

## Introduction

The Institutional Characteristics (IC) survey is conducted annually as part of the National Center for Education Statistics' Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS).<sup>1</sup> The IC survey attempts to identify and characterize the universe of institutions offering postsecondary education in the United States and its outlying areas.<sup>2</sup> The final 1998-99 IPEDS universe includes 9,653 postsecondary institutions and 91 administrative units, for a total of 9,744 postsecondary entities.

NCES conducts the IC survey and all other IPEDS surveys in order to fulfill its legislative mission "to collect, analyze, and disseminate statistics and other information related to education in the United States..." (P.L. 103-382, National Education Statistics Act of 1994, Sec. 404(a)). In addition, the IPEDS surveys are now mandatory for all institutions that participate in or are applicants for participation in any Federal financial assistance program authorized by Title IV of the Higher Education Act of 1965, as amended (20 U.S.C. 1094(a)(17) - the discussion of Program Participation Agreements).

**Table 1.—Number of postsecondary institutions and survey response rates by sector of institution: 50 states, District of Columbia and the outlying areas: academic year 1998-99**

Sector of institution	Sector codes	Final IC file 1997-98	Sector changes (net)	Deletes	Adds	Final IC file 1998-99	Respondents	Response rate
Total entities	--	9,800	0	530	409	9,744	9,280	91.9
Administrative units	0	96	-1	5	4	91	79	84.0
All institutions	--	10,120	1	525	405	9,653	9,201	92.0
4-year, public	1	632	2	0	1	645	625	98.4
4-year, nonprofit	2	2,004	14	42	26	1,998	1,836	91.7
4-year, for-profit	3	206	13	9	7	264	201	92.6
2-year, public	4	1,284	17	20	7	1,269	1,226	95.2
2-year, nonprofit	5	615	3	29	10	527	548	91.5
2-year, for-profit	6	700	313	50	25	970	958	97.0
< 2-year, public	7	306	-18	16	6	365	267	96.0
< 2-year, nonprofit	8	308	-15	15	25	303	275	90.8
< 2-year, for-profit	9	4,065	-328	344	298	3,312	3,265	88.5

Table notes:

1. By definition, 4-year institutions offer a bachelor's degree or postbaccalaureate award of some kind; 2-year institutions offer at least one program of at least 2 years' duration; and less-than-2-year schools offer only programs of less-than-2-years' duration.

2. The column entitled "Sector changes (net)" reflects the net change in the number of institutions moving into and out of a given sector between 1997-98 and 1996-97. The number is based on institutions that were in the universe in both survey years; i.e., deletes and adds are excluded. A school's sector may change due to a change in its highest level of offering, or the school may have been improperly classified by sector on the prior year's survey file.

3. The "Adds" column includes only institutions new to the 1998-99 IPEDS universe; i.e., not on the 1997-98 IC file. The "Deletes" column shows the number of institutions that were on the 1997-98 file but were eliminated before closeout of the 1998-99 file because they were declared out-of-scope for one reason or another. For example, the school may have closed.

4. Response rates are based on institutions that are on the final 1997-98 file that responded to the survey. For example, the final 1996-97 file has a total of 10,001 institutions. Of these, a total of 9,201 responded to the IC survey. Therefore, the response rate for all institutions combined is 9,201 divided by 10,001, or 92.0 percent. An institution was counted as a respondent if it responded to either: (a) the paper form or (b) the Postsecondary Education Telephone System (PETS), which collected only critical data items during a telephone interview with an institutional representative. PETS were used for nonrespondents to the paper form.

<sup>1</sup>Other IPEDS surveys include Fall Enrollment, Completions, Finance, Salaries, Fall Staff, Academic Libraries, and the Consolidated survey.

<sup>2</sup>Postsecondary education is defined as 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.

The IC survey is the control file for the entire IPEDS system. As such, it forms the sampling frame for all other NCEES surveys of postsecondary institutions; it also helps determine the specific IPEDS survey forms and form types to be mailed to each institution; and it collects basic institutional data that are necessary to sort and analyze not only the IC database, but all other IPEDS databases.

## Survey Methodology

The Institutional Characteristics (IC) survey has four versions: IC, IC3, IC4 and IC-ADD. The version of the survey received by an institution was determined by the school's assigned sector and Title IV status at the time of the mailout. Sector is defined by the institutions' control (public, private not-for-profit or private for-profit) and its highest level of offering (4-year or higher, at least 2-but-less-than-4-year, or less-than-2-year certificate, diploma, degree, or other formal award). The IC survey was mailed to all 4-year, 2-year, and public less-than-2-year institutions participating in Title IV financial aid programs<sup>3</sup>. The IC3 form was sent to private less than-2-year institutions participating in Title IV financial aid. The IC4 survey was sent to institutions that were not participating in Title IV programs regardless of level. Institutions that were new to the IPEDS universe received an IC-ADD form. The IC survey is the control file for the entire IPEDS universe. It determines the specific IPEDS survey data to be completed by the institution and provides basic information about all postsecondary institutions for sampling purposes.

The 1998–99 IC survey was mailed in August 1998 to 9,811 postsecondary institutions in the United States and its outlying areas, and to 96 administrative units. During the survey processing, 150 institutions and offices were deleted because they either (1) were duplicates of other institutions on the file, (2) closed, merged with another institution, or were no longer a legitimate institution or branch; or (3) no longer offered postsecondary programs. In addition, institutions not in the IPEDS were added to the universe if they responded to the survey and indicated that their mission was the provision of postsecondary education as defined in the survey. The institutions were identified as "potential adds" from several sources including recommendations from the state coordinators, a review of the list of Title IV participating schools from the Office of Postsecondary Education, or from the institutions themselves.

A major subset of all postsecondary institutions are those institutions that have Program Participation Agreements (PPA) with the Department of Education and thus may participate in Title IV federal financial aid programs. Beginning in 1997, the subset of participating institutions was verified by matching the IPEDS universe with the Office of Postsecondary Education's (OPE), Postsecondary Education Participation System (PEPS) file. OPE grants approval to institutions to participate in Title IV federal financial aid programs. Using the PEPS file as the source for determining Title IV status, the number of Title IV institutions on the 1998 IC file is 6,573 (table 2). In the 1998 IC file, institutions are classified by whether or not they grant degrees. Degree-granting institutions offer either an associate's, bachelor's, master's, doctor's, or first-professional degree; non-degree-granting institutions offer only certificates at any level. Institutions offering only postbaccalaureate, post-master's or first-professional certificates, and institutions offering certificates or diplomas of 4 or 5 years or less are included in the non-degree-granting group.

When examined by control and level, private for-profit postsecondary institutions made up 47 percent of the IPEDS universe. Among these for-profit institutions, less-than-2-year institutions comprised 73 percent of the total and had a response rate of 57.6 percent in 1998–99. The 4-year and 2-year for-profit postsecondary institutions both had a response rate of 87.9 percent. The private not-for-profit postsecondary institutions represented 29 percent of the IPEDS universe and the response rates were 86.9 percent for 4-year institutions, 77.8 percent for 2-year and 66.0 percent for less-than-2-year institutions. While, the public institutions represented only 24 percent of the IPEDS universe the response rates were 98.3 percent for 4-year, 96.8 percent for 2-year and 88.8 percent for less-than-2-year institutions (table 2).

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<sup>3</sup> These institutions will be referred to as Title IV institutions throughout this document.

In 1998–99, 6,573 institutions were identified as Title IV institutions. These institutions had a 96.6 percent response rate. The public Title IV institutions had an overall response rate of over 98 percent; 99.4 percent for 4-year, 98.2 percent for 2-year, and 96.9 percent for less-than-2-year institutions. The public non-Title IV institutions had much lower response rates ranging from 36.4 percent for 4-year institutions to 68.3 percent for less-than-2-year schools (table 2).

**Table 2.—Number of postsecondary institutions and survey response rates, by Title IV status, degree-granting status and sector of institution: 50 States, District of Columbia, and outlying areas, academic year 1998–99**

Degree-granting status and sector of institution	All institutions			Title IV institutions			Non-Title IV institutions		
	Final universe	Number responded	Response rate	Final universe	Number responded	Response rate	Final universe	Number responded	Response rate
Total	9,653	7,528	78.0	6,573	6,349	96.6	3,080	1,179	38.3
4-year, public	645	634	98.3	634	630	99.4	11	4	36.4
4-year, not-for-profit	1,998	1,737	86.9	1,594	1,560	97.9	404	177	43.8
4-year, for-profit	264	232	87.9	202	200	99.0	62	32	51.6
2-year, public	1,269	1,229	96.8	1,221	1,199	98.2	48	30	62.5
2-year, not-for-profit	527	410	77.8	319	302	94.7	208	108	51.9
2-year, for-profit	970	853	87.9	831	795	95.7	139	58	41.7
Less-than-2-year, public	365	324	88.8	261	253	96.9	104	71	68.3
Less-than-2-year, not-for-profit	303	200	66.0	116	109	94.0	187	91	48.7
Less-than-2-year, for-profit	3,312	1,909	57.6	1,395	1,301	93.3	1,917	608	31.7
Degree-granting									
4-year, public	635	627	98.7	628	624	99.4	7	3	42.9
4-year, not-for-profit	1,875	1,671	89.1	1,565	1,535	98.1	310	136	43.9
4-year, for-profit	245	220	89.8	195	193	99.0	50	27	54.0
2-year, public	1,095	1,074	98.1	1,079	1,061	98.3	16	13	81.3
2-year, not-for-profit	210	186	88.6	165	158	95.8	45	28	62.2
2-year, for-profit	531	504	94.9	493	478	97.0	38	26	68.4
Non-degree-granting									
4-year, public	10	7	70.0	6	6	100.0	4	1	25.0
4-year, not-for-profit	123	66	53.7	29	25	86.2	94	41	43.6
4-year, for-profit	19	12	63.2	7	7	100.0	12	5	41.7
2-year, public	174	155	89.1	142	138	97.2	32	17	53.1
2-year, not-for-profit	317	224	70.7	154	144	93.5	163	80	49.1
2-year, for-profit	439	349	79.5	338	317	93.8	101	32	31.7
Less-than-2-year, public	365	324	88.8	261	253	96.9	104	71	68.3
Less-than-2-year, not-for-profit	303	200	66.0	116	109	94.0	187	91	48.7
Less-than-2-year, for-profit	3,312	1,909	57.6	1,395	1,301	93.3	1,917	608	31.7

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System, Institutional Characteristics Survey, (IPEDS-IC: 1998–99).

### Editing and Follow-up

Survey responses were edited for internal and inter-year consistency. For example, if the institution indicated that graduate-level programs were offered, the form was checked to make sure that graduate tuition was also reported. If the room and board charges reported by the institution were inconsistent with last year's reported charges, the data were verified with the institution. Tuition charges that were reported

for a quarter, semester, or trimester were converted to academic year charges to conform to the instructions provided to respondents.

The 1998–99 IC survey was due on October 1, 1999. Nonresponse followup was conducted from mid-October 1999 through May 2000. The first follow-up procedure occurred two weeks after the due date when a second IC survey form was mailed to all nonresponding institutions. After a few weeks, if there was no response to the second mailing, a letter was mailed to the President/CEO asking for a prompt response. In the past, the letter follow-up would normally be followed by a telephone call requesting critical data items only. However, telephone follow-up was not used in 1998–99.

None of the variables used in this report were imputed. In tables A, B, C, D, and 10 through 17, only responding institutions were used in calculating mean and median charges. The number of responding institutions is presented in the tables.

### **The imputation process for Part E: Enrollment and Instructional Activity**

Unlike the other data on the IC survey, the instructional activity data (specifically, the Part E data items on credit hour activity, contact hour activity, and unduplicated headcount) are imputed for partial and total nonresponse to these items. Part E also contains a total fall enrollment headcount.<sup>4</sup> Fall enrollment data are pre-printed on the survey form at mailout and are derived from the IPEDS Fall Enrollment Survey 1997-98. If the institution did not respond to the fall enrollment survey, data were imputed. As part of their IC survey response, institutions may correct this item, and if so, the new data are also included on the file. The total fall headcount is also collected from new institutions.

If 12-month unduplicated headcount data were imputed, it is noted on the file for users by the RSTATUS variable. Imputations were performed after all editing was complete. Institutions that did not respond to Part E or provided partial response were flagged for imputation. Prior to beginning the imputation process, certain types of schools were eliminated from the imputation base. These included schools that had merged or split, those that changed sector, and those reporting combined data.

Imputations were performed by first identifying schools with missing or incomplete Part E data. The schools that did respond were grouped according to sector and highest award level (for those with awards above the baccalaureate only) and by calendar system. Group ratios by student level (undergraduate, first-professional, and graduate) were derived by first aggregating the 12-month 1997-98 unduplicated headcount enrollment by student level and the reported fall enrollment from the 1997 fall enrollment survey by student level for each group for all responding institutions. The aggregated totals of the 12-month unduplicated headcount by student level were divided by the aggregated totals of the 1997 fall enrollment by student level to form the group ratios. For each nonresponding institution that reported 1997 fall enrollment data, the fall enrollment count was multiplied by the appropriate group ratios to yield imputed 12-month unduplicated headcount by student level. For nonresponding institutions that also did not respond to the 1997 fall enrollment survey, but reported total 1997 fall enrollment on the 1997-98 IC file, group ratios were derived by first aggregating 12-month 1997-98 unduplicated headcounts by student level and the 1997-98 total fall enrollment reported on the IC file (fall enrollment is not collected by student level on the IC file). The aggregated unduplicated headcount by student level and the aggregated total fall enrollment were divided by the number of institutions reporting these items to form group means. The group means for the 12-month unduplicated headcount by student level were then divided by the group mean of the total fall enrollment to form group ratios by student level. These ratios were then multiplied by the 1997 fall enrollment reported on the IC file for nonresponding institutions to derive imputed 12-month unduplicated headcount by student level. For institutions not responding to either the 1997 fall enrollment survey or the 1997 total fall enrollment item on the 1997-98 IC survey, similar

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<sup>4</sup> Fall enrollment is the traditional measure of student access to higher education. For most institutions, enrollment is reported as of the institution's official fall reporting data or October 15<sup>th</sup> of the survey year. If the institution does not have a fall term or semester, the report covers **one** day, in the fall, on which the schools is in session.

procedures as above were used substituting prior year (1996) fall enrollment data from the previous year's IC file or as a last option imputed data from the 1997 fall enrollment file.

Once unduplicated headcount was imputed for nonresponding institutions, instructional activity was then imputed. For example, credit hour activity for undergraduates was imputed by first aggregating the 12-month credit hour activity, the fall credit hour activity and the unduplicated head count for undergraduates for each time period in each imputation group. A group mean for 12-month credit hour activity was then calculated by dividing the aggregated 12-month credit hours by the number of institutions reporting in the group. A group mean for the total unduplicated undergraduate headcount was calculated in the same manner. A ratio was calculated by dividing the group mean for 12-month credit hour activity by the mean unduplicated headcount. The 12-month credit hour activity was then imputed by multiplying the ratio by the imputed unduplicated headcount for undergraduates. The imputed 12-month credit hour activity for undergraduates was then multiplied by the group ratio of fall credit hour activity to 12-month credit hour activity. This process was repeated to impute for first-professional and graduate credit hour activity and undergraduate contact hour activity.