

Administrative Split of the Academic Degree Programs Inventory to identify Research and Professional Doctorates for the purpose of IPEDS Reporting

The National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) has revised Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) reporting requirements for first-professional degree and doctoral programs beginning in 2009. Currently only a select number of degree programs are reported as First Professional (Law, Medicine, Veterinary Medicine, Dentistry, Pharmacy, etc.) but in recent years a greater number of doctoral-level programs have been implemented across the U.S. and Canada that lead either to professional licensure or advanced practical education in a particular field. This later group has been reported as doctoral programs along with the traditional research oriented Ph.D. programs. It is anticipated that the new reporting categories will more accurately delineate between research and professional doctorates.

NEW REPORTING CATEGORIES AND DEFINITIONS

Based on the recommendations of the Technical Review Panel and subsequent comments received from university representatives, NCES decided that:

1. The first-professional degree category will be eliminated.
2. All master's degrees will continue to be reported in a single category.
3. Doctor's degrees will be reported in the three categories defined below.

Doctor's degree - research/scholarship: A Ph.D. or other doctor's degree that requires advanced work beyond the master's level, including the preparation and defense of a dissertation based on original research, or the planning and execution of an original project demonstrating substantial artistic or scholarly achievement. Some examples of this type of degree may include Ed.D., D.M.A., D.B.A., D.Sc., D.A., or D.M, and others, as designated by the awarding institution.

Doctor's degree - professional practice: A doctor's degree that is conferred upon completion of a program providing the knowledge and skills for the recognition, credential, or license required for professional practice. The degree is awarded after a period of study such that the total time to the degree, including both pre-professional and professional preparation, equals at least six full-time equivalent academic years. Some of these degrees were formerly classified as "first-professional" and may include: Chiropractic (D.C. or D.C.M.); Dentistry (D.D.S. or D.M.D.); Law (L.L.B. or J.D.); Medicine (M.D.); Optometry (O.D.); Osteopathic Medicine (D.O); Pharmacy (Pharm.D.); Podiatry (D.P.M., Pod.D., D.P.); or Veterinary Medicine (D.V.M.), and others, as designated by the awarding institution.

Doctor's degree - other: A doctor's degree that does not meet the definition of a doctor's degree - research/scholarship or a doctor's degree - professional practice.

IMPLICATIONS FOR SUS INSTITUTIONS

SUS institutions can only report data on doctoral programs that have been approved for implementation by the university boards of trustees and the Board of Governors. These programs are identified in the State University System Academic Degree Programs Inventory. The change in NCES reporting requirements will necessitate changing the data fields in the Inventory to reflect the new categories. In most cases this will only mean choosing one field over another for each degree approved. However, in those situations where a university has been offering research and professional practice degree program tracks under the same approved Classification of Instructional Program (CIP) Code, the data will be cleaner and more useful as program information (such as enrollment and degrees granted) is reported in the appropriate IPEDS category.

Following the NCES guidelines, the BOG staff proposes that each university be responsible for the classification of its own doctorates into these categories. To ease the transition, staff also proposes that the Board of Governors allow a one-time administrative change to the SUS Academic Degree Programs Inventory so that research and professional degree programs offered in the same CIP code (such as a research-oriented Ph.D. in Business with a practitioner oriented D.B.A. track) can be differentiated with a separate data field. In some cases, there may be justification for moving either the professional or research degree program track into a new CIP Code on the degree inventory.

This action may result in a net gain of doctoral programs on the Inventory, but will not result in any actual new programs being implemented by the universities. For this reason the Academic Programs Team needs to determine whether such changes are appropriate as an administrative action by staff, or if any "new" doctorates gained should be required to go through the full new degree proposal process.