

Institutional Research
Standard Definitions
for Reporting

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INTRODUCTION

Purpose

To establish a set of Institutional Research (IR) reporting standard definitions in order to keep IR reporting more consistent and to communicate more effectively with end users. This will allow our office to better support academic research and decision-making. This is our initial step in preparing for future online reporting efforts.

Guidelines

To establish standard definitions, we follow these guidelines:

- Consider theoretical accuracy and data availability,
- Each Measurement should include two aspects: definition and method,
- Provide an example or template to demonstrate the definition and the corresponding methods

Measurements

Measurements can be reported at the aggregate level (overall/college-wide), intermediate level (location, mode of learning, division/department, program, major, subject/discipline, course/class), and/or individual level (student). Established measurements include:

- Student Enrollment, and
- Student Performance including:
 - Persistence
 - Retention
 - Transfer-outs
 - Grade Distribution
 - Completion, Success, and Withdrawal
 - Graduates
 - Degrees and Certificates Awarded
 - Course Taking Behaviors

Our office has developed standard reports based on census day (45th day) data, after audit processes have been finalized, as well as on semester end data. Most established measurements are reported on a regular basis at the aggregate level in these standard reports and student enrollment is reported partially at the intermediate level (location, mode of learning, division/department). Additional reports can be provided at the other levels as requested.

OFFICIAL ENROLLMENT AND FTSE

Official Enrollment Headcount and Full-Time Student Equivalency (FTSE): Official enrollment headcounts (unduplicated) are based on data provided to us on the census day (45th day) of each Fall and Spring semester, and on Short Term/ OE-OE/Summer School/Skill Center data provided to us at the end of each academic year.

Official enrollment headcount and FTSE are reported on a regular basis at the aggregate level in the **Fall and Spring Standard Reports** and the annual **Fact Book** by:

- full-time/part-time status
- gender
- ethnicity/race
- age groupings (per IPEDS categories), and
- student characteristics (by groups)

Additional data can be provided by sub-groups as needed.

At the intermediate level, in the **Fall and Spring Standard Reports** and the annual **Fact Book**, official enrollment headcount and FTSE are reported by:

- Division and Department
- Location
- Mode of Learning

The following four standard enrollment reports have been developed and are included in the **Fall and Spring Standard Reports** and the annual **Fact Book**:

- Five-Year Enrollment Comparison
- Enrollment by Division and Department
- Enrollment by Location
- Enrollment by Mode of Learning

ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

Several measurements of academic performance may be reported by our office:

- course enrollment
- grade distribution
- course success (may include the number and percentage of credits received)
- course retention
- course failure
- course withdrawal
- course dropout

For those measurements that are similar to or the same as each other, further clarifications are provided:

Course Enrollment: The number of students who enrolled in one course at a certain date. Enrollment headcount will be unduplicated within but duplicated throughout since one student may enroll in multiple courses.

Significant dates: first day of course, drop/add date, 45th day (official census date)

Standard Enrollment Headcount will be calculated as follows, unless otherwise specified:

Using table, 'A_STUDENTACADCRED'

With 'Status' as 'A' (add) OR 'N' (new)

Therefore, students whose current status is 'X' (deleted), 'C' (cancelled), 'D' (drop), 'TR' (transferred-out), NC (non-credit), or 'W' (withdrawal) will not be included in the standard enrollment headcount

If data are requested based on a specific date other than the 45th day, then enrollment headcount will be calculated as follows:

Using table, 'A_STUDENTACADCRED'

With 'Status' as 'A' (add) OR 'N' (new), regardless of 'Status_Date' and

With 'Status' as 'C', 'D', 'X', or 'TR', and 'Status_Date' as '>(specific date)'

If data are requested based on 45th day (official census date), then enrollment headcount will be calculated as follows:

Using specific term or academic year 45th day table, link student ID to 'A_STUDENTACADCRED' table student ID

Grade Distribution: The final grade received in any course.

Grading Systems (see AWC catalog for details):

- System I: A, B, C, D, F
- System II: CR (Credit), NC (No Credit), AU (Audit), I (Incomplete), W (Withdrawal), AW (Administrative Withdrawal), NS (No Show), R (Repeat), IP (In Progress)

Grade distribution is the base in calculating the following academic measurements:

Course Completion: Refers to those students that finish a course with grades of A, B, C, D, F, CR, or NC (without grades AU, I, W, AW, NS, R, or IP).

Course Completion Rate: Refers to the percentage of students that finish a course with grades of A, B, C, CR, NC, D, or F (without grades AU, I, W, AW, NS, R, or IP).

Calculation:

- The numerator is number of students who received grades of A, B, C, D, F, CR or NC
- The denominator is the number of students who received grades of A, B, C, D, F, CR, NC, W, AW or NS

Note: grades AU, I, R, and IP are not included in this calculation

Course Success: Refers to those students that finish a course with grades of A, B, C, or CR (without grades D, F, NC, AU, I, W, AW, NS, R, or IP).

Course Success Rate: Refers to the percentage of students that finish a course with grades of A, B, C, or CR (without grades D, F, NC, AU, I, W, AW, NS, R, or IP). In other words, the percentage of students that succeeded and received credits.

Calculation:

- The numerator is number of student who received grades of A, B, C, or CR
- The denominator is the number of students who received grades of A, B, C, D, F, CR, NC, W, AW, or NS

Note: grades AU, I, R, and IP are not included in this calculation

The Annual Institutional Benchmark defines success rate as the ratio of the number of students who received the grades of A, B, C, CR, or I to the number of students who received grades of A, B, C, CR, I, D, F, or NC.

Course Retention Rate: The same as course completion rate.

Course Failure Rate: Refers to the percentage of students that did not complete a course and received grades of D, F, or NC (without grades A, B, C, CR, AU, I, W, AW, NS, R, or IP). In other words the percentage of students that failed/were unsuccessful and did not receive credits.

Calculation:

- The numerator is the number of student who received grades of NC, D and F
- The denominator is the number of students who received grades of A, B, C, D, F, CR, NC, W, AW, or NS

Note: grades AU, I, R, and IP are not included in this calculation

Course Withdrawal Rate: Refers to the percentage of students that did not complete a course and received grades of W or AW (without grades of A, B, C, D, F, CR, NC, AU, I, NS, R, or IP). This is the percentage of students who withdrew or were administratively withdrawn.

Calculation:

- The numerator is the number of student who received grades of W or AW
- The denominator is the number of students who received grades of A, B, C, D, F, CR, NC, W, AW, or NS

Note: grades AU, I, R, and IP are not included in this calculation

Course Dropout Rate: Refers to the percentage of students that did not complete a course and received grades of I, NS, W, or AW (without grades of A, B, C, D, F, CR, NC, AU, R, or IP). This is the percentage of students who dropped out of a course.

Calculation:

- The numerator is the number of student who received grades of I, NS, W, or AW
- The denominator is the number of students who received grades of A, B, C, D, F, CR, NC, I, W, AW, or NS

Note: grades AU, R, and IP are not included in this calculation

RETENTION AND PERSISTENCE

Retention: Measures the degree of which a student cohort enrolled in one period of time and continues enrolling in sequential periods of time in one year at the same institution. Retention rate is a short term measure that covers only one year and thus may be adjusted accordingly as noted below.

In terms of basic cohort and the periods of time, we regularly report two versions of retention rates as follows. The periods of time usually considered only include Fall semester and Spring semester.

- **Total Student Cohort, as of Official Census Day (45th day):** Student cohort is defined as all students who were enrolled on the 45th day of a given semester, where headcount is unduplicated

The periods of time considered in this type of retention report are: Fall to Spring, Fall to Fall, and Spring to Fall. Therefore, our office will provide sequentially three retention rates for those periods.

- **First-Time, Degree-Seeking (FTDS) Student Cohort, as of Official Census Day (45th day):** Student cohort is defined as only those first-time, degree-seeking students enrolled on the 45th day of a given semester, where headcount is unduplicated.

The periods of time considered in this type of retention report are: Fall to Fall. The first-time, degree-seeking students' Fall to Fall retention rate is consistent with the definition of National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) and Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS).

Adjustments and Calculations

When calculating retention rates, we consider the following factor:

- **The number of graduates during the related periods of time:** there are a significantly larger number of graduates that will continue enrolling in the sequent semester. Meanwhile, there are some graduates that will not enroll in the subsequent semester. For the most accurate retention rate, we consider the latter and make adjustments when calculating the retention rate.

Exceptions in terms of IPEDS: the basic cohort may be adjusted for students who left the institution for any of the following reasons: died or were totally and permanently disabled; to serve in the armed forces (including those called to active duty); to serve with a foreign aid service of the Federal Government, such as the Peace Corps; or to serve on official church missions. These are exclusions, and may be subtracted from the cohort prior to calculating the retention rate. The fall cohort does not include those students who transferred into the institution.

Note: due to the difficulty of receiving the data on exceptions and to keep the calculation simple, we normally do not take into consideration the exceptions above when calculating the retention rate.

Calculation:

- The numerator is the number of students in the cohort in one semester who re-enroll in the sequential semester PLUS the number of graduates in the cohort
- The denominator is the number of students in the basic cohort in one semester.

Persistence: Measures the long term degree of which a student cohort enrolled in one period of time and continues enrolling in more than one sequential year at the same institution. Persistence rate is a long term measure that covers more than one year.

In terms of basic cohort and the periods of time, we regularly report four versions of persistence rates as follows. The periods of time considered are Fall to Fall for more than one year. Therefore, persistence rates will be reported as the first-year, second-year, third-year, and so on.

- **First-Time Student Cohort, as of Official Census Day (45th day):** Student cohort is defined as all first-time students enrolled on the 45th day of a given semester, where headcount is unduplicated.
- **First-Time, Degree-Seeking (FTDS) Student Cohort, as of Official Census Day (45th day):** Student cohort is defined as only those first-time, degree-seeking students enrolled on the 45th day of a given semester, where headcount is unduplicated.
- **First-Time, Developmental Student Cohort, as of Official Census Day (45th day):** Student cohort is defined as only those first-time, developmental students enrolled on the 45th day of a given semester, where headcount is unduplicated.
- **First-Time, Athletic Student Cohort, as of Official Census Day (45th day):** Student cohort is defined as only those first-time, athletic students enrolled on the 45th day of a given semester, where headcount is unduplicated.

Calculation:

- The numerator is the number of students in the cohort in one fall semester who continue enrolling in the sequential fall semesters
- The denominator is the number of students in the basic cohort in the fall semester.

Other Considerations:

When calculating the persistence rate, we do not make adjustments like we do in calculating the retention rate above, so to reasonably evaluate the persistence rate, we will consider other factors that may have great impact on the persistence rate, such as graduation, transfer out, employment or other placements. At this point in time, due to data availability, we report the persistence rate along with the graduation rate data. We

will integrate the transfer and employment data into the persistence report as it is available to us.

Comparisons between Retention and Persistence

In IR practice, retention and persistence tend to have similar or the same meaning (both of them measure the percentage of students who continuously enroll at the same institution) and are often used interchangeably, ultimately causing confusion when responding to IR data requests. Here we differentiate retention and persistence to reduce the confusion. “Retention” measures the short term (one year) performance of continuous enrollment of students. “Persistence” measures the long term (more than one year) performance of continuous enrollment of students. In other words, institutions retain students and students persist in an institution.

We suggest that for internal retention studies the two versions of retention rates noted above should be applied and that the first-time, degree-seeking student fall to fall retention rates should be used for external reporting. Particularly because, the first-time, full time and degree-seeking students’ fall to fall retention rate is most common used for external and annual reporting.

When make retention or persistence comparison or analysis, be careful to identify that the basic cohort and the periods of time related are consistent with each other.

GRADUATION

Graduate Headcount

Graduate: A student that receives a credential (certificate and/or associate degree) at a given period of time.

Duplicated Graduate HC: A graduate is counted for every credential (certificate and/or associate degree) received. The duplicated graduate HC is equal to the number of credentials awarded.

Unduplicated Graduate HC: A graduate is counted only once regardless of the number of credentials (certificate and/or associate degree) received. The unduplicated graduate HC is equal to the number of graduates in a given time.

Graduate HC can be reported for special subgroups such as: degrees, majors, program or ethnicity and so on.

Graduation Rate: The basic cohort used for calculating graduation rate is the first-time, degree-seeking students in fall semester, broken down into full time, first time and degree seeking cohort and part time, first time and degree seeking cohort. The basic time periods for calculating graduation rates are one-year, two-years and three-years.

Calculation:

- The Numerator is the number of graduates in the given time period(s)
- The Denominator is the number of students in the fall cohort

The three-year (150% completion time) graduation rate for full time, first time, degree seeking student cohort is the most common graduation rate. This is the graduation rate that is required by IPEDS.

TRANSFERS (out)

We regularly report three types of transfer data. The first two reports include transfer-out headcounts and the corresponding transfer percentages by universities and colleges that students transferred into for two populations, enrolled students and graduates. The last is the official transfer rate report.

Student Transfer Headcount Enrollment: The unduplicated headcount of students who enrolled in a semester or year at AWC and transferred into other colleges or universities at the same or sequential semesters or years.

The transfer percentage of enrolled students is the percentage of student transfers headcount enrollment in the total enrolled students in a semester or year.

Graduate Transfer Headcount: Refers to the unduplicated headcount of graduates who graduated in a semester or year at AWC transferred into other colleges or universities at the same or sequential semesters or years.

The transfer percentage of graduates is the percentage of graduate transfer headcount in the total number of graduates in a semester or year.

Official Transfer Rate: Total number of students who are known to have transferred out of the reporting institution within 150% of normal time to completion divided by the revised cohort minus allowable exclusions. This rate is required by IPEDS and is the most common measurement for transfer. It also is consistent with the industrial standard.

The basic cohort is the first time, full time, degree seeking students enrolled in a given year. The related period of time is within the 150% of normal completion time or three years.

Allowable Exclusions:

Those students who may be removed (deleted) from the basic cohort according to the Student Right-to-Know legislation. These include students who died or were totally and permanently disabled; those who left school to serve in the armed forces; those who left to serve with a foreign aid service of the federal government, such as the Peace Corps; and those who left to serve on official church mission.

Note: Due to the availability of data, we will not make such adjustments when reporting.

Comments:

Transfer reports highly depend on the availability of data. The best effort is made to integrate the various data sources in order to generate the various transfer reports. Transfer data may not be available for some specific subgroups.

COURSE TAKING BEHAVIORS

We try to capture the characteristics of course taking behavior for a typical or average AWC student who enrolled in a semester or year by establishing the ten measurements noted below. The measurements may reflect the number of classes attempted/completed/dropped, the number of credits attempted/gained.

Maximum Number of Classes Attempted: The maximum number of classes that a student attempted in one semester or year.

Average Number of Classes Attempted: The average number of classes that a student attempted in one semester or year.

Maximum Number of Classes Completed: The maximum number of classes that a student completed in one semester or year.

Average Number of Classes Completed: The average number of classes that a student completed in one semester or year.

Maximum Number of Classes Dropped: The maximum number of classes that a student dropped out with grades of NS, AW and W in one semester or year.

Average Number of Classes Dropped: The average number of classes that a student dropped out with grades of NS, AW and W in one semester or year.

Maximum Number of Credits Attempted: The maximum number of credits that a student attempted in one semester or year.

Average Number of Credits Attempted: The average number of credits that a student attempted in one semester or year.

Maximum Number of Credits Gained: The maximum number of credits that a student gained in one semester or year.

Average Number of Credits Gained: The average number of credits that a student gained in one semester or year.