



2009-10 Survey Materials

FAQ Race/Ethnicity

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Answers:

1) What is the difference between collection of race and ethnicity information and reporting of race and ethnicity data?

Under the new guidelines, collection of and reporting of data are no longer the same.

When institutions collect race and ethnicity data from students and staff, they are required to use a 2-question format. The first question asks about ethnicity (is the individual Hispanic or Latino,

yes or no) and the second question asks about race (the individual is asked to select one or more race categories with which he or she identifies: American Indian or Alaska Native; Asian; Black or African American; Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander; White. So there are 6 categories for data collection. **ALL respondents must have the opportunity to answer BOTH questions.**

There are 9 categories for data reporting to IPEDS. The categories for reporting are: (1) Hispanic (regardless of race); and for non-Hispanics, (2) American Indian or Alaska Native; (3) Asian; (4) Black or African American; (5) Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander; (6) White; (7) Two or more races. In addition, (8) Nonresident alien (for whom race and ethnicity is not reported), and (9) Race and ethnicity unknown.

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2) What is the correct format for the new race and ethnicity questions?

For collection purposes, the guidance requires the use of a 2-question format. The first question must ask if the respondent is Hispanic or Latino, and the second question must ask the respondent to select one or more races. The race categories to be used are: (1) American Indian or Alaska Native; (2) Asian; (3) Black or African American; (4) Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander; (5) White. **ALL respondents must have the opportunity to answer BOTH questions.**

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3) What wording should I use on my data collection forms (e.g., applications, employee information, etc)?

The guidance does not specifically address this issue. One example is included within the NCES Statistical Standards located at: http://nces.ed.gov/statprog/2002/std1_5.asp. Additionally, the Association for Institutional Research (AIR) is making available suggestions and "good practices" information which will likely help with this issue. Please check their website at: <http://airweb.org>.

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4) Which of the following is appropriate to use when collecting race data: choose "one or more" or "all that apply"?

Based on research conducted by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB), "one or more" has been determined to be more effective and thus is required to be used, rather than "all that apply."

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5) Can I collect subcategories of the race categories specified in the guidance?

Yes, as long as the subcategories can be aggregated to the categories indicated in the guidance for purposes of reporting to IPEDS. That is, additional categories can be collected and utilized by the institution, but cannot be reported to IPEDS.

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6) Can I collect the data in the same format that I will be submitting it to IPEDS?

No. Under the guidelines, collection and reporting of the new race and ethnicity categories are distinctly separate.

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7) Can I ask students/staff for a primary and secondary race (for internal purposes, not for reporting purposes)?

The guidelines do not prohibit this. When reporting to IPEDS, the data collected must be able to be reported using the 9 race and ethnicity categories for data reporting.

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8) Can I use "Nonresident alien" as a collection category?

No. "Nonresident alien" is a REPORTING category only. It is not a race or ethnicity, and is not permissible to be used as a collection category.

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9) Can I include a category of "Two or more races" on my collection form(s)?

No. "Two or more races" is a REPORTING category only and is not permissible to be used as a collection category.

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10) Can I include a "refuse to answer" checkbox on my data collection forms?

No. The guidance does not allow for such a response when collecting the data.

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11) Can I ask a student his/her nationality to determine race and/or ethnicity?

No. Nationality is not a sufficient proxy for determining race or ethnicity.

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12) Can I ask a student his/her nationality to determine whether he/she is a Nonresident alien?

No. Nationality is not a sufficient proxy for determining residency status. Nonresident alien is a legal status which requires specific types of visas.

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13) How do I report foreign students living outside the U.S. who are enrolled in my institution?

There has been no change to how these students should be reported. Foreign students living outside the U.S. should be classified in the Race/Ethnicity Unknown category. Only U.S. citizens are to be categorized in the specific Race/Ethnicity categories. The non-resident alien category is reserved specifically for students that are in the U.S. under that specific legal status.

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14) Is it OK to provide some background to respondents about why their race and ethnicity is being collected and how the data will be used?

Yes. The guidelines issued by the U.S. Department of Education are available as a resource, as is information posted by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB), and the AIR website FAQs.

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categories?

The recent guidelines only apply to the U.S. Department of Education. Other governmental agencies have adopted similar reporting standards in recent years (all of which are based on the 1997 OMB standards). For information about other specific data collection efforts, the agency or organization conducting the data collection should be contacted directly.

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16) How long must data collection records be retained, and in what format?

Responses to both parts of the two-questions must be retained for 3 years. This means that the data REPORTED to IPEDS are not sufficient as a means of satisfying this 3-year period of record storage, because the data reported are less complete than the detail collected. Note that if there is litigation, a claim, an audit, or other action which began prior to the end of the 3-year storage period, applicable records must be retained until the completion of the action.

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17) Do I have to resurvey my students and/or staff in order to determine their race and ethnicity using the new categorization?

No, the guidance recommends, but does not require, resurveying of students and/or staff. Regardless of whether your institution resurveys or not, it will be necessary to determine strategies for handling missing race and ethnicity information.

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18) Can I resurvey just the students from the GRS cohort(s) and not all students?

Because the guidance does not mandate resurveying, this decision is left to the discretion of the institution.

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19) For students that I can't (or don't) resurvey, can I recode their race and ethnicity from the old categories to the new?

It is left to the discretion of the institution to determine strategies for handling the conversion of "old" race and ethnicity categories to the "new" categories, if desired (i.e., as an alternative or supplement to resurveying). The Association for Institutional Research (AIR) is making available suggestions and "good practices" information which will likely help with this issue. Please check their website at: <http://airweb.org>

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20) If I resurvey, do I need to include students who have already left the institution (e.g., students in a GRS cohort)?

No. It is left to the discretion of the institution to decide if such an approach is desired and/or feasible.

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21) How do I know if a student or staff member refused to answer the race question, rather than just overlooking it?

For postsecondary institutions, the Department has indicated that presenting the data collection form to the respondent is sufficient to ensure that individuals have had the opportunity to respond to the race and ethnicity questions. It is not necessary to prompt the respondent to complete one or both questions if they have been left unanswered. (For elementary and secondary institutions, the criteria for this are more stringent, since they are not allowed to report race and ethnicity unknown.)

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22) How do I deal with nonresponse?

Under the guidance, IPEDS continues to allow the reporting of "Race and ethnicity unknown."

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23) How do I deal with nonresponse of one part of the question, but not both?

If there is a response to only one of the two questions, the information that is known about the individual should be used in the reporting of race and ethnicity.

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24) How do I report a person who does not answer the first question, but does answer the second question?

If a person does not answer the Hispanic question but does indicate race, report that person using the race categories that were selected.

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25) How do I report a person who answers the first question, but does not answer the second?

If the answer to the first question is Yes, report that person as Hispanic. If the answer to the first question is No and there is no race data reported in the second question, report that person as Unknown.

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26) Can I include a "no response" option on the collection form?

No, the guidelines do not allow for this.

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27) If a student or staff does not self-identify their race and ethnicity, can we identify their race and ethnicity on their behalf (third-party identification)?

There is nothing in the guidance that would prevent an institution from employing third-party identification of race and ethnicity, but only as a last resort. The use of third-party identification is intended mostly for the use of race and ethnicity reporting at the primary and secondary levels where access to children may be limited. For postsecondary institutions, self-reporting of race and ethnicity by students and staff is considered to be the desired method.

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28) What is the implementation schedule?

2008-09 and 2009-10 Collection Years:

- Data can be reported to IPEDS using either the "old" or the "new" race and ethnicity categories.

2010-11 Collection Years

- Mandatory year for Fall Enrollment and Human Resources: Reporting using new race/ethnicity categories will be required.
- Optional year for Completions, 12-Month Enrollment, and Graduation Rates Reporting using the new categories will remain optional.

2011-12 and Beyond Collection Years

- Mandatory years for all IPEDS components: Institutions will be required to report using only the new race/ethnicity categories.

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29) During the phase-in years, can different surveys (e.g. EF, HR) use different reporting categories (old vs. new)?

Yes. The collection system can accommodate the use of "old" vs. "new" categories both within individual survey components and between survey components. Once the phase-in has been completed, all surveys will require the use of the new categories only.

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30) If Fall Staff data are collected and reported in 2010-11 (which is an optional year for Fall Staff), must the new reporting categories be used?

Yes. The Human Resources survey component data must be reported using the new race and ethnicity categories in 2010-11.

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