

# Technical Review Panel No. 44 Improvements to the Human Resources Survey

## Final Actions

The Human Resources (HR) component of the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) collects data on the financial and human resources involved in the provision of institutionally based postsecondary education. The HR component meets data collection and reporting requirements as outlined in federal higher education and civil rights laws. Additionally, the data collected in the HR component provide information on staffing levels at the institutions for various occupational categories and can be used in peer institution analysis, in workforce utilization studies, and to address issues related to general demographics of higher education faculty and staff. Although the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) has taken steps in the past to simplify reporting and ensure data consistency and accuracy in the HR component, data providers have indicated that it remains one of the most burdensome components of the IPEDS data collection in terms of time needed to report.

On July 22 and 23, 2014, RTI International, the contractor for the IPEDS web-based data collection system, convened a meeting of the IPEDS Technical Review Panel (TRP)<sup>1</sup> in Washington, DC. RTI's specific purpose for TRP 44 was to discuss how data collected through the HR survey component are currently used and how potential changes would impact institutions, researchers, and the Department of Education. The panel consisted of 47 individuals representing institutions, researchers and other data users, state governments, the federal government, higher education associations, and other experts. A number of panelists came from a human resources background and had expert knowledge of this topic.

The TRP reviewed the Human Resources component and assessed the utility of the data to meet policy and research needs. Given the increased demands placed on institutions over the last several years, the TRP focused on adjusting existing data elements to improve data quality, which may, in turn, lessen or reduce reporting burden for institutions. Following the meeting, RTI posted a summary of the TRP suggestions to the web for public comment. RTI solicited comments by notifying keyholders and coordinators through a "This Week in IPEDS" email announcement and encouraged member associations involved in the TRP to notify their constituents and stakeholders. Comments were left open for approximately 30 days and the comment period closed on November 14, 2014. RTI received 2 comments from interested parties before the summary was posted and 9 comments from interested parties during the public comment period. Following the comment period, RTI outlined recommendations for NCES based on the outcome of the TRP meetings and subsequent public comment period. NCES has taken the actions listed below.

## Proposed Changes to the HR Component

NCES requested clearance from the Office of Management and Budget for the 2016-17, 2017-18, and 2018-19 IPEDS data collections. The clearance package includes a number of proposed changes to the data collection, including the following proposed changes to the HR component. If approved, the items will be implemented in 2016-17.

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<sup>1</sup> Meetings of the IPEDS TRP are conducted by RTI to solicit expert discussion and suggestions on a broad range of issues related to postsecondary education and the conduct of IPEDS. The TRP is designed to allow the public to advise and work with RTI to improve IPEDS data collection and products, data quality, and userfriendliness. The TRP does not report to or advise the Department of Education.

## **Changes to the HR Form -- Degree-granting Institutions**

- **Salary outlays and headcounts:**
  - Collect salary outlays for full-time non-medical school instructional staff by gender and academic rank separately by contract length/employment agreement (i.e., 9-month, 10-month, 11-month, 12-month) to improve the quality, clarity, and comparability of the resulting data.
  - Collect the headcount of full-time non-medical school instructional staff whose contract/employment agreement covers a period of less than 9 months by gender and academic rank to square the data file and clarify reporting.
- **Graduate assistants, by function:**
  - To reduce burden, implement new, condensed categories specifically for graduate assistants:
    - Graduate assistant, teaching;
    - Graduate assistant, research; and
    - Graduate assistant, other.
- **New hires:**
  - Revise the reporting period for new hires to include any newly hired full-time, permanent staff on the payroll of the institution between November 1 and October 31 in order to collect more complete information on new hires and improve data quality.

## **Changes to the HR Form -- Degree-granting Institutions with 15 or More Full-time Staff**

- **Employment agreement/contract length**
  - Split occupational category “Multi-year or Continuing or At-will Contract” into two new categories:
    - Multi-year; and
    - Indefinite length (e.g., continuing or at will).

## **Changes to the HR Form – All Versions**

- **Reporting of race/ethnicity**
  - Implement annual collection of staff data by race/ethnicity to provide more comprehensive demographic information and better facilitate trend analysis.
- **Non-instructional staff categories**
  - Provide better guidance on where to classify the most problematic roles among the existing categories to improve the overall quality of the data reported to IPEDS.