

Student Financial Aid Survey Frequently Asked Questions

General Questions:

QUESTION: Which institutions are required to respond to the Student Financial Aid (SFA) survey?

ANSWER: All postsecondary institutions that enroll full-time, first-time, degree/certificate-seeking undergraduate level students must complete the Student Financial Aid survey.

QUESTION: When did IPEDS begin the collection of Student Financial Aid data?

ANSWER: The first collection of Student Financial Aid data was in August 1999. This was a pilot test and also included the price data that is currently collected through the Institutional Characteristics survey.

QUESTION: When do I report my Student Financial Aid data?

ANSWER: These data are reported annually in the IPEDS spring collection, for the prior year's fall cohort of full-time, first-time, degree/certificate-seeking undergraduate students.

QUESTION: If I made a mistake on my submission last year, can I change my prior year Student Financial Aid data?

ANSWER: Yes. Beginning with the 2003-04 collection cycle, you will be able to make changes to the data you submitted the prior year. Since the Student Financial Aid data are collected in spring, you may only correct data (for the prior year) during the spring collection. If you place the **final lock** on your data, that is, if only one lock is required (see Survey status page – if (1/1 locks) is required, you are the final lock), you may call the Help Desk at 1-877-225-2568 and they will unlock your submission so that you may change your data. You will need to log in to the prior year system using your UserID and password for the current year, enter your data, run edits, and lock. If your institution is coordinated and your coordinator locks the data after the institution lock is applied, then you must call your coordinator and discuss the change with them.

QUESTION: What does NCES do with the data that are collected?

ANSWER: NCES releases these data via the IPEDS College Opportunities On-Line website (IPEDS COOL), the Peer Analysis System (PAS), downloadable data files, and EDTab reports – all of which can be accessed from the IPEDS website at <http://nces.ed.gov/ipeds>.

Student Counts:

QUESTION:

What students are included in the count for full-time, first-time degree/certificate-seeking undergraduates?

ANSWER:

Include students attending your institution for the first time at the undergraduate level. Also include students enrolled in the fall term who attended college for the first time in the prior summer term and students who entered with advanced standing (college credits earned before graduation from high school). This number should closely match the data reported on the Enrollment survey submitted last year.

Financial Aid:

QUESTION:

How do I calculate the average amount of aid?

ANSWER:

The amount of aid received by each student (for each type requested) should be added together and then divided by the number of students receiving that type of aid. For example, 3 students received institutional aid in the amount of \$3,000 (\$9,000), and 4 students received \$2,000 each (\$8,000). Add the two amounts (\$17,000) and divide by 7 = \$2,429. This is the average amount of institutional aid you should report.

QUESTION:

What are the types of financial aid that should be reported?

ANSWER:

There are four types of aid collected in IPEDS:

- **Federal grants (grants/educational assistance funds)** are grants provided by federal agencies such as the U.S. Department of Education, including Title IV Pell Grants and Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grants (SEOGs). Also includes need-based and merit-based educational assistance funds and training vouchers provided from other federal agencies and/or federally-sponsored educational benefits programs, including the Veteran's Administration, Department of Labor, and other federal agencies.
- **State/local grants (grants/scholarships/waivers):** Institutions should include grants that were provided by your state such as Leveraging Educational Assistance Partnerships (LEAP) (formerly SSIGs). Also include merit scholarships that were provided by your state and tuition and fee waivers for which your institution was reimbursed by a state agency. Local grants would include any local government grants, scholarships or gift-aid that are awarded directly to the student.
- **Institutional Grants** are scholarships and fellowships granted and funded by the institution and/or individual departments

within the institution (i.e., instruction, research, public service), although they may contribute indirectly to the enhancement of these programs. Also includes scholarships targeted to certain individuals (e.g., based on state of residence or major) for which the institution designates the recipient; athletic scholarships; and the like. This is not intended to include College work study.

- **Loans to Students** includes any monies that must be repaid to the lending institution for which the student is the designated borrower. Includes all Title IV subsidized loans and all institutionally- and privately-sponsored loans. Please do not include PLUS and other loans made directly to parents.

QUESTION: **If a student receives more than one type of aid do I count him/her twice?**

ANSWER: Yes, students should be included in each type of aid that they receive. If a student receives federal and institutional aid, he/she should be counted under both types of aid.

QUESTION: **If a student receives two types of federal aid, do I count him/her twice?**

ANSWER: If a student that receives two types of federal aid, you should include both amounts of aid but count the student only once. *This also applies to all of the other types of aid.*

QUESTION: **Where do I report students that receive private scholarships?**

ANSWER: Students receiving scholarships that are privately funded, and the funds do not pass through the financial aid office, should not be reported on this survey.

QUESTION: **Can the percent of students receiving aid be greater than 100% if a student receives more than one type of aid?**

ANSWER: No, since each student who is receiving aid can only be counted once by type of aid, the percent cannot exceed 100%.