

Report and Recommendations from IPEDS Technical Review Panel #1: Data Reporting Structures and Clustering

PROPOSAL SUMMARY: IPEDS should revise its reporting requirements to eliminate (or minimize) combined reporting by institutions.

On July 11-12, 2002, NCES hosted the first in a series of IPEDS Technical Review Panel (TRP) meetings. The panel addressed issues raised by data reporting structures (i.e., the way some institutions combine their data to report to IPEDS) and clustering (do they combine data for the same institutions for all survey components or combinations of surveys).

Background

IPEDS has traditionally allowed the reporting of combined data for multiple campuses for all survey components except Institutional Characteristics (IC). This type of reporting is referred to as "parent/child" reporting. When combined reporting for any component occurs, the parent institution (normally the main campus) submits a combined report, which includes data for its own (main) campus plus data for one or more branch campuses (these branches, because they do not report data separately, are referred to as "children"). When this happens, the data file includes the parent record, which contains the data, and the child record(s), which contain no data. The parent/child reporting structure may be more complicated for Finance, where the Finance data file may reflect partial data reported by children.

These reporting patterns are documented on IPEDS data files through the use of a parent/child indicator that shows whether the record is a parent, a child, or a child with data; a variable that holds the UnitID of the parent is included so that data users know where the data for the child/children are reported.

In recent years, the reporting of combined data has become pervasive across all surveys and the problems posed by this practice have become unmanageable. An examination of parent/child reporting practices in IPEDS indicate that these relationships are not necessarily constant across surveys. For example, an institution with two branches might report enrollment data separately for each of the three entities, while reporting combined Completions data or combined faculty counts. These kinds of reporting inconsistencies across components make the data very difficult to use.

Additionally, NCES/IPEDS is required to provide a list of nonrespondents to each of the IPEDS components to the U.S. Department of Education's office of Federal Student Aid (FSA) and the inconsistent reporting practices of some institutions have made it difficult to determine compliance with Title IV reporting requirements. Because IPEDS reporting is part of an institution's Program Participation Agreement (PPA) with the Department of Education for Title IV federal student aid programs, the Department must be able to readily determine compliance with this agreement.

Issues Addressed:

- Should parent/child (combined) reporting be allowed in IPEDS?
- If yes, should it be consistent across all surveys or groups of surveys?
- Why do parent/child combinations differ for surveys that depend on a student record, or an HR record? For example, "Institution A" reports for 2 branches in the Completions component and for 6 branches in Enrollment or "Institution B" reports combined data on

Enrollment but separate reports for Graduation Rates and Completions (where all three components are driven off of the student record files)?

- Should IPEDS allow parent/child reporting across sectors? How will this impact data tables?
- How does combined reporting impact the Peer Analysis System and IPEDS College Opportunities On-Line?
- Can institutions change/modify the way they report?
- How much lead-time would institutions need to be able to conform to a new reporting structure, if implemented?

Proposal:

The TRP recommended the following:

- That IPEDS require separate reporting for each entity that has a Program Participation Agreement (PPA) with Federal Student Aid.
- That institutions listed as separate entities in IPEDS would be required to report data separately for all survey components.

The only exception would be that IPEDS would allow institutions with multiple listings (campuses that share a PPA) to report combined Finance data; this would allow institutions to provide data directly from their audited financial statement for the institution as a whole.

- That IPEDS allow institutions (multiple campuses) that share a PPA to become one entity, if they are unable to report data separately for each component.

What is a separate entity in IPEDS?

Any institution that has a PPA with the Department of Education AND is primarily postsecondary AND is open to the public must be listed as a separate entity in IPEDS.

Any branch campus or location that shares a PPA with a main campus may be listed as a separate entity in IPEDS if it satisfies the following definition:

A branch campus is a campus or site of an educational institution that is not temporary, is located in a community beyond a reasonable commuting distance from its parent institution, and offers organized programs of study, not just courses.

For federal student aid purposes, the Office of Postsecondary Education includes further restrictions such as: the institution must have its own faculty; its own budgetary and hiring authority, and its own systems/administrative organization (i.e., its own financial aid office, registration system, student record system, and financial accounting system (if possible)).

In addition, any main campus or branch campus of a non-Title IV institution that is primarily postsecondary and open to the public may be listed as a separate entity in IPEDS. Non-Title IV institutions have no reporting requirements; however, they will be listed in College Opportunities On-Line (IPEDS COOL) if they respond to the surveys.

What are the reporting implications of this proposal?

Any institution listed in IPEDS will be required to report its own data separately (that is, not combined with any other campus) for all IPEDS survey components, with the one exception noted above. That is, a branch campus of an institution that shares a PPA

with another IPEDS entity, may have their Finance data reported by the parent institution.

Any institution that does not provide data for any component of IPEDS will be reported to the Department of Education's office of Federal Student Aid for appropriate action.

When will this be implemented?

NCES would like to implement this requirement, that all IPEDS entities report separate data, starting with the Fall 2004 data collection.

For any data collections prior to the implementation date, combined reporting will be permitted between entities that share an OPEid. However, reporting must be consistent among like components. For example, institutions that choose to submit combined Salaries data, must also submit combined EAP and Staff data. Likewise, institutions submitting combined Completions or Enrollment data should report all "student-related" data the same way.

Comments:

NCES is concerned about whether or not institutions that currently report combined data are able to comply with these new requirements within the timeframe presented. We encourage e-mailing any comments concerning this proposal to Susan Broyles at ~~Susan.Broyles@ed.gov~~ **[defunct]** by August 1, 2003. Please include the following in the subject line: TRP #1 - Proposal comments.