



Reporting Requirements – Content Review and Recommendations Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) Student Financial Aid

IPEDS - Overview

IPEDS is the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System, which consists of interrelated surveys conducted annually by the U.S. Department’s National Center for Education Statistics (NCES). Data gathered from every college, university, and technical and vocational institution that participates in the federal student financial aid programs as required by the Higher Education Act of 1965 (HEA).

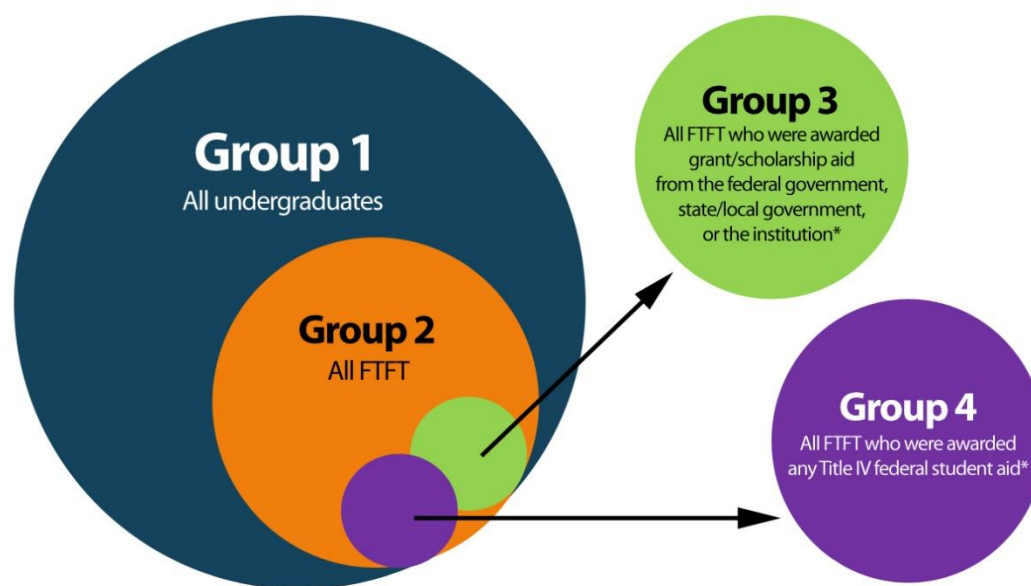
IPEDS provides basic data needed to describe and analyze trends in postsecondary education in the United States. Areas of focus include the numbers of students enrolled, staff employed, dollars expended, and degrees earned. Congress, federal agencies, state governments, education providers, professional associations, private businesses, media, students and parents, and others rely on IPEDS data for this basic information on postsecondary institutions.

Student Financial Aid Survey

IPEDS collects data on the number of full-time, first-time degree/certificate-seeking undergraduate students who receive different types of student financial aid, including grants and loans, from different sources at each institution. IPEDS also collects data to show the average dollar amount of aid received by these students. Finally, as a result of the Higher Education Opportunity Act (HEOA), IPEDS collects data to calculate the average net price at each institution for the following two groups: (1) full-time, first-time degree/certificate-seeking undergraduate students who receive grant and scholarship aid; and (2) full-time, first-time degree/certificate-seeking undergraduate students who receive Title IV federal student aid.

The purpose of the IPEDS Student Financial Aid (SFA) component is to collect information about financial aid provided to various groups (Figure 1) of undergraduate students. Data collected includes the number and average dollar amount of aid received by these students. Group 3 and Group 4 student information used to calculate net price at each institution. These calculations shown on [College Navigator](#) and used for [College Affordability and Transparency Lists](#).

Figure 1.



*For public institutions, include only those students paying the in-state or in-district tuition rate. For program reporters, include only those students enrolled in the institution’s largest program.

Source: IPEDS Student Financial Aid Survey Materials



Reporting Requirements – Content Review

There was a major rewrite of the S_IPEDS program (generates input data for the IPEDs Student Financial Aid Survey) in 2016 with additional modifications in 2017. Earlier this year, a great deal of time and effort went into the technical review which resulted in greater understanding, increased accuracy in reporting, and documented functionality that will greatly reduce future effort when modifications are necessary. The next phase included partnering with data stakeholders (Financial Assistance Services - FAS) and conducting a content review focusing on each survey input including items from other survey components, aligning reported data with IPEDS definitions, and peer comparisons on their reporting practices.

Evaluate the Number of Credit Hours Used to Calculate Fees

According to IPEDS definitions, the period of time (Academic Year) used to calculate fees generally extended from September to June and usually equated to 2 semesters or trimesters. St. Petersburg College's FAS office uses the same timeframe to calculate student financial aid packages (24 credit hours). In addition, the tuition and fees must match the amounts used by your financial aid office to determine eligibility (Full Academic Year Price of Attendance). Detailed information available online ([SFA Data Collection Detail](#)).

Five institutions (Broward, Daytona State, Hillsborough, Pasco-Hernando, Valencia) were identified for peer comparisons due to proximity and/or similar size. The following table shows three years of the average net price, rank (highest to lowest), per credit hour fees, reported in-state fees, and a derived variable for credit hours used. Several resources were utilized to determine the number of hours the institutions used to calculate in-state fees.

1. The [College Navigator](#) site provided information on the reported in-state fees. Topic areas that may be helpful for further analysis include Tuition, Fees, and Estimated Expenses (books and supplies, room and board, other expenses), Financial Aid, and Net Price ([Broward](#), [Daytona](#), [Hillsborough](#), [Pasco-Hernando](#), [St. Petersburg](#), [Valencia](#)).
2. Per credit hour charges were gathered from college websites.
3. The total in-state fees were divided by the per credit hour charge to determine the total hours used (Credit Hour Calc.).

Figure 2. Comparison of Florida Colleges System - Average Net Price and Credit Hours Used to Calculate Tuition

UnitID	Institution Name	2015-16 (SFA1516)	Rank	2014-15 (SFA1415)	Rank	2013-14 (SFA1314)	Rank	Percent > or < SPC	Per Credit Hour	In-state Fees	Credit Hour Calc.
132709	Broward College	8,882	5	8,622	7	9,417	4	25.3%	\$ 117.90	\$ 1,414.80	12
133386	Daytona State College	4,364	22	4,959	23	5,064	19	-38.4%	\$ 102.38	\$ 3,071.40	30
134495	Hillsborough Community College	4,555	21	5,400	19	4,940	20	-35.7%	\$ 104.39	\$ 2,505.36	24
136400	Pasco-Hernando State College	6,229	15	5,593	16	5,868	16	-12.1%	\$ 105.18	\$ 3,155.40	30
137078	St Petersburg College	7,089	11	10,933	3	7,499	12	0.0%	\$ 111.75	\$ 3,352.50	30
138187	Valencia College	6,804	12	6,166	15	5,872	15	-4.0%	\$ 103.06	\$ 2,473.44	24

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Source: IPEDS Data Center - Compare Institutions by Select Variables (<https://nces.ed.gov/ipeds/datacenter/InstitutionList.aspx>)

The role of the State IPEDS Coordinator has changed over the years as new employees were hired. At one time, this position was more actively involved with setting state standards and instructed colleges to use 30 credit hours to calculate fees. Colleges have been given more flexibility in recent years to set standards that better align with their internal practices as evidenced by the information in the table above.

Evaluate the Data Source

In the process of the content review, it was discovered that the data generated by the current version of the S_IPEDS program was not aligned to IPEDS definitions. The 2016 rewrite of the program used disbursed to establish headcount and dollars for grants/scholarships. Records maintained by individuals in Administrative Information Systems show that the S_IPEDs report was originally created in SOLAR (1999) which was later converted to REGIS and then finally to PeopleSoft (2004).



According to detailed information available online ([SFA Data Collection Detail](#)), “aid awarded” refers to grants/scholarship aid that was awarded to students. If this amount is different from what the student actually received (disbursed), report the original amount awarded. Institutions should continue to report loans that were awarded and accepted by the student.

Beginning 2002, meetings of the IPEDS Technical Review Panel (TRP) were conducted to obtain peer review of IPEDS-related project plans and products, and to foster communications with potential users of the data. Discussions related to “aid-awarded” appeared in [Requirements of the Higher Education Opportunity Act: Net Price of Attendance \(December 2008\)](#) as recommendations and [Improvements to the Student Financial Aid Component and Net Price Calculations \(December 2010\)](#) with changes to the definition applicable to the next reporting cycle.

Notes from the Management Information Advisory Task Force ([MISATFOR](#)) were reviewed (2008 through 2011). Modifications to this survey included Tuition and Fees moved to another survey module, additional data points (aid by income level and living arrangements), and a definitive definition for counting aid. Internal documentation ([December 2011](#)) shows that changes were requested to this program to use the new definition. Unfortunately, we are unable to confirm that this was applied to the S_IPEDS program since the normal practice is to modify within a program with detailed commenting. The current version was so heavily modified in 2016 that it is not clear if anything was deleted. We are evaluating the current program to the 2011 change documentation to determine any differences.

Calculate Net Price

Net price is the amount a student pays to attend an institution in a single academic year **after** subtracting financial aid that does not have to be paid back (Grants/Scholarships). Average net price provides an idea of how much it would cost a first-time, full-time undergraduate student awarded aid to attend a particular institution.

The tables below show comparisons using the same groups of students reported for the 2017-18 survey with adjustments discussed previously (24 Credit Hours, aid-awarded). There appears to be a 5.6% decrease in total cost using 24 credit hours to calculate tuition and required fees (Figure 3.). There appears to be 20.6% increase in the average amount of grant/scholarship aid using the correct definition (Figure 4.). For comparison purposes, three scenarios presented—adjusting to 24 Credits, using initial award amount, and adjusting for both conditions (Figure 5.). Estimates shown were within 0.5% of results generated from the modified S_IPEDS SQR that went into production 2/1/2019.

Figure 3. Total Cost of Attendance Comparison

Total Cost of Attendance (06)	Original	With Changes	% Change
	30 Credits	24 Credits	
Tuition/ Required Fees (IC)	\$ 3,385.00	\$ 2,708.00	-20.0%
Books and Supplies (IC)	\$ 1,600.00	\$ 1,600.00	0.0%
Weighted Room/ Board ¹	\$ 7,055.00	\$ 7,055.00	0.0%
Total	\$ 12,040.00	\$ 11,363.00	-5.6%

Weighted Room/ Board¹ = [Room/Board * (Students living with Family /(Students living with Family + Students not living with family + Unknown))] + [Room/Board * (Students not living with Family /(Students living with Family + Students not living with family + Unknown))] + [Room/Board * (Unknown /(Students living with Family + Students not living with family + Unknown))]

Figure 4. Average Amount of Grant/Scholarship Aid Comparison

Average Amount of Grant/Scholarship Aid	Original	With Changes	% Change
	Disbursed	Initial Award	
Source of Headcount and Dollars	\$ 4,956.39	\$ 5,975.49	20.6%

Figure 5. Average Net Price Simulation

Average Net Price = Total Cost of Attendance - Average grant or scholarship aid (federal, state, institutional)



Average Institutional Net Price (FTFT Students who Receive Grant/Scholarship Aid)	Original	With Changes	% Change
	Disbursed	Initial Award	
Average Institutional Net Price (Tuition Only)	\$ 7,083.61	\$ 6,406.61	-9.6%
Average Institutional Net Price (Source Only)	\$ 7,083.61	\$ 6,064.51	-14.4%
Average Institutional Net Price (All)	\$ 7,083.61	\$ 5,387.51	-23.9%

Reporting Impact

The table below shows historical trends to meet the HEOA requirements to report data for average costs of attendance for first-time, full-time aided students. This information shown on [College Navigator](#) and used for [College Affordability and Transparency Lists](#) (Highest Net Price (top 5.0%), Lowest Net Price (bottom 10.0%), Highest Increase in Net Price (top 5.0%).

Figure 6. St. Petersburg College Historical Trends with Year-Over-Year (YOY) Percent Change

Aid Year	Total Cost of Attendance	YOY Percent Change	Average Grant/Scholarship Aid	YOY Percent Change	Average Net Price	YOY Percent Change
2006-07	\$ 7,986.00		\$ 3,464.00		\$ 4,522.00	
2007-08	\$ 7,770.00	-2.7%	\$ 3,418.00	-1.3%	\$ 4,352.00	-3.8%
2008-09 ¹	\$ 9,468.00	21.9%	\$ 3,700.00	8.3%	\$ 5,768.00	32.5%
2009-10	\$ 10,085.00	6.5%	\$ 4,280.00	15.7%	\$ 5,805.00	0.6%
2010-11 ²	\$ 11,628.00	15.3%	\$ 4,566.00	6.7%	\$ 7,062.00	21.7%
2011-12	\$ 11,619.00	-0.1%	\$ 4,457.00	-2.4%	\$ 7,162.00	1.4%
2012-13	\$ 12,314.00	6.0%	\$ 4,619.00	3.6%	\$ 7,695.00	7.4%
2013-14	\$ 12,481.00	1.4%	\$ 4,982.00	7.9%	\$ 7,499.00	-2.5%
2014-15 ³	\$ 15,759.00	26.3%	\$ 4,826.00	-3.1%	\$ 10,933.00	45.8%
2015-16	\$ 11,880.00	-24.6%	\$ 4,791.00	-0.7%	\$ 7,089.00	-35.2%
2016-17	\$ 12,033.00	1.3%	\$ 4,956.00	3.4%	\$ 7,077.00	-0.2%
2016-17 ⁴	\$ 11,363.00	-5.6%	\$ 5,975.49	20.6%	\$ 5,387.51	-23.9%

¹Cost of Attendance used by the Financial Assistance office determining financial need was updated.

²Aid-awarded defined

³S_IPEDS Re-write -method for capturing living arrangement was not accurate and impacted total cost of attendance. Corrected the following year.

⁴Adjustments made to last year's survey results to gauge impact.

Survey Input and Outside Range Edits

Typically, outside of range edits would be triggered if the current year value were greater than 25% to 30% variance from prior year value.

College Affordability and Transparency

The [College Affordability and Transparency Center](#) (CATC) on the U.S. Department of Education's College Navigator website helps students make informed decisions about their choice for higher education. As part of this Center, the Department posts College Affordability and Transparency Lists that highlight institutions with the highest tuition prices, highest net prices, and institutions whose prices are **rising** at the fastest rates – top 5.0%. Institutions that appear on either of the highest increase lists mentioned above must provide an explanation as to why costs have increased and what steps were or will be taken toward reducing costs.

Recommendation

Implement both the adjustment to 24 credit hours to calculate tuition and fees and aid-awarded to generate headcount and dollars for grants/scholarship. These changes will show a more accurate representation of St. Petersburg College on public websites mentioned in this paper, increase ranking related to other Florida colleges, and little if any reporting impact.