course is classified “depends on why you are doing it and who it is for, not necessarily the content.”
- **PLGU:** “There could be some utility in it, particularly for community colleges. I don’t know how applicable it would be to universities.”
  - “A benefit would be transparency, especially for different types of institutions and different regions of the country where we see high school graduations starting to dwindle.”
  - Overcoming the “practicality questions” to get “consistency among all the institutions” would be a challenge.
- **FPMO:** “I don’t see it being useful to some students, depending on the type of student. It would be helpful for nursing students to see data, but probably not to industrial training students.”
  - “[IPEDS] needs to have multiple definitions across different sectors and categories. It’s going to get very muddy.”
  - “Maybe it’s limited to courses at your institution that are not contracted by another company or agency.”
  - We would feel the burden because the data are not very relevant to us.
  - Data should be collected moving forward, not retrospectively.

- **PNFP:** Comparison or benchmarking data on student participation in noncredit extracurricular activities would be valuable.
  - Courses offered through the institution’s center for continuing education would be a better fit for reporting through IPEDS but are entirely student-funded.
  - Mandating reporting of data on student-funded courses would be “authoritarian and not supportive of education at large.”

### *Researcher and Association Representative Interviews*

In addition to the institutional interviews, an academic researcher (researcher) and a representative of a national association that collects noncredit enrollment data (association) participated in interviews. Their responses are presented separately below because they represent non-institutional perspectives and responded to discussion guides that differed from the guides to which the interviewees from institutions responded.

**Noncredit Data Collection:** The association representative and researcher commented on various aspects of implementing noncredit data elements relevant to IPEDS. The researcher discussed the process by which his association developed data elements for noncredit activity and challenges it encountered in that process. The researcher offered thoughts based on his experience working with noncredit datasets and categorizing noncredit enrollment meaningfully.

- **Association Representative:** The association convened a group of stakeholders to develop data elements for its collection, including on noncredit activity. The development group identified the following challenges, along with solutions for some:
  - Defining which students and activities should or should not be included.
    - The group “erred on the side of institutional definitions,” allowing reporters to determine which activities to include.
  - Overcoming the limited availability of student identifying information needed to deduplicate enrollment and instructional activity.
    - The collection includes both duplicated and unduplicated cohorts, allowing institutions to report where possible.
  - Obtaining accurate headcounts for contract training courses.
  - Defining completion for noncredit activities that may not be designed with clear endpoints: enrollments and completions are “different challenges.”
  - Establishing a consistent definition for avocational programming: “Is it one hour? Two hours? Is it a ‘learning experience’?”
- **Noncredit Researcher:** The IPEDS definition of noncredit is “established,” but the two functional categories suggested by TRP #22 are not sufficient.
  - The IPEDS definition of noncredit does not address the emerging trend of granting credit for noncredit coursework retroactively (through noncredit-to-credit articulation or prior learning assessments).
  - Remedial or developmental education should not be included in a noncredit data collection, but short-term adult education is important and should be included: “[My

- colleagues and I] have never thought remedial education should be included on the noncredit side,” because it is delivered on the credit side.
- Data on noncredit offerings would be “okay,” but some measure of intensity or the proportion of the student population served would be more useful.
  - Data on sponsored training and self-funded occupational enrollment should be collected separately: “there are apples and oranges in workforce training.”
    - “There are different cases to be made for each type of course. Data on sponsored training could support apprenticeships. Self-sponsored training could make the case for articulation.”
    - ABE and ESL may help a person gain employment, but “those are not the same type of technical training” typically thought of as noncredit vocational training.
  - Casual staff may be used to teach a significant number of noncredit courses based on personal experience in the community college sector.

**Benefits and Challenges of Collecting Noncredit Data:** The association representative and researcher also discussed potential benefits and challenges associated with collecting data on noncredit activity at the national level.

- **Association Representative:**

- Noncredit programming is “left out of discussions” and “largely absent from the literature” because “we do not have good data on noncredit to communicate that value.”
- “The value case has not been made,” but if the industry decided on a set definition and metrics, “it might drive capacity at the colleges. It could be very effective.”
- IPEDS data on the offerings related to apprenticeships might be worth pursuing, whether they are offered with or without college credit.

- **Noncredit Researcher:**

- “Having some national data, even if limited, could help make the case for funding at the state level.”
  - If we could better capture outcomes, it could help make the case for federal funding of “the most nimble system in higher education..., [in which] a program can be created at any time to meet business or community needs.”
  - “Connecting datasets is important” in regard to connecting data on noncredit activity and labor market outcomes, as well as between credit and noncredit student records.
- “It would be great if there was a nationally representative sample to start looking at student outcomes,” but “there are many local issues that make standard data collection a challenge.”
  - It is “hard to motivate states to have a robust data collection if there is no financial incentive.”
  - The lack of data about students in contract training courses is an issue.
  - He has encountered various methods of categorizing noncredit activities in state data systems, reflecting the lack of consistency in definitions.

- The IPEDS data on staff who teach not-for-credit could suffer from inconsistent definitions.

*Summary: Interviews with Stakeholders*

The responses to the stakeholder interviews shed further light on this study's research questions. All of the public institutions and the FPMO offer self-funded and contract occupational training, and all of the public institutions offer avocational programming (RQ 1a). Two of the institutions have explicit definitions of noncredit and one defines both workforce and community education, but they all indicated that they can identify noncredit students in their SIS except for the PNFP (RQ 2b). The interviewees from the public institutions and the FPMO indicated that they would be able to report noncredit enrollment data through IPEDS, but they noted potential issues with the completeness and reliability of data on avocational courses and contract training (RQ 2b & 3c).

Three of the interviewees indicated that enrollment in noncredit activities has been flat or declined in recent years, one of whom noted that enrollment in workforce training is countercyclical to the economy (RQ 1c). One of the community colleges reported that its noncredit enrollment data are used in allocating state funding, but the other interviewees indicated that their data on noncredit activities are not used regularly or are used primarily for internal and strategic planning and accountability (RQ 2b).

The institutionally affiliated interviewees said they see at least some potential value in the collection of noncredit enrollment data through IPEDS associated with increasing awareness about noncredit offerings and their value to the economy and community (RQ 2c). Several noted the potential challenge of establishing consistent definitions across institutions to allow for comparing "apples to apples." The PNFP interviewee indicated that her office is interested in extracurricular activities that support student success but not in other types of noncredit activities, which are not prevalent at her institution. This response is not necessarily representative of other institutions but merits consideration as a potential concern related to collecting noncredit enrollment data (RQ 3c).

The association representative echoed concerns raised in the literature and by the institutional interviewees that some community colleges do not have detailed data on enrollment in noncredit activities readily available and that the lack of consistent definitions is a barrier to collecting reliable noncredit enrollment data (RQ 2b). However, he suggested that data on noncredit activities would be valuable if the industry could reach consensus on those issues (RQ 2c). The researcher suggested that collecting noncredit enrollment data in the categories identified by TRP #22 may not provide enough specificity to optimize the value of the data (RQ 3b), but that collecting data on noncredit activities could help make the case for additional funding of noncredit activities at the state and federal levels (RQ 2c).

## 7. RECOMMENDATIONS

The findings from this study suggest that noncredit activity plays an important role in U.S. higher education that is not adequately captured by any national, publicly available data collection and that information on this activity would be valuable to community colleges, researchers, and policymakers. Furthermore, the exclusion of noncredit enrollment from IPEDS has a negative effect on the quality of IPEDS data, specifically the calculation of per FTE student ratios using IPEDS data. The following recommendations address these findings and are presented in order of the author's estimation of their difficulty of implementation.

**Recommendation #1:** Use the term “noncredit” consistently throughout the IPEDS survey materials. The terms “noncredit,” “non-credit,” and “not-for-credit” are used in the IPEDS survey materials with no discernable difference in meaning or usage, although only “noncredit” is defined in the *Glossary*. Using one term consistently throughout the IPEDS survey materials would help avoid confusion, likely improve data quality, and signal the value of noncredit data within IPEDS. The unhyphenated version is suggested because it is the most common in the contemporary literature.

**Recommendation #2:** Raise awareness of the data about staff who teach noncredit through reports and training. NPEC members and the researcher interviewed expressed concerns about the quality of the IPEDS data on staff who teach noncredit. Factors affecting the quality of these data may include institutions: placing low value on their quality, misinterpreting the coverage of the survey, or having difficulty collecting accurate data internally. Recommendations 2 and 3 address the first two of these potential causes. The third may not be directly addressable by NCES, although collecting noncredit enrollment could nudge institutions toward changing their internal processes in ways that would ease Human Resources (HR) component reporting.

Institutions may place low importance on the quality of these data because they are relatively new to IPEDS, having been added in 2012-13, and are not reported visibly and regularly. Staff who teach noncredit are included in the new Data Explorer, but they have not been featured in regular NCES publications (e.g., First Look reports) or other online reporting tools (e.g., Data Trends). The limited use of these data may contribute to a negative feedback loop in which institutions devalue them due to their low visibility and, therefore, do not invest effort in improving their quality, which discourages potential users from reporting them.

NCES can counter this cycle in two ways. First, it can make deliberate efforts to report and publicize these data more widely. Publishing an ad hoc report or data visualization using these data could help boost their visibility and publicizing such a product to participating institutions could encourage them to place greater value on their quality.

Second, NCES can increase the emphasis on these data during IPEDS keyholder training. A review of current training materials indicates that keyholders are made aware of these data elements and the likelihood that the data may not be readily accessible. Encouraging trainers to spend more time discussing these data with keyholders would convey the importance of

reporting high quality data for these elements and help keyholders develop a consistent understanding of the component's coverage.

**Recommendation #3: Clarify the coverage of the Human Resources component.** The HR component Instructions for institutions that have 15 or more full-time staff include language that may lack clarity regarding staff who teach noncredit. As noted in the findings from the environmental scan, the instructions clearly indicate that institutions must report all instructional staff, including staff who provide instruction in non-credit courses. However, the "Coverage" section does not specify that staff who teach noncredit workforce training and ABE programs should be reported, and it directs institutions to exclude casual staff, which likely includes noncredit instructors at many institutions.

Casual staff fill a variety of roles in postsecondary education, and it is not the intent of this recommendation that they should all be reported through IPEDS. Traditional, for-credit courses are normally taught by faculty, so casual staff who fill temporary vacancies in these courses should continue to be excluded. In contrast, it is normal for noncredit activities to be ad hoc, short-term, and have specialized instructor skill requirements, so casual staff in these roles should be included in IPEDS. Following are suggested revisions to clarify the coverage of the HR component with regard to staff who teach noncredit activities, with additions underlined:

- **Who to Include in this Report:** Staff in for-credit or noncredit workforce development training programs, avocational programs, and pre-collegiate programs (i.e., Adult Basic Education (ABE), English as a second language (ESL), General Educational Development (GED) and remedial or developmental education programs).
- **Who NOT to Include in this Report:** Casual staff (hired on an ad hoc or occasional basis to meet short-term needs) except casual staff who teach noncredit workforce development training programs or avocational programs.

**Recommendation #4: Add terms to the IPEDS Glossary to create a reporting framework for noncredit activities.** The framework is intended to establish a set of clearly defined, mutually exclusive categories based on research from the literature and consideration of the different policy and data needs for different types of noncredit activity, as well as the potential collection of data on student outcomes in the future. Such a framework, established by IPEDS, would serve as a guide to help institutions and states develop interoperable data definitions and practices and facilitate multistate and national analysis even if noncredit enrollment data elements are not added to IPEDS.

The key distinction in the framework is between "noncredit activities" and "noncredit courses." The noncredit courses category is intended to exclude noncredit activities, such as seminars and workshops. These other activities are important, but establishing a clear definition of what should be counted is necessary to operationalize the noncredit course as a concept that can be clearly defined and identified across many institutions. It is anticipated that the definition of "noncredit courses" will be examined and refined by a TRP.

The noncredit courses category is further subdivided into: vocational courses, employer-sponsored vocational courses, pre-collegiate courses, and avocational courses. The vocational

and pre-collegiate course categories are explicitly defined in the framework. The avocational category includes all other noncredit courses. The recommended terms to establish this framework are listed below.

**Noncredit activity:** *An educational experience offered by the institution having no credit applicable toward a degree, diploma, certificate, or other recognized postsecondary credential at the time of completion, including offerings for which credit may be granted retroactively, such as through articulation or prior learning assessment.*

**Noncredit course:** *A noncredit activity with a designated instructor, a curriculum approved by the institution, and consisting of a minimum of 6 clock hours of instruction, including Adult Basic Education (ABE) courses, English as a Second Language (ESL) courses, courses that are part of a program leading to a high school credential when not taken as part of a postsecondary academic program.*

**Vocational noncredit course:** *A noncredit course intended to provide labor market value or postsecondary instruction in occupationally specific skills, including courses intended to prepare students for certification or licensure examinations and courses that provide continuing education units (CEUs) and excluding remedial, ABE, ESL, and courses that are part of a program leading to a high school credential. Also referred to as occupational, technical, or workforce development training, skills upgrading, and noncredit continuing professional education.*

**Employer-sponsored vocational noncredit course:** *A noncredit vocational course offered under an agreement with an entity other than the institution (e.g., a business or government, or both) for the purpose of providing labor market value or postsecondary instruction in occupationally specific skills to employees of the other entity.*

**Pre-collegiate noncredit course:** *A noncredit course that provides instruction intended to prepare students for college level courses, including remedial, ABE, GED, and ESL courses.*

**Avocational noncredit course:** *Any noncredit course that is neither a vocational course nor a pre-collegiate course, such as personal interest and leisure courses.*

Recommendation #5: Add duplicated headcount enrollment and instructional activity for noncredit enrollment to the E12 survey component. Add data elements to collect duplicated headcounts and instructional activity (clock hours) for enrollment in noncredit courses and for-credit courses taken as noncredit courses, categorized as shown in table 6. Following the framework described above, enrollment would be reported in three primary categories: Vocational, Avocational, and Pre-collegiate, with Employee-sponsored Vocational as an exclusive subcategory of Vocational. The Pre-collegiate category includes in ABE, ESL, GED, and remedial courses, while the Avocational category captures any courses not categorized as Vocational or Pre-collegiate. Section D of the appendix identifies suggested changes to the E12 component instructions to support the addition of these data elements to IPEDS.

**Table 6. Suggested categories for collection of noncredit enrollment and instructional activity**

	Duplicated Headcount	Instructional Activity (clock hours)
A. Total Noncredit Enrollment (calculated)	(sum of 1, 2, 3)	(sum of 1, 2, 3)
1. Vocational (total)	(sum of 1a, 1b)	(sum of 1a, 1b)
a. Vocational (not employer-sponsored)	(required)	(required)
b. Employer-sponsored vocational	(optional for 1 yr.)	(optional for 1 yr.)
2. Pre-collegiate	(required)	(required)
3. Avocational	(required)	(required)
B. Enrollment in Other Noncredit activities	(optional)	(optional)

Duplicated headcount would be reported for students who enroll in any course (credit or noncredit) for which the student does not receive credit toward a degree, diploma, certificate, or other recognized postsecondary credential at the time of completion, excluding: audits, labs, and other enrollments associated with a credit course, as well as students who enroll exclusively in noncredit “activities.” Reported noncredit enrollments would be categorized based on the type of course or courses in which the student enrolled based on the framework outlined above. Students who enroll in more than one category of noncredit course would be reported in each category in which they enrolled.

Students who take both noncredit and for-credit courses during the same reporting period would be reported in both headcounts, except for students in remedial courses. Students in remedial courses would only be counted as noncredit if they are *not* degree-seeking for the purpose of student financial aid determination. Instructional activity would be reported in the category corresponding to the category of the course in which the student enrolled.

The instructional activity data (clock hours) could be used to calculate approximate FTE enrollment to address the issue with per FTE student ratios identified by TRP #22 and others. The duplicated headcount data would allow institutions and researchers to quantify the number of students served in each of these categories. The categories reflect types of noncredit activity that have distinctive data and policy considerations, and could be modified in the future to include completions (i.e., credentials awarded, employment outcomes, and transitions to academic programs) or additional subcategories, such as a subcategory for apprenticeship-related course work in the Vocational category.

If NCES adds noncredit enrollment data elements to IPEDS, the collection should be prospective, not retrospective. In addition, NCES could consider giving institutions the option to report duplicated headcounts and instructional activity for noncredit activities, in addition to noncredit courses (shown as item B in table 6). Collection of *unduplicated* headcounts is not recommended at this time because the findings suggest that collecting the required student identifying data would be overly burdensome and incompatible with many institutions’ policies against collecting the data that would be needed for de-duplication.

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## APPENDIX

### A. State Noncredit Funding and Data Collection Polices from the Literature

**Table A-1. Summary of findings from the literature on noncredit funding and data collection, by state**

State	Oleksiw et al. (2007)		Van Noy et al. (2008)				Sykes et al. (2014)			
	State support (funding formula)	State support (matching grants)	State general funds (for noncredit)	Data system includes noncredit	Noncredit definition	Reporting required (for noncredit)	Contact Hours	Duplicated Headcount	Unduplicated headcount	Credit/Noncredit Combined
AK			X			X	X			
AL		X				X	-	-	-	-
AR		X			X	X		X		
AZ			X		X		-	-	-	-
CA	X		X	X	X	X			X	
CO		X			X	X			X	
CT					X	X	-	-	-	-
DE		X					-	-	-	-
FL	X		X	X	X	X				X
GA				X		X			X	
HI								X		
IA	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
ID	X	X	X		X	X	-	-	-	-
IL	X		X	X	X	X		X	X	
IN	-	-					-	-	-	-
KS	X						-	-	-	-
KY		X	X		-	X	-	-	-	-
LA							-	-	-	-
MA	X					X			X	
MD	X		X		X	X			X	
ME					X		-	-	-	-
MI	X		X	X		X			X	
MN	X		X		X	X				
MO					X				X	
MS	X		X			X			X	
MT	X		X	X		X				
NC	X	X	X	X	X	X			X	
ND	X	X	X		X	X		X		
NE	X		X		X	X	-	-	-	-
NH		X		X		X			X	
NJ	X	X	X	X	X	X			X	

State	Oleksiw et al. (2007)		Van Noy et al. (2008)				Sykes et al. (2014)			
	State support (funding formula)	State support (matching grants)	State general funds (for noncredit)	Data system includes noncredit	Noncredit definition	Reporting required (for noncredit)	Contact Hours	Duplicated Headcount	Unduplicated headcount	Credit/Noncredit Combined
NM			X		X	X	-	-	-	-
NV							-	-	-	-
NY	X	X					-	-	-	-
OH	X	X		X	X	X				
OK	X		X			X				
OR	X		X	X	X	X			X	
PA	X		X		X	X			X	
RI							-	-	-	-
SC	X		X		X	X	-	-	-	-
SD		X	X			X				
TN					X		X			
TX	X		X		X	X	-	-	-	-
UT	X		X	X	X	X			X	
VA	X		X		X	X	-	-	-	-
VT	-	-					-	-	-	-
WA		X		X		X				
WI	X		X		X	X	-	-	-	-
WV	X	X	X		X	X	-	-	-	-
WY						X		X	X	

- Not available

Sources: Adapted from Oleksiw et al. (2007, Table 15), Van Noy et al. (2008, appendix B), and Sykes et al. (2014, Table 1).

B. Select definitions from the Voluntary Framework of Accountability (VFA)

Term	Definition
<b>CTE Non-Credit Profile</b>	
<b>Enrollment (non-credit)</b>	Duplicated count of students (seat count) in non-credit CTE (business and industry courses, contract training, professional education programs) in the [specified] academic year.
<b>Completion</b>	A non-credit completion is the completion of noncredit experiences/courses that provides training with a labor market value similar to the value of completion of a credit CTE program. . . . Completions in a non-credit program may be less than 180 contact hours.
<b>CTE Non-credit Completer/Leaver Outcomes</b>	
<b>Non-credit CTE Completer/Leaver Cohort</b>	[S]tudents who in academic year 2015-16 completed a non-credit CTE program (completers) or whose last noncredit CTE enrollment was in the academic year 2015-16 and left the college with a minimum of 180 contact hours/clock hours of CTE coursework at your college within two academic years (leavers).
<b>Completion</b>	A non-credit completion is the completion of non-credit experiences/courses that provides training with a labor market value.
<b>ABE Measures</b>	
<b>ABE Cohort</b>	[U]nduplicated headcount of students enrolled in Adult Basic Education (ABE) or high school equivalency courses offered by your institution during the [specified] academic year.... All students who are enrolled in ABE, high school equivalency, or GED preparation courses should be in the cohort, including English as a Second Language (ESL) students and students concurrently enrolled in any other educational institution (secondary or postsecondary).
<b>ABE Completers</b>	Number of students in the ABE Cohort who completed ABE, determined by meeting or surpassing the functional level equivalent to high school completion based on practices in your college or state

Source: Voluntary Framework of Accountability *Metrics Manual* (2019b)

## C. Interview Protocol

The following interview protocol, with minor variations based on the type of organization represented (institution, district, etc.), guided the interviews with institutions that collect and report noncredit data.

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### **NPEC/IPEDS Non-credit Data Research Discussion Questions**

Thank you for taking the time to speak with me. As I mentioned in my email, I am conducting research on noncredit enrollment and related activities for the National Postsecondary Education Cooperative (NPEC). The purpose of my research is to collect background information and develop recommendations regarding the collection of information on noncredit activity through IPEDS. To that end, I would like to learn more about the role of noncredit enrollment at your institutions and how you currently collect and use data on noncredit activities.

Your responses in this interview will be anonymous, and I will be happy to provide you with a copy of the final report when it is published.

#### **Discussion Questions**

1. Does your institution have an explicit definition of “non-credit courses,” “non-credit enrollment,” other specific types of non-credit activities (e.g., workforce training) for data collection and reporting purposes? If so, what is your definition, and who provides it (e.g., the institution, state agency, state legislation)?
2. What types of non-credit activities are offered at your institution? *Examples might include: remedial/developmental education, occupational training, or personal interest, but please describe in the terms used at your institution.*
3. Tell me about the students enrolled in non-credit courses at your institution:
  - a. Roughly how many students enrolled in non-credit courses at your institution in the most recent reporting period?
  - b. Roughly how large is the non-credit student population at your institution relative to the for-credit student population?
4. Do you collect student- or course-level data on non-credit students beyond headcounts, such as field of study, demographics, or outcomes? If so, are these data collected for all non-credit students or only for student in certain courses, programs, etc.?
  - a. Are there any noteworthy functions included or excluded from your overall non-credit data (e.g., remedial/developmental education, contract training)?

- b. Has the number of non-credit enrollments at your institution increased or decreased in the last five to ten years? If so, to what do you attribute the trend?
5. How are non-credit enrollment data collected and reported out at your institution (e.g., the same student information system as credit-bearing enrollments, another centralized system, other)?
6. To whom do you report out this information?
  - a. How are non-credit enrollment data typically used (e.g., for planning or benchmarking)?
  - b. What information on non-credit activities, if any, does your institution report to the state-level system or agency? If so, are they used to help determine funding allocations (i.e., through a funding formula or institutional allocations)?
7. Do you think data on non-credit enrollment, or any other data related to non-credit activities, should be reported to a federal collection such as IPEDS to inform the research and policy communities at the federal and state levels?
  - a. What data elements do you think should be included (e.g., headcount, contact hours, student characteristics)?
  - b. What benefits and challenges do you see in making data on non-credit enrollment available through a federal data collection?
8. Is there anything else you would like to add?

## D. Suggested changes to the Instructions for the E12 survey component

The following additions to the E12 survey component Instructions and FAQ are suggested if data elements for noncredit enrollment are added to the survey as recommended.

### **Who to Include (noncredit)**

Include all students enrolled in noncredit courses (noncredit activities with a designated instructor and curriculum approved by the institution and consisting of a minimum of 6 clock hours of instruction having no credit applicable toward a degree, diploma, certificate, or other recognized postsecondary credential at the time of completion at the time of completion) regardless of whether they are seeding a degree, certificate or other recognized postsecondary credential. This includes:

- Students previously or concurrently enrolled for credit at your institution
- Students enrolled in ABE courses
- Students enrolled in ESL courses
- Students enrolled in noncredit courses that are part of a program leading to a high school credential
- High school students enrolled in noncredit courses
- Students taking remedial courses if the student is NOT degree-seeking for the purpose of student financial aid determination
- Students enrolled in noncredit courses online or through distance education, including students from overseas

### **Who NOT to Include (noncredit)**

- Students enrolled exclusively for credit
- Students taking remedial courses if the student is degree-seeking for the purpose of student financial aid determination

### **FAQ**

Revise Question 6: “Do I include students enrolled only in ESL programs (programs comprised exclusively of ESL courses) in enrollment?”

**Current:** ESL has never been considered a postsecondary program by IPEDS. Since it is considered non-postsecondary, students who are ONLY enrolled in ESL programs, regardless of whether or not they are receiving Title-IV aid, should NOT be counted in enrollment.

**Revised:** ESL has never been considered a postsecondary program by IPEDS. Since it is considered non-postsecondary, students who are ONLY enrolled in ESL programs, regardless of whether or not they are receiving Title-IV aid, should NOT be counted in enrollment as enrolled for credit. They should be counted in noncredit enrollment.

Add new questions to the “General” section of the FAQ:

**How do I report students who enroll in credit and noncredit courses during the same reporting period?**

Students who enroll in credit and noncredit courses during the same period should be included in both credit and noncredit enrollment. Instructional activity should only be reported as credit or noncredit depending on the student received academic credit for the enrollment.

**How do I report non-employer-sponsored students who enroll in employer-sponsored programs or courses?**

Students whose enrollment is not sponsored by an employer should be reported as enrollments in the Vocational category, but not in the Employer-sponsored Vocational subcategory.

**Does enrollment in remedial education count as credit or noncredit?**

Students enrolled in remedial education who have been determined degree-seeking for the purpose of student financial aid determination should be counted as credit students. Students enrolled in remedial education who have NOT been determined degree-seeking for the purpose of student financial aid determination should be counted as noncredit students.

**Do I count students who received credit retrospectively for completion of noncredit courses, such as through articulation or prior learning assessments?**

Students awarded credit retroactively through administrative actions, such as noncredit-to-credit articulation or prior learning assessment, should not be included in credit or noncredit enrollment on the basis of credit being awarded. However, they should be reported in the noncredit enrollment for the period in which they are enrolled in the noncredit course or courses for which credit is (or may be) retroactively awarded.

E. Items related to noncredit activity from the IPEDS survey materials and *Glossary*

Glossary	
<b>Academic program</b>	An instructional program leading toward an associate's, bachelor's, master's, doctor's, or first-professional degree or resulting in credits that can be applied to one of these degrees.
<b>Adjunct instructional staff</b>	Non-tenure track instructional staff serving in a temporary or auxiliary capacity to teach specific courses on a course-by-course basis. Includes both instructional staff who are hired to teach an academic degree-credit course and those hired to teach a remedial, developmental, or ESL course; whether the latter three categories earn college credit is immaterial. Excludes regular part-time instructional staff (who, unlike adjuncts are not paid on a course-by-course basis), graduate assistants, full-time professional staff of the institution who may teach individual courses (such as a dean or academic advisor), and appointees who teach non-credit courses exclusively.
<b>Adult basic education</b>	Courses designed primarily for students 16 years of age and older to improve basic skills in reading, writing, and arithmetic. These courses are not intended to be part of a program leading to a high school credential, nor are they part of any academic, occupational, or vocational program at the postsecondary level.
<b>Avocational programs</b>	Instructional programs in personal interest and leisure categories whose expressed intent is not to produce postsecondary credits, nor to lead to a recognized postsecondary credential or an academic degree, nor result in occupationally specific skills.
<b>Calculation of FTE students (using fall student headcounts)</b>	<p>The number of FTE students is calculated based on fall student headcounts as reported by the institution on the IPEDS Enrollment (EF) component (Part A). The full-time equivalent (headcount) of the institution's part-time enrollment is estimated by multiplying the factors noted below times the part-time headcount. These are then added to the full-time enrollment headcounts to obtain an FTE for all students enrolled in the fall. This formula is used to produce an FTE that is used annually in the Digest of Education Statistics.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Part-time undergraduate enrollment               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Public 4-year (.403543)</li> <li>○ Private (not-for-profit and for-profit) 4-year (.392857)</li> <li>○ Public 2-year and &lt;2-year (.335737)</li> <li>○ All other institutions (.397058)</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Part-time graduate enrollment               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Public 4-year (.361702)</li> <li>○ Private (not-for-profit and for-profit) 4-year (.382059)</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>Calculation of FTE students (using instructional activity)</b>	The number of FTE students is calculated based on the credit and/or clock hours reported by the institution on the IPEDS 12-month enrollment (E12) component and the institution's calendar system, as reported on the IC Header component. The following table indicates the level of instructional activity used to convert the credit and/or clock hours reported to an indicator of full-time equivalents (FTE students):

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Quarter calendar system <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Enrollment level (One FTE over 12-month period) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Undergraduate 45 credit hours, 900 clock hours</li> <li>▪ Graduate 36 credit hours</li> </ul> </li> </ul> </li> <li>• Semester/trimester/4-1-4 plan/other calendar system <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Enrollment level (one FTE over 12-month period) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Undergraduate 30 credit hours 900 clock hours</li> <li>▪ Graduate 24 credit hours</li> </ul> </li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p>For institutions with continuous enrollment programs, FTE is determined by dividing the number of clock hours attempted by 900. The total 12-month FTE is generated by summing the estimated or reported undergraduate</p>
<b>CEU</b>	One CEU (Continuing Education Unit) is normally defined as 10 clock hours of participation in an organized continuing education experience under responsible sponsorship, capable direction, and qualified instruction.
<b>Clock hour</b>	A period of time consisting of (1) A 50- to 60-minute class, lecture, or recitation in a 60-minute period; (2) A 50- to 60-minute faculty-supervised laboratory, shop training, or internship in a 60-minute period; or (3) Sixty minutes of preparation in a correspondence course (from CFR 34 600.2)
<b>Clock hour activity</b>	The provision of coursework to students which can be measured in terms of clock hours.
<b>Continuing professional education</b>	Programs and courses designed specifically for individuals who have completed a degree in a professional field (such as law, medicine, dentistry, education, or social work) to obtain additional training in their particular field of study.
<b>Credit</b>	Recognition of attendance or performance in an instructional activity (course or program) that can be applied by a recipient toward the requirements for a postsecondary degree, diploma, certificate, or other recognized postsecondary credential, irrespective of the activity's unit of measurement.
<b>Credit course</b>	A course that, if successfully completed, can be applied toward the number of courses required for achieving a postsecondary degree, diploma, certificate, or other recognized postsecondary credential, irrespective of the activity's unit of measurement.
<b>Credit for life experiences</b>	Credit earned by students for what they have learned through independent study, noncredit adult courses, work experience, portfolio demonstration, previous licensure or certification, or completion of other learning opportunities (military, government, or professional). Credit may also be awarded through a credit by examination program.
<b>Credit hour</b>	A unit of measure representing the equivalent of an hour (50 minutes) of instruction per week over the entire term. It is applied toward the total number of credit hours needed for completing the requirements of a degree, diploma, certificate, or other recognized postsecondary credential.
<b>Credit hour activity</b>	The provision of coursework to students which can be measured in terms of credit hours.

<b>Degree</b>	An award conferred by a college, university, or other postsecondary education institution as official recognition for the successful completion of a program of studies.
<b>Degree/certificate-seeking students</b>	<p>Students enrolled in courses for credit who are seeking a degree, certificate, or other recognized postsecondary credential. This includes students who:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– received any type of federal financial aid, regardless of what courses they took at any time;</li> <li>– received any state or locally based financial aid with an eligibility requirement that the student be enrolled in a degree, certificate, or transfer-seeking program; or</li> <li>– obtained a student visa to study at a U.S. postsecondary institution</li> </ul> <p>High school students also enrolled in postsecondary courses for credit are not considered degree/certificate-seeking.</p>
<b>Diploma</b>	An official document certifying the successful completion of a prescribed program of studies.
<b>Educational offerings</b>	Educational programs offered by postsecondary institutions that are occupational, academic, or continuing professional that qualify as postsecondary education programs OR recreational or avocational, adult basic, remedial instruction, high school equivalency, or high school programs that are not deemed postsecondary.
<b>FTE of students</b>	The full-time equivalent (FTE) of students is a single value providing a meaningful combination of full-time and part-time students. IPEDS data products currently have two calculations of FTE students, one using fall student headcounts and the other using 12-month instructional activity.
<b>Full-time student</b>	<p>Undergraduate: A student enrolled for 12 or more semester credits, or 12 or more quarter credits, or 24 or more clock hours a week each term.</p> <p>Graduate: A student enrolled for 9 or more semester credits, or 9 or more quarter credits, or a student involved in thesis or dissertation preparation that is considered full-time by the institution.</p> <p>Doctor's degree - Professional practice: as defined by the institution.</p>
<b>High school diploma or recognized equivalent</b>	<p>A document certifying the successful completion of a prescribed secondary school program of studies, or any of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– recognized attainment of satisfactory scores on the GED or another state-authorized examination,</li> <li>– recognized completion of homeschooling at the secondary level as defined by state law,</li> <li>– completion of secondary school education in a homeschool setting which qualifies for an exemption from compulsory attendance requirements under state law, if state law does not require a homeschooled student to receive credential for their education.</li> </ul>

<b>Instruction</b>	A functional expense category that includes expenses of the colleges, schools, departments, and other instructional divisions of the institution and expenses for departmental research and public service that are not separately budgeted. Includes general academic instruction, occupational and vocational instruction, community education, preparatory and adult basic education, and regular, special, and extension sessions. Also includes expenses for both credit and non-credit activities. Excludes expenses for academic administration where the primary function is administration (e.g., academic deans). Information technology expenses related to instructional activities if the institution separately budgets and expenses information technology resources are included (otherwise these expenses are included in academic support). Institutions include actual or allocated costs for operation and maintenance of plant, interest, and depreciation.
<b>Instruction (GASB aligned form reporters)</b>	A functional expense category that includes expenses of the colleges, schools, departments, and other instructional divisions of the institution and expenses for departmental research and public service that are not separately budgeted. Includes general academic instruction, occupational and vocational instruction, community education, preparatory and adult basic education, and regular, special, and extension sessions. Also includes expenses for both credit and non-credit activities. Excludes expenses for academic administration where the primary function is administration (e.g., academic deans). Information technology expenses related to instructional activities if the institution separately budgets and expenses information technology resources are included (otherwise these expenses are included in academic support). GASB institutions include actual or allocated costs for operation and maintenance of plant and depreciation.
<b>Instructional activity</b>	The total number of credit and clock hours all students are engaged in during the specified period.
<b>Instructional Staff</b>	An occupational category that is comprised of staff who are either: 1) Primarily Instruction or 2) Instruction combined with research and/or public service. The intent of the Instructional Staff category is to include all individuals whose primary occupation includes instruction at the institution.
<b>Non-degree-seeking student</b>	A student enrolled in courses for credit who is not recognized by the institution as seeking a degree or recognized postsecondary credential.
<b>Noncredit course</b>	A course or activity having no credit applicable toward a degree, diploma, certificate, or other recognized postsecondary credential.
<b>Occupational program</b>	A program of study consisting of one or more courses, designed to provide the student with sufficient knowledge and skills to perform in a specific occupation.
<b>Occupationally specific program</b>	An instructional program, below the bachelor's level, designed to prepare individuals with entry-level skills and training required for employment in a specific trade, occupation, or profession related to the field of study.
<b>Postsecondary education</b>	The provision of a formal instructional program whose curriculum is designed primarily for students who are beyond the compulsory age for high school. This includes programs whose purpose is academic, vocational, and continuing professional education, and excludes avocational and adult basic education programs.

<b>Program</b>	A combination of courses and related activities organized for the attainment of broad educational objectives as described by the institution.
<b>Program with no recognized postsecondary credential</b>	Any formally organized program with stated educational objectives and well-defined completion requirements that does not lead to a recognized postsecondary credential.
<b>Remedial courses</b>	Instructional courses designed for students deficient in the general competencies necessary for a regular postsecondary curriculum and educational setting.
<b>Remedial services</b>	Instructional activities designed for students deficient in the general competencies necessary for a regular postsecondary curriculum and educational setting.
<b>Student-to-faculty ratio</b>	<p>The ratio of FTE students to FTE instructional staff, i.e., students divided by staff.</p> <p>Students enrolled in 'stand-alone' graduate or professional programs and instructional staff teaching in these programs are excluded from both full-time and part-time counts.</p> <p>'Stand-alone' graduate or professional programs are those programs such as medicine, law, veterinary, dentistry, social work, or public health, in which faculty teach virtually only graduate-level students (also referred to as 'independent' programs).</p> <p>Each FTE value is equal to the number of full-time students/staff plus 1/3 the number of part-time students/staff.</p>
<b>Unduplicated count</b>	The sum of students enrolled for credit with each student counted only once during the reporting period, regardless of when the student enrolled.
<b>Admissions Component – Instructions</b>	
<b>Coverage</b>	<p>ADM is only applicable to first-time degree/certificate-seeking undergraduate students; do not include other students in the number of applicants, number of admits, and number (of admitted) that enrolled.</p> <p>For the number (of admitted) that enrolled, include all students enrolled for credit after the official drop date. Exclude students who are not enrolled for credit.</p> <p>For example, exclude:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students enrolled exclusively in courses that cannot be applied towards a recognized postsecondary credential</li> <li>• Students enrolled only in ESL programs (programs comprised exclusively of ESL courses)</li> <li>• Students enrolled exclusively in Continuing Education Units (CEUs)</li> <li>• Students exclusively auditing classes</li> <li>• Any student studying abroad (e.g., at a foreign university) if their enrollment at the 'home' institution serves as an administrative record</li> </ul>

- Students enrolled in any branch campus located in a foreign country.
- Students in Experimental Pell Programs.

### Completions Component – Instructions

**Purpose of Component** The awards reported range from sub-baccalaureate certificates to doctor's degrees and must be recognized postsecondary credentials conferred by the postsecondary institution as the result of completion of an academic or occupational/vocational program of study. The program's instructional activity can be measured in credit hours, clock hours, or some other unit of measurement. Postsecondary credentials must be recognized by the institution's appropriate governing body.

**What to Include**

- Recognized postsecondary credentials conferred as the result of completion of an academic or occupational/vocational program of study. (Note that only CIP codes describing academic or occupational/vocational programs of study are valid CIP codes on the Completions component.) The instructional activity completed as part of the program of study must be credit-bearing, but can be measured in credit hours, clock hours, or some other unit of measurement.
- Awards conferred by the postsecondary institution.
- Awards conferred between July 1, 2017 and June 30, 2018.
- Multiple awards conferred to a single student.

**What to Exclude**

- Recognized postsecondary credentials conferred by branches of your institution located in foreign countries.
- Honorary degrees.
- Recognized postsecondary credentials conferred by an entity other than the postsecondary institution (such as the state, or an industry certificate).
- Recognized postsecondary credentials earned as the result of an avocational, basic skills, residency, or other program not recognized by IPEDS as academic or occupational/vocational.
- Completions by students in the Experimental Pell program.
- Examples of awards to exclude
  - Merit
  - Completion
  - Attendance
  - ESL
  - Developmental/college preparatory
  - Noncredit

### Completions Component – FAQ

**General: 1) What certificates should be included?** Any certificates that are eligible to be recorded on students' transcripts should be included. All certificates should be recognized by the institution's appropriate governing body.

### 12-Month Enrollment Component – Instructions

<p><b>Who to Include</b></p>	<p>Include all students <b>enrolled for credit</b> (enrolled in instructional activity, courses or programs, that can be applied towards the requirements for a postsecondary degree, diploma, certificate, or other recognized postsecondary credential), regardless of whether or not they are seeking a degree or certificate. This includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students enrolled for credit in off-campus centers</li> <li>• High school students taking regular college courses for credit</li> <li>• Students taking remedial courses if the student is degree-seeking for the purpose of student financial aid determination</li> <li>• Students from overseas enrolled for credit at your institution (e.g., online students)</li> <li>• Graduate students enrolled for thesis credits, even when zero credits are awarded, as these students are still enrolled and seeking their degree [4-yr only]</li> </ul>
<p><b>Who to Exclude</b></p>	<p>Exclude students who are not enrolled for credit. For example, exclude:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students enrolled exclusively in courses that cannot be applied towards a recognized postsecondary credential</li> <li>• Students enrolled only in ESL programs (programs comprised exclusively of ESL courses)</li> <li>• Students enrolled exclusively in Continuing Education Units (CEUs)</li> <li>• Students exclusively auditing classes</li> <li>• Residents or interns in doctor's - professional practice programs, since they have already received their doctor's degree [4-yr only]</li> <li>• Students in Experimental Pell Programs</li> </ul> <p>In addition, the following students should be excluded:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Any student studying abroad (e.g., at a foreign university) if their enrollment at the 'home' institution serves as an administrative record</li> <li>• Students enrolled in any branch campus located in a foreign country</li> </ul>
<p><b>12-Month Enrollment Component – FAQ</b></p>	
<p><b>General: 1) Who should I include in my enrollment reporting?</b></p>	<p>All students enrolled for credit should be reported. Credit is defined as "recognition of attendance or performance in an instructional activity (course or program) that can be applied by a recipient toward the requirements for a postsecondary degree, diploma, certificate, or other recognized postsecondary credential, irrespective of the activity's unit of measurement."</p>
<p><b>General: 6) Do I include students enrolled only in ESL programs (programs comprised exclusively of ESL courses) in enrollment?</b></p>	<p>ESL has never been considered a postsecondary program by IPEDS. Since it is considered non-postsecondary, students who are <b>ONLY</b> enrolled in ESL programs, regardless of whether or not they are receiving Title-IV aid, should <b>NOT</b> be counted in enrollment.</p>

<p><b>Part A: 6) What is NOT considered "prior postsecondary experience" when reporting first-time students?</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Credit for military service/training from an association such as the American Council on Education,</li> <li>• Credit from any non-credit courses, as defined by the institution,</li> <li>• Credit received for completion of tests/assessments,</li> <li>• Credit received before the student has earned a high school diploma (i.e., dual enrollment credits),</li> <li>• Postsecondary award received before the students earned a high school diploma (e.g., certificate, associate's, bachelor's, etc.), or</li> <li>• Credit for life experience.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Part A: 16) How does enrollment in non-credit or zero-credit remedial/ESL and co-op courses count in the determination of a student's full-time status?</b></p>	<p>Students with prior postsecondary experience credit from attending a military academic institution (e.g., Community College of the Air Force, West Point, U.S. Naval Academy, etc.) would NOT be considered first-time students.</p> <p>Students in the following categories are considered degree-seeking in IPEDS, though they may be enrolled in courses not creditable for an award:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students enrolled in remedial courses that are not creditable toward an award but have been admitted into an eligible Title-IV program and receive Title-IV aid</li> <li>• Students enrolled in ESL courses that are not creditable toward an award but have been admitted into an eligible Title-IV program and receive Title-IV aid</li> <li>• Co-op students enrolled in courses that are not creditable toward an award but are required for award attainment</li> </ul> <p>In determination of the student's full-time status, credit or contact hours (up to one academic year's worth) of remedial and ESL courses may be used in the determination of a student's full-time status if the remedial or ESL course is part of a program that leads to a postsecondary award. In these cases, the remedial or ESL courses should count the same as the comparable full-credit class. For co-op students, the work portion of a cooperative education program in which the amount of work performed is equivalent to the academic workload of a full-time student will also count toward the determination of full-time status.</p>
<p><b>Fall Enrollment Component – Survey: Part F: Student-to-Faculty Ratio Worksheet</b></p>	
<p><b>Line F10B/F6</b></p>	<p>Of the full-time instructional staff reported in Line F9/F5 [From HR Survey component], the number teaching exclusively <b>non-credit</b> courses</p>
<p><b>Line F13B/F9</b></p>	<p>Of the part-time instructional staff reported in Line F12/F8 [From HR Survey component], the number teaching exclusively <b>non-credit</b> courses</p>
<p><b>Fall Enrollment Component – Instructions</b></p>	
<p><b>Who to Include</b></p>	<p>Include all students <b>enrolled for credit</b> (enrolled in instructional activity, courses or programs, that can be applied towards the requirements for a postsecondary degree, diploma, certificate, or other recognized postsecondary credential), regardless of whether or not they are seeking a degree or certificate. This includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students enrolled for credit in off-campus centers</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• High school students taking regular college courses for credit</li> <li>• Students taking remedial courses if the student is degree-seeking for the purpose of student financial aid determination</li> <li>• Students from overseas enrolled for credit at your institution (e.g., online students)</li> <li>• Graduate students enrolled for thesis credits, even when zero credits are awarded, as these students are still enrolled and seeking their degree [4-yr only]</li> <li>• Graduate students enrolled for credit while not seeking a degree or certificate. [4-yr only]</li> </ul>
<b>Who to Exclude</b>	<p>Exclude students who are <b>not</b> enrolled for credit. For example, exclude:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students enrolled exclusively in courses that cannot be applied towards a recognized postsecondary credential</li> <li>• Students enrolled only in ESL programs (programs comprised exclusively of ESL courses)</li> <li>• Students enrolled exclusively in Continuing Education Units (CEUs)</li> <li>• Students exclusively auditing classes</li> <li>• Residents or interns in doctor's - professional practice programs, since they have already received their doctor's degree [4-yr only]</li> </ul> <p>In addition, the following students should be excluded:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Any student studying abroad (e.g., at a foreign university) if their enrollment at the 'home' institution serves as an administrative record</li> <li>• Students enrolled in any branch campus located in a foreign country</li> <li>• Students in Experimental Pell Programs</li> </ul>
<b>Instructional Staff Exclusion for Non-Credit Instructors: [4-yr only]</b>	<p><b>In line F10B</b>, report the number of full-time instructional staff teaching exclusively non-credit courses.</p> <p><b>In line F13B</b>, report the number of part-time instructional staff teaching exclusively non-credit courses.</p> <p>For institutions that have a large amount of non-credit activity (most often public two-year institutions), the above exclusions will better align the student data with the instructional staff data being used in the ratio.</p>
<b>Instructional Staff Exclusion for Non-Credit Instructors:</b>	<p><b>In line F6</b>, report the number of full-time instructional staff reported in line F5 that are teaching exclusively noncredit courses.</p> <p><b>In line F9</b>, report the number of part-time instructional staff reported in line F8 that are teaching exclusively noncredit courses.</p> <p>For institutions that have a large amount of non-credit activity, the above exclusions will better align the student data with the instructional staff data being used in the ratio.</p>

<p><b>General: 1) Who should I include in my enrollment reporting?</b></p>	<p>All students enrolled for credit should be reported. Credit is defined as “Recognition of attendance or performance in an instructional activity (course or program) that can be applied by a recipient toward the requirements for a degree, diploma, certificate, or other recognized postsecondary credential, irrespective of the activity's unit of measurement.”</p> <p>Students who are not seeking a degree or certificate may still be enrolled for credit. These students are to be reported in the non-degree/non-certificate-seeking column.</p>
<p><b>General: 6) Do I include students enrolled only in ESL programs (programs comprised exclusively of ESL courses) in Fall Enrollment?</b></p>	<p>ESL has never been considered a postsecondary program by IPEDS. Since it is considered non-postsecondary, students who are ONLY enrolled in ESL programs (programs comprised exclusively of ESL courses), regardless of whether or not they are receiving Title-IV aid, should NOT be counted in enrollment.</p>
<p><b>Part A: 1) What is NOT considered "prior postsecondary experience" when reporting first-time students?</b></p>	<p>Credit for military service/training from an association such as the American Council on Education,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Credit from any non-credit courses, as defined by the institution,</li> <li>• Credit received for completion of tests/assessments,</li> <li>• Credit received before the student has earned a high school diploma (i.e., dual enrollment credits),</li> <li>• Postsecondary award received before the students earned a high school diploma (e.g., certificate, associate's, bachelor's, etc.), or</li> <li>• Credit for life experience.</li> </ul> <p>Students with prior postsecondary experience credit from attending a military academic institution (e.g., Community College of the Air Force, West Point, U.S. Naval Academy, etc.) would NOT be considered first-time students.</p>
<p><b>Part A: 13) How does enrollment in non-credit or zero-credit remedial/ESL and co-op courses count in the determination of a student's full-time status?</b></p>	<p>Students in the following categories are considered degree-seeking in IPEDS, though they may be enrolled in courses not creditable for an award:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students enrolled in remedial courses that are not creditable toward an award but have been admitted into an eligible Title-IV program and receive Title-IV aid</li> <li>• Students enrolled in ESL courses that are not creditable toward an award but have been admitted into an eligible Title-IV program and receive Title-IV aid</li> <li>• Co-op students enrolled in courses that are not creditable toward an award but are required for award attainment</li> </ul> <p>In determination of the student's full-time status, credit or clock hours (up to one academic year's worth) of remedial and ESL courses may be used in the determination of a student's full-time status if the remedial or ESL course is part of a program that leads to a postsecondary award. In these cases, the remedial or ESL courses should count the same as the comparable full-credit</p>

	class. For co-op students, the work portion of a cooperative education program in which the amount of work performed is equivalent to the academic workload of a full-time student will also count toward the determination of full-time status.
<b>Finance Component – Survey</b>	
<b>Revenue Section [Ex. Degree-granting public institutions using GASB Reporting Standards]</b>	Total operating and nonoperating revenues per student FTE CV=[B27/B28]
<b>Expense Section [Ex. Degree-granting public institutions using GASB Reporting Standards]</b>	Total expenses and deductions per student FTE CV=[C19-1/C20-1]
<b>Finance Component – Instructions</b>	
<b>Part B [Example from Degree-granting public institutions using GASB Reporting Standards]</b>	<b>28 – 12-month Student FTE from E12</b> – This number for full-time equivalent (FTE) student enrollment is carried over from the 12-month enrollment survey.
<b>Part B [Example from Degree-granting public institutions using GASB Reporting Standards]</b>	<b>29 – Total operating and nonoperating revenues per Student FTE</b> – This amount is generated by dividing line 27 by line 28. This calculated value is used by the system to compare the data reported by the institution to the data of institutions that are in the same sector (e.g., public/private, 4-year/2-year) to see if the calculated value is an extreme value that is too high or low. While it is not anticipated that your institution would have the same overall revenues, this comparison may be useful for ensuring that all appropriate revenues have been included in the finance survey component, or excluded when appropriate.
<b>Part C-1 [Example from Degree-granting public institutions using GASB Reporting Standards]</b>	<b>01 – Instruction</b> – Expenses of the colleges, schools, departments, and other instructional divisions of the institution and expenses for departmental research and public service that are not separately budgeted should be included in this classification. Include expenses for both credit and noncredit activities. Exclude expenses for academic administration where the primary function is administration (e.g., academic deans); such expenses should be reported on line 05. The instruction category includes academic instruction, occupational and vocational instruction, community education, preparatory and adult basic education, and remedial and tutorial instruction conducted by the teaching faculty for the institution’s students.
<b>Part C-2 [Example from Degree-granting public institutions using GASB Reporting Standards]</b>	<b>20-1 – 12-month Student FTE from E12</b> – This number for full-time equivalent (FTE) student enrollment is carried over from the 12-month enrollment survey.

<b>Part C-2 [Example from Degree-granting public institutions using GASB Reporting Standards]</b>	<b>21-1 – Total Expenses &amp; Deductions per Student FTE</b> - This amount is generated by dividing line 19-1 by line 20-1. This calculated value is used by the system to compare the data reported by the institution to the data of institutions that are in the same sector (e.g., public/private, 4-year/2-year) to see if the calculated value is an extreme value that is too high or low. While it is not anticipated that your institution would have the same overall expenses, this comparison may be useful for ensuring that all appropriate expenses have been included in the finance survey component, or excluded when appropriate.
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**Finance Component – FAQ**

<b>General 12) How are revenues per full-time equivalent (FTE) student and expenses per FTE student calculated, and why were they added to the screens? [Example from Degree-granting public institutions using GASB Reporting Standards]</b>	The calculation of these values takes the amounts reported for revenues and expenditures from the finance survey form and divides those amounts by the 12-month FTE student enrollment from the 12-month Enrollment survey that was completed in the fall data collection. These calculated values are used by the system to compare the data reported by the institution to the data of institutions that are in the same sector (e.g., public/private, 4-year/2-year) to see if the calculated value is an extreme value that is too high or low. While it is not anticipated that your institution would have the same overall revenue or expenses, this comparison may be useful for ensuring that all appropriate amounts have been included in the finance survey component, or excluded when appropriate.
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**Graduation Rates Component – Instructions**

<b>Who to Include in the Cohort</b>	<p>...Include all students enrolled for credit toward a degree, diploma, certificate, or other recognized postsecondary credential. Include students enrolled in courses that are part of a vocational or occupational program, INCLUDING those enrolled in off-campus centers and those enrolled in distance learning/home study programs.</p> <p>Be sure to include full-time students taking remedial courses if the student is considered degree-seeking for the purpose of student financial aid determination. This includes students who:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Received any type of federal financial aid, regardless of what courses they took at any time</li> <li>• Received any state or locally based financial aid with an eligibility requirement</li> </ul>
<b>Who to Exclude from the Cohort</b>	<p>Do NOT include students in the cohort who are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enrolled exclusively in courses not creditable toward a recognized postsecondary credential or the completion of a vocational program (i.e., non-degree/certificate-seeking students)</li> <li>• Exclusively taking CEUs</li> <li>• Exclusively auditing classes</li> <li>• Enrolled part-time</li> <li>• Transfers into the institution</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Foreign students who are only taking coursework at a host institution (e.g., an American institution overseas), if these students are not enrolled at a U.S. institution.</li> <li>• Students in Experimental Pell Programs.</li> </ul>
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### Graduation Rates Component – FAQ

<b>Cohort: 5) How do I report students who are taking ESL (English as a Second Language) or developmental courses?</b>	These students are not included in the cohort if their courses are not part of a program of study that leads to a degree, diploma, certificate, or other recognized postsecondary credential, and if they are not eligible for Title IV federal financial aid.
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<b>Cohort: 6) Are students in remedial courses included in the cohort?</b>	Use the same reasoning here that you use to determine who to report as degree/certificate-seeking in the IPEDS Fall Enrollment survey. If a student is degree/certificate-seeking for the purposes of qualifying for student financial aid, then they must be included in the GR cohort.
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<b>Cohort: 8) What about non-credit enrollment, or students taking CEUs?</b>	Neither should be included in the cohort for graduation rates reporting.
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### Graduation Rates 200 Component – Instructions

<b>Who to exclude from the cohort</b>	<p>DO NOT include students in the cohort who are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enrolled exclusively in courses not creditable toward a recognized postsecondary credential or the completion of a vocational program (i.e., non-degree/certificate-seeking students)</li> <li>• Exclusively taking CEUs</li> <li>• Exclusively auditing classes</li> <li>• Enrolled part-time</li> <li>• Transfers into the institution</li> <li>• Foreign students who are only taking coursework at a host institution (e.g., an American institution overseas), if these students are not enrolled at a U.S. institution.</li> <li>• Students in Experimental Pell Programs</li> </ul>
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### Human Resources Component – Survey

<b>Full-time Instructional Staff by Function/Part-time Staff by Occupational Category and Tenure Status</b>	<p>Full-time and part-time, medical school and non-medical school Primarily Instruction staff who teach Exclusively credit, Exclusively not-for-credit, and Combined credit/not-for-credit by faculty, tenure, and contract status.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• With Faculty Status <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Tenured</li> <li>○ On Tenure Track</li> <li>○ Not on Tenure Track <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Multi-year</li> <li>– Annual contract</li> <li>– Less-than-annual contract</li> <li>– Indefinite duration (continuing or at-will)</li> </ul> </li> </ul> </li> </ul>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Without Faculty Status</li> </ul>
<b>Human Resources Component – Instructions (degree-granting institutions and related administrative offices that have 15 or more full-time staff)</b>	
<b>Who to Include in this Report</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Persons on the payroll of the institution as of November 1, 2018, AND (in the New Hires section) persons newly hired between November 1, 2017 and October 31, 2018, whether or not the persons were still on the payroll as of November 1, 2018.</li> <li>• Staff who are on sabbatical leave and staff who are on leave but remain on the payroll.</li> <li>• Staff who are hired to temporarily replace staff who are on sabbatical leave or on leave with or without pay. "Visiting" instructional, research, and public service staff who are paid by your institution.</li> <li>• Adjunct instructional staff (see definition in Glossary below). Report adjuncts as either full-time or part-time instructional staff.</li> <li>• Staff in workforce development training programs and Adult Basic Education (ABE) programs.</li> <li>• Staff at off-campus centers associated with the campus covered by this report. (Do not include staff who work at branch campuses located in a foreign country.)</li> <li>• Corporate administrators for single-campus institutions or for multi-campus organizations (administrative units).</li> </ul>
<b>Part A - Full-time Instructional Staff</b>	<p>... In addition, you must report the number of full-time instructional staff at the institution by faculty status, tenure status (if applicable), contract length, and medical school status (if applicable) for each of the following functions:</p> <p>n (carried forward based on the data reported on the previous screens in Part</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Exclusively credit</li> <li>○ Exclusively not-for-credit</li> <li>○ Combined credit/not-for-credit</li> </ul> <p>h/public service staff</p>
<b>Parts D and E - Part-time staff</b>	<p>... In addition, in Part E, you must report the number of part-time instructional staff at the institution by faculty status, tenure status (if applicable), contract length, and medical school status (if applicable) for each of the following functions:</p> <p>n (carried forward based on the data reported in Part D)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Exclusively credit</li> <li>○ Exclusively not-for-credit</li> <li>○ Combined credit/not-for-credit</li> </ul> <p>h/public service staff</p>
<b>Human Resources Component – Instructions</b>	
<b>Degree-granting institution: 2) Should instructional staff who provide instruction in non-credit courses be</b>	<p>Yes. Instructional staff who provide instruction in non-credit courses should be included in the HR component.</p>

included in the HR component?

### Institutional Characteristics Component – Survey

- Part A – Educational Offerings**
1. Which of the following types of instruction/programs are offered by your institution? [Check one or more]
- If your institution does not offer occupational, academic or continuing professional programs, you are not expected to complete this or any other IPEDS survey.*
- Occupational, may lead to a certificate, degree, or other formal award
  - Academic, may lead to a certificate, degree, or diploma
  - Continuing professional (postbaccalaureate only)
  - Recreational or avocational (leisure) programs
  - Adult basic or remedial instruction or high school equivalency
  - Secondary (high school)

### Institutional Characteristics Component – Instructions

- Who NOT to Include**
- Students enrolled exclusively in courses not creditable toward a recognized postsecondary credential
  - Students enrolled exclusively in Continuing Education Units (CEUs)
  - Students exclusively auditing classes
  - Residents or interns in Doctor's - professional practice (previously first-professional), since they have already received their Doctor's degree
  - Students studying abroad (e.g., at a foreign university) if their enrollment at the "home" institution is only an administrative record and the fee is nominal
  - Students in any branch campus located in a foreign country
  - Students in Experimental Pell programs.

### Outcome Measures Component – Instructions

- Who to Exclude from the Cohort**
- DO NOT include students in the cohort who are:
- Enrolled exclusively in courses not creditable toward a recognized postsecondary credential or the completion of a vocational program.
  - Exclusively taking Continuing Education Units (CEUs).
  - Exclusively auditing classes.
  - Foreign students who are only taking coursework at a host institution (e.g., an American institution overseas), if these students are not enrolled at a U.S. institution.
  - Students in Experimental Pell Programs

### Outcome Measures Component – FAQ

- Award Related Questions: 18) What does "award" mean?**
- An award can be a degree (e.g., Associate's or Bachelor's), diploma, certificate or other recognized postsecondary credential conferred by the reporting institution that would be included on the IPEDS Completions Survey. For OM reporting purposes, an award does not mean financial aid award.

**Award Related Questions: 25) Can stackable credentials count as an award?**

Yes, stackable credentials can be counted, as long as the credentials meet the definition of an award. According to the Department of Labor, stackable credentials are “a sequence of credentials that can be accumulated over time to build up an individual’s qualifications and help them to move along a career pathway or up a career ladder to different and potentially higher-payer jobs” (Source: TEGl 15-10, [www.doleta.gov](http://www.doleta.gov)). Educause (Jan 27, 2014) explains these credentials as an institution-designed “pathway for students to acquire credentials along a trajectory that can lead to a baccalaureate and beyond but that has exit and entry points designed in a way to allow students to pick up wherever they left off en route to the next level of achievement.”

**Student Financial Aid Component – Instructions**

**What NOT to Include**

- Do not report student counts or aid amounts for the following:
- Students who were only graduate students at the institution during the reporting period
  - Students who were enrolled exclusively in courses not creditable toward a certificate/degree
  - Students who were enrolled exclusively in Continuing Education Units (CEUs)
  - Students who were exclusively auditing classes

**Part A – Establish Your Groups: 01. Group 1: All undergraduate students**

Report the number of all undergraduate students who were enrolled for the prior year as of October 15 or your institution’s official fall reporting date. Include all new and continuing undergraduate students (full-time students, part-time students, degree/certificate-seeking students, non-degree/certificate-seeking students, and all others). This number will be preloaded from your institution's IPEDS Fall Enrollment component, but it may be modified if necessary. If you have questions about the value that has been preloaded in this field, please contact your institution’s IPEDS Keyholder.