

## Appendix B: Glossary of IPEDS Terms

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**academic year:** The period of time generally extending from September to June; usually equated to 2 semesters or trimesters, 3 quarters, or the period covered by a 4-1-4 calendar system.

**adjusted cohort:** In the *Graduation Rates* component of the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS), an institution's revised cohort minus any allowable exclusions.

**admitted students:** Applicants that have been granted an official offer to enroll in a postsecondary institution.

**applicant:** An individual who has fulfilled the institution's requirements to be considered for admission (including payment or waiving of the application fee, if any) and who has been notified of one of the following actions: admission, nonadmission, placement on waiting list, or application withdrawn by applicant or institution.

**bachelor's or equivalent degree-seeking cohort:** In the *Graduation Rates* component of IPEDS, a cohort of students who were seeking a bachelor's or equivalent degree upon entry.

**cohort:** A specific group of students identified and tracked over time.

**cohort year:** The year that a cohort of full-time, first-time students began attending college.

**control (of institution):** A classification of whether an institution is operated by publicly elected or appointed officials (public control) or by privately elected or appointed officials and derives its major source of funds from private sources (nonprofit or for-profit control).

**degree/certificate-seeking students:** Students enrolled in courses for credit who are recognized by the institution as seeking a degree or other formal award. At the undergraduate level, this is intended to include students enrolled in vocational or occupational programs.

**exclusions:** Those students who may be removed (deleted) from a cohort (or subcohort). For the *Graduation Rates* data collection, students may be removed from a cohort if they left the institution for one of the following reasons: died or were totally and permanently disabled; to serve in the armed forces; to serve with a foreign aid service of the federal government, such as the Peace Corps; or to serve on official church missions.

**fall cohort:** The group of students entering in the fall term established for tracking purposes. For the *Graduation Rates* component, this includes all students who enter an institution as full-time, first-time degree- or certificate-seeking undergraduate students during the fall term of a given year.

**federal grants:** Grants provided by federal agencies such as the U.S. Department of Education, including Title IV Pell Grants and Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grants (SEOG). Also includes need-based and merit-based educational assistance funds and training vouchers provided from other federal agencies and federally sponsored educational benefits programs, including the Department of Veterans Affairs, Department of Labor, and other federal agencies. (Used for reporting on the *Student Financial Aid* component.)

**financial aid:** Grants, loans, assistantships, scholarships, fellowships, tuition waivers, tuition discounts, military servicemembers and veterans benefits, employer aid (tuition reimbursement), and other monies (other than from relatives/friends) provided to students to meet expenses. This includes Title IV subsidized and unsubsidized loans made directly to students.

**first-time student (undergraduate):** A student attending any institution for the first time at the undergraduate level. Includes students enrolled in academic or occupational programs. Also includes students enrolled in the fall term who attended college for the first time in the prior summer term, as well as students who entered with advanced standing (college credits earned before graduation from high school).

**full-time undergraduate student:** A student enrolled for 12 or more semester credits, or 12 or more quarter credits, or 24 or more contact hours a week each term.

**graduation rate:** The rate required for disclosure and/or reporting purposes under the Student Right-to-Know Act. This rate is calculated as the total number of completers within 150 percent of normal time at the same institution where the student started divided by the adjusted cohort (revised cohort minus any allowable exclusions).

**in-district student:** A student who is a legal resident of the locality in which he/she attends school and thus is entitled to reduced tuition charges if offered by the institution.

**in-district tuition:** The tuition charged by the institution to those students residing in the locality in which they attend school. This may be a lower rate than in-state tuition if offered by the institution.

**institutional grants:** Scholarships and fellowships granted and funded by the institution and/or individual departments within the institution (i.e., instruction, research, public service) that may contribute indirectly to the enhancement of these programs. Includes scholarships targeted to certain individuals (e.g., based on state or jurisdiction of residence, major field of study, athletic team participation) for which the institution designates the recipient.

**less-than-2-year institution:** This group includes any postsecondary institution that only offers programs of less than 2 years' duration below the baccalaureate level, as well as occupational and vocational schools with programs that do not exceed 1,800 contact hours.

**level of institution:** A classification of whether an institution's programs are of at least 4 years' duration or beyond a baccalaureate level (4-year institution), at least 2 but less than 4 years (2-year institution), or less than 2 years (less-than-2-year institution).

**loans to students:** Any monies that must be repaid to the lending institution for which the student is the designated borrower. Includes all Title IV subsidized and unsubsidized loans and all institutionally and privately sponsored loans. Does not include PLUS and other loans made directly to parents.

**net price:** The Higher Education Opportunity Act of 2008 defines institutional net price as “the average yearly price actually charged to first-time, full-time undergraduate students receiving student aid at an institution of higher education after deducting such aid.” In IPEDS, the institutional net price of attendance is generated by subtracting the average amount of federal, state/local government, or institutional grant and scholarship aid from the average total cost of attendance. Total cost of attendance is the sum of published tuition and required fees (lower of in-district or in-state for public institutions), books and supplies, and the weighted average for room and board and other expenses. Cost of attendance data are collected in the *Institutional Characteristics* (IC) component of IPEDS, and financial aid data are collected in the *Student Financial Aid* (SFA) component of IPEDS.

**nonresident alien:** A person who is not a citizen or national of the United States and who is in this country on a visa or temporary basis and does not have the right to remain indefinitely.

**normal time to completion:** The amount of time necessary for a student to complete all requirements for a degree or certificate according to the institution’s catalog. This is typically 4 years (8 semesters or trimesters, or 12 quarters, excluding summer terms) for a bachelor’s degree in a standard term-based institution; 2 years (4 semesters or trimesters, or 6 quarters, excluding summer terms) for an associate’s degree in a standard term-based institution; and the various scheduled times for certificate programs.

**Office of Postsecondary Education (OPE):** Office within the U.S. Department of Education that formulates federal postsecondary education policy and administers programs that address critical national needs in support of its mission to increase access to quality postsecondary education.

**open admission:** An admission policy whereby the school will accept any student who applies.

**postsecondary education:** The provision of a formal instructional program whose curriculum is designed primarily for students beyond the compulsory age for high school. This includes programs whose purpose is academic, vocational, and continuing professional education, and excludes avocational and adult basic education programs.

**postsecondary institution:** An institution that has as its sole purpose, or one of its primary missions, the provision of postsecondary education. Postsecondary education is the provision of a formal instructional program whose curriculum is designed primarily for students beyond the compulsory age for high school. This includes programs whose purpose is academic, vocational, or continuing professional education and excludes avocational and adult basic education programs. For IPEDS, these institutions must be open to the public.

**private for-profit institution:** A private institution in which the individual(s) or agency in control receives compensation other than wages, rent, or other expenses for the assumption of risk.

**private institution:** An educational institution controlled by a private individual(s) or by a nongovernmental agency, usually supported primarily by other than public funds, and operated by other than publicly elected or appointed officials. These institutions may be either for-profit or nonprofit.

**private nonprofit institution:** A private institution in which the individual(s) or agency in control receives no compensation, other than wages, rent, or other expenses for the assumption of risk. These include both independent nonprofit schools and those affiliated with a religious organization.

**Program Participation Agreement (PPA):** A written agreement between a postsecondary institution and the Secretary of Education. This agreement allows institutions to participate in any of the Title IV student assistance programs other than the State Student Incentive Grant (SSIG) and the National Early Intervention Scholarship and Partnership (NEISP) programs. The PPA conditions the initial and continued participation of an eligible institution in any Title IV program upon compliance with the General Provisions regulations, the individual program regulations, and any additional conditions specified in the program participation agreement that the Department of Education requires the institution to meet. Institutions with such an agreement are referred to as Title IV institutions.

**public institution:** An educational institution whose programs and activities are operated by publicly elected or appointed school officials and which is supported largely by public funds.

**race/ethnicity:** Categories developed in 1997 by the Office of Management and Budget that are used to describe groups to which individuals belong or identify with. The categories do not denote scientific definitions of anthropological origins. The designations are used to categorize U.S. citizens, resident aliens, and other eligible noncitizens.

Individuals are asked to first designate ethnicity as:

- Hispanic or Latino or
- Not Hispanic or Latino

Second, individuals are asked to indicate all races that apply among the following:

- American Indian or Alaska Native
- Asian
- Black or African American
- Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
- White

For reporting purposes, students who identify with more than one race are included in the Two or more races category.

**resident alien (and other eligible noncitizens):** A person who is not a citizen or national of the United States but who has been admitted as a legal immigrant for the purpose of obtaining permanent resident alien status and who holds one of the following: an alien registration card (Form I-551 or I-151), a Temporary Resident Card (Form I-688), or an Arrival-Departure Record (Form I-94) with a notation that conveys legal immigrant status such as Section 207 Refugee, Section 208 Asylee, Conditional Entrant Parolee, or Cuban-Haitian.

**revised cohort:** Initial cohort after revisions are made. This is the number from which graduation and transfer-out rates are calculated. Cohorts may be revised if an institution discovers that incorrect data were reported in an earlier year.

**sector:** One of nine institutional categories resulting from dividing the universe according to control and level. Control categories are public, nonprofit, and for-profit. Level categories are 4 years and higher (4-year institutions), at least 2 but less than 4 years (2-year institutions), and less than 2 years (less-than-2-year institutions). For example: sector 1 = public 4-year institutions; sector 2 = nonprofit 4-year institutions.

**state and local government grants:** State and local monies awarded to the institution under state and local student aid programs, including the state portion of State Student Incentives Grants (SSIG) (used for reporting *Student Financial Aid* data).

**Student Right-to-Know Act:** Also known as the “Student Right-to-Know and Campus Security Act” (P.L. 101-542), which was passed by Congress November 9, 1990. Title I, Section 103 requires institutions eligible for Title IV funding to disclose completion or graduation rates of certificate- or degree-seeking, full-time students entering an institution to all students and prospective students. Further, Section 104 requires each institution that participates in any Title IV program and is attended by students receiving athletically related student aid to annually submit a report to the Secretary of Education. This report is to contain, among other things, graduation/completion rates of all students as well as students receiving athletically related student aid by race/ethnicity and gender and by sport, and the average completion or graduation rate for the four most recent years. These data are also required to be disclosed to parents, coaches, and potential student athletes when the institution offers athletically related student aid. The *Graduation Rates* component of IPEDS was developed specifically to help institutions respond to these requirements.

**subcohort:** A predefined subset of the initial cohort or the revised cohort established for tracking purposes on the *Graduation Rates* component of IPEDS (e.g., athletic subcohort).

**Title IV institution:** An institution that is accredited by an agency or organization recognized by the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Education, has at least one program of more than 300 clock hours or 8 credit hours, has been in business for at least 2 years, and has a signed Program Participation Agreement with the Office of Postsecondary Education, U.S. Department of Education.

**undergraduate student:** A student enrolled in a 4- or 5-year bachelor’s degree program, an associate’s degree program, or a vocational or technical program below the baccalaureate level.

**2-year institution:** Any postsecondary institution that offers programs of at least 2 but less than 4 years’ duration, as well as occupational and vocational schools with programs of at least 1,800 hours and academic institutions with programs of less than 4 years. Does not include bachelor’s-degree-granting institutions where the baccalaureate program can be completed in 3 years.

**4-year institution:** Any postsecondary institution that offers programs of at least 4 years’ duration or one that offers programs at or above the baccalaureate level, as well as schools that offer postbaccalaureate certificates only or those that offer graduate programs only. Also includes free-standing medical, law, or other professional schools.