Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System
Distance Education Overview
Tutorial Script
2024-25 Data Collection

On behalf of the Institute of Education Sciences', IES, National Center for Education Statistics, NCES, and the Association for Institutional Research, AIR, welcome to this tutorial. The purpose of this tutorial is to discuss distance education data institutions must report to IPEDS.

We will start with the review of three important definitions and related concepts used in IPEDS for reporting distance education. The first one is *distance education.*

Distance education for IPEDS reporting purposes includes active interaction between students and the instructor and is defined in the IPEDS Glossary as:

"Education that uses one or more technologies to deliver instruction to students who are separated from the instructor and to support regular and substantive interaction between the students and the instructor synchronously or asynchronously.

Technologies used for instruction may include the following: Internet; one-way and two-way transmissions through open broadcasts, closed circuit, cable, microwave, broadband lines, fiber optics, satellite or wireless communication devices; audio conferencing; and video cassette, DVDs, and CD-ROMs, if the cassette, DVDs, and CD-ROMs are used in a course in conjunction with the technologies listed above."

The IPEDS Glossary defines a distance education course as: "A course in which the instructional content is delivered exclusively via distance education. Requirements for coming to campus for orientation, testing, or academic support services do not exclude a course from being classified as distance education."

Lastly, the IPEDS Glossary defines a distance education program as: "A program for which all the required coursework for program completion is able to be completed via distance education courses."

It is important to be able to understand and distinguish these definitions and related concepts from each other when reporting distance education data to IPEDS to help NCES provide accurate, consistent, reliable and valid data to the public.

Distance education data are reported in four IPEDS survey components:

1.   Institutional Characteristics (IC) for the current academic year,

2.   Fall Enrollment (EF) for the current year as of the institution's official fall reporting date,

3.   12-month Enrollment (E12) for the prior year (July 1 – June 30), and

4.   Completions (C) for the prior year (July 1 – June 30).

In the IC survey component, institutions report if they offer distance education programs and/or courses and at what student levels: undergraduate and/or graduate. Whether or not all programs offered by the institution are delivered exclusively via distance education is also reported in this survey component.

In the EF and E12 survey components, institutions report all students in the following categories:

• Enrolled exclusively in distance education courses;

• Enrolled in at least one, but not all, distance education courses; and

• Not enrolled in any distance education courses.

In the EF component, for students enrolled exclusively in distance education, institutions must also report the student's location relative to the institution, including if the student is:

• In the same state or jurisdiction as the institution;

• Within the United States or one of its jurisdictions, but in a different state or jurisdiction than the institution;

• Within the United States or one of its jurisdictions, but the state or jurisdiction is unknown; or

• Outside the United States and its legal jurisdictions.

In the C survey component, institutions must report whether at least one program within the Classification of Instructional Programs code, commonly referred to as the CIP code, and award level is offered as a distance education program. Specifically, an institution must report if all, some, or none of the programs in the CIP code at a particular award level can be completed entirely via distance education.

For additional information, please visit the Distance Education in IPEDS resource page at the following website.

If you have questions about reporting your institution's data to IPEDS, the IPEDS Data Collection System, or IPEDS Data Tools, contact the IPEDS Help Desk.