**IPEDS Q & A for Library Directors and Contacts (Updated 2015-16)**

The National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) is aware that there might be confusion surrounding the integration of the Academic Libraries (AL) component, formerly known as the Academic Libraries Survey (ALS), into its Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) collection. The purpose of this question-and-answer document is to inform Library Directors and Contacts of the changes and provide guidance on how they can help ensure the submission of timely and accurate library data for their institution.

**What is IPEDS?**

IPEDS is a system of interrelated surveys conducted annually by NCES. IPEDS gathers information from every college, university, and technical and vocational institution that participates in the federal student financial aid programs.

**What is the AL component of IPEDS?**

The Academic Libraries (AL) component for IPEDS replaced the previous Academic Libraries Survey (ALS), which was collected separate from IPEDS from degree-granting postsecondary institutions every other year in even-numbered years. The new Academic Libraries component is mandatory and collected annually starting with the 2014-15 data collection cycle.

**Where can I find more information about the current AL questions and instructions?**

The survey form and instructions are available at <http://surveys.nces.ed.gov/IPEDS/VisForms.aspx?survey=15&form=103&index=0&ri=0&show=all&instid=30103>.

**Is there a difference between the AL and the old ALS?**

Yes, there are many differences. For a complete table of the differences, download the PDF at <http://nces.ed.gov/ipeds/resource/download/IPEDS_ALSComparing.pdf>.

**Who will be responsible for the data submission now?**

Unlike the 2012 ALS, whose respondents were either the library director or someone working in the library, the institution’s designated IPEDS Keyholder will be responsible for ensuring that the IPEDS AL component is completed. However, the Keyholder may rely on library staff to gather and/or enter AL data.

**Where are the data submitted?**

The data are submitted through the IPEDS data collection system at <http://surveys.nces.ed.gov/IPEDS>.

**What is an IPEDS Keyholder, Coordinator, or additional user?**

The Keyholder is the person responsible for the submission of all IPEDS data for their institution and for “locking” the survey component. This person is designated by the institution’s CEO. The Coordinator is responsible for IPEDS-related coordination activities for a specified group of schools within a state or system. They are typically able to review the survey after it has been locked by the Keyholder. Additional users are designated by the Keyholder or Coordinator to help with data entry. They can save data but not lock the survey. Institutions can have just a Keyholder, just a Coordinator, or a combination of both.

**If I’m not responsible for data submission, what is my role?**

IPEDS is a very large collection with 12 components. Typically, it will take coordination from across the institution to provide all of the data. In order to ensure the accurate and timely reporting of Academic Libraries data, which may later be used by researchers, associations, and policy makers at all levels of the government, NCES encourages Library Directors to reach out to their institution’s Keyholder to inquire how they can help.

There are two common roles the Library Director or Contact can take. One, they can be responsible for gathering the requested library data, since they will most likely have the knowledge, experience, and access to do so, and then allow for the Keyholder to submit the data through the online system. Two, they can be the data gatherer and data entry person, if their institution’s Keyholder adds them as an additional user in the online system.

**How do I identify the IPEDS Keyholder for my institution?**

First, attempt to contact the appropriate administrative office at your institution, which is often the office where institutional research is housed. If you are unable to identify the IPEDS Keyholder, please contact the IPEDS Help Desk at 1-877-225-2568 or [ipedshelp@rti.org](mailto:ipedshelp@rti.org).

**What if I no longer want to receive communication from IPEDS?**

Please send an email to the IPEDS Help Desk and request to be removed as a Library Contact from the data collection system. Prior to doing so, please confer with the Keyholder to ensure all parties agree with this course of action.

**Where can I access additional AL resources?**

FAQs, variable crosswalks, timelines, and other resources can be accessed via <http://nces.ed.gov/ipeds/Section/Alscenter>.

**Who can I contact for more information?**

The IPEDS Help Desk can be reached 1-877-225-2568 or [ipedshelp@rti.org](mailto:ipedshelp@rti.org).