

IPEDS Cost Survey Component Overview

Tutorial Script

2024-25 Collection

On behalf of the Association for Institutional Research (AIR) and the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), welcome to this tutorial on the IPEDS Cost (CST) survey component. The CST component designed to collect information on student charges for estimating the Cost of Attendance (COA) and calculating Average Net Price (ANP) for first-time, full-time undergraduate students, as mandated by the Higher Education Act of 1965 (HEA), as amended. This component also collects information on tuition and fees for other groups of students.

The CST component consists of screening questions and three sections. During the Fall data collection period, institutions complete screening questions and Section 1, which covers cost of attendance for the current academic year. In the Winter data collection period, Section 2 focuses on selected financial aid data for ANP calculation, and Section 3 involves ANP calculations based on data from Sections 1 and 2.

Although introduced in the 2024-25 data collection, much of the CST component data elements are moved from Institutional Characteristics (IC) and Student Financial Aid (SFA) survey components, maintaining continuity in data collection while streamlining reporting requirements.

Institutions are required to submit cost of attendance data by the end of fall collection period, with an opportunity to revise this information during the Winter collection period, if necessary. Note that data for all years are reported and edited within the CST survey component, not in the Prior Year Revision System.

Due to the introduction of the CST component, the IC component no longer includes data elements on cost of attendance and tuition charges, as these have been moved to the CST component. Additionally, the selected information on financial aid awards and the net price calculation elements were moved from the SFA component to the CST component. Finally, NCES has incorporated two new questions in the CST component to determine whether institutions request non-FAFSA financial information and if they collect asset data for students eligible for federal need analysis exemptions, as mandated by the FAFSA Simplification Act.

This tutorial provides an overview of the CST component. For more information, visit the IPEDS website or contact the IPEDS Help Desk.