ANNUAL INSTITUTIONAL UPDATE
FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Version 2020.01
The 2020 AIU opens on July 13, 2020 at 9am and closes on August 14, 2020 at 5pm (EST).

Table of Contents

Table of Contents............................................................................................................................................. 2
Data FAQs.......................................................................................................................................................... 3
   Which year’s data should be reported in the Annual Institutional Update? .............................................. 3
General FAQs.................................................................................................................................................. 4
   What is the Annual Institutional Update? ..................................................................................................... 4
   Where do I access the AIU? ......................................................................................................................... 4
   Who has access? – How do I get access? ..................................................................................................... 4
   What will Evaluators see from our institution’s AIU submission? ............................................................. 4
   Why am I not receiving emails about the AIU? ......................................................................................... 4
   Is the AIU required? .................................................................................................................................. 4
   Are institutions exempt from the AIU during other Accreditation activities like Self-Study? ............... 5
   Who should be involved in identifying and gathering the AIU information? ....................................... 5
   How will this information be used by the Commission? ......................................................................... 5
   What will evaluators see? .......................................................................................................................... 5
   What is the best way to prepare for the AIU? ........................................................................................... 5
   What Reminders/Notices can we expect during the AIU...................................................................... 6
Enhancements.................................................................................................................................................. 7
   Improved Layout ................................................................................................................................. 7
   Locations Tab .......................................................................................................................................... 8
   Required Fields ......................................................................................................................................... 8
   Comment Boxes ....................................................................................................................................... 8
   Calculated Fields ..................................................................................................................................... 8
   Why do I not see my institution’s previous year’s data? ........................................................................ 9
   How do I save my institution’s data without submitting the AIU? ...................................................... 10
Data Dictionaries.......................................................................................................................................... 11
   Where do I access data definitions? ......................................................................................................... 11
   How do I use the AIU Data Dictionaries? .............................................................................................. 11
Finance Metrics ........................................................................................................................................... 13
   Why is there an additional finance section this year? ........................................................................... 13
   What is the year of my institution’s Most Recent Audited Financial Statements? ............................ 13
   How do I find my institution’s finance numbers? ................................................................................ 13
Institutional Context FAQs ....................................................................................................................... 15
   Will we be able to compare our institution’s performance with that of our peers? ........................... 15
   How should different degree levels be defined? .................................................................................. 15
Student Achievement FAQs .................................................................................................................... 17
   What types of files should be uploaded for the Context of Performance Uploads? ............................ 17
   Do the Context of Performance Uploads need to be the same every year? ...................................... 17
Data FAQs

Which year’s data should be reported in the Annual Institutional Update?

MSCHE imports most data from the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS). Accordingly, the Annual Institutional Update (AIU) data follows the reporting years used by IPEDS that are made publicly available each April.

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Subsection</th>
<th>Source Year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>General Information</td>
<td>General Information</td>
<td>Academic year 2018-19</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Catalog</td>
<td>Most Recent Catalog Available</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enrollment</td>
<td>Fall Enrollment Headcounts</td>
<td>Academic year 2018-19</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Fall Enrollment Race-Ethnicity Percentages</td>
<td>Academic year 2018-19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Fall Enrollment Age Percentages</td>
<td>Academic year 2018-19</td>
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<td></td>
<td>12-Month Enrollment</td>
<td>July 1, 2016 – June 30, 2018</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Distance Education Headcounts¹</td>
<td>Academic year 2018-19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Programs Offered</td>
<td>July 1, 2016 – June 30, 2018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Achievement</td>
<td>Retention Rates</td>
<td>Academic year 2018-19</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>First-Time Full-Time Enrollment</td>
<td>Academic year 2018-19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Graduation Rates 150%</td>
<td>Status of student as of August 31, 2018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Graduation Rates 200%</td>
<td>Status of student as of August 31, 2018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Graduation Rate by Gender</td>
<td>Status of student as of August 31, 2018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Graduation Rate by Race / Ethnicity</td>
<td>Status of student as of August 31, 2018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finance – IPEDS</td>
<td>General</td>
<td>Fiscal year 2017-18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Financial Results</td>
<td>Fiscal year 2017-18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Education and General Expenses</td>
<td>Fiscal year 2017-18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finance – Most Recent</td>
<td>General</td>
<td>Most Recent Audited Financial Statement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Financial Results</td>
<td>Most Recent Audited Financial Statement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Education and General Expenses</td>
<td>Most Recent Audited Financial Statement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finance – For Dues</td>
<td>Total Expenses and Deductions</td>
<td>Fiscal year 2017-18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uploads</td>
<td>Most Recent Financial Audit Metrics</td>
<td>Most Recent Audited Financial Statement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Financial Documents to Upload</td>
<td>Most Recent Audited Financial Statement</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

¹ With the exception of “Programs Offered via distance education,” for which institutions should report data from July 1, 2017 - June 30, 2018.

² With the following exceptions:
   - “Percent FT-FT receiving Pell” and “Percent of all undergrads receiving Pell,” for which institutions should report data from July 1, 2017 - June 30, 2018.
   - “Percent First Generation” and “Default Rate,” which are being populated by data from NSLDS 2016-17 and 2017-18 pooled cohorts.
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**General FAQs**

**What is the Annual Institutional Update?**
The Annual Institutional Update, or AIU, is the Commission’s primary means of collecting our members’ institutional characteristics (key institutional contacts, locations, Carnegie classification, etc.), enrollment, financial, and “student success” (including graduation, loan repayment, and default rates) information. The AIU is part of MSCHE monitoring activities contained within MSCHE policy Accreditation Review Cycle and Monitoring.

**Where do I access the AIU?**
The AIU is part of your institution’s portal. To access it, login to your portal page and select the Annual Update tab.

**Who has access? – How do I get access?**
The AIU is part of your institution’s portal. Four Key Contacts at your institution are granted access by MSCHE: the President, CAO, CFO, and Accreditation Liaison Officer (ALO). These Key Contacts may grant portal access to one other individual, known as the “Portal Delegate.”

**What will Evaluators see from our institution’s AIU submission?**
Data collected during the AIU flows into the Mid-Point Peer Review and other accreditation processes.

- The AIU page, visible on the Institution Portal, is only visible to the institution. Peer reviewers do not see the Institution’s Portal, or the institution’s AIU page.
- Evaluators are provided with access to all uploaded material in the AIU, and a report which graphically displays five-year trends of AIU data relevant to the accreditation process.

**Why am I not receiving emails about the AIU?**
The AIU is part of the institution portal. Per MSCHE policy, the individual primarily responsible for completing the AIU is the institution’s Accreditation Liaison Officer (ALO). All communications regarding the AIU are sent to the President, CAO, CFO, and ALO. It is the responsibility of the ALO to pass along MSCHE communications to appropriate individuals at the institution.

**Is the AIU required?**
The AIU is part of MSCHE monitoring activities contained within MSCHE policy Accreditation Review Cycle and Monitoring. Failure to complete the AIU on time
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will result in a Commission action requiring immediate additional reporting, and a finding of non-compliance with Commission policy and procedures.

**Are institutions exempt from the AIU during other Accreditation activities like Self-Study?**
The AIU is collected every year from each accredited institution regardless of other accreditation processes, with no exceptions.

**Who should be involved in identifying and gathering the AIU information?**
The AIU is not only a collection of data fields, it is an annual collection of key performance metrics and contextual information that will later be reviewed by evaluators during accreditation processes. For this reason, the Commission strongly recommends that senior administration consider the appropriate team of individuals who should be responsible for validating data, providing context for the data, and determining appropriate documentation.

**How will this information be used by the Commission?**
Annually, MSCHE staff will review information to find anomalies that may require outreach to the institution. A formal review of information collected during the AIU is conducted by peer reviewers during the Mid-Point Peer Review. The information collected during the AIU is also available to peer evaluators assigned to the institution during any accreditation activity.

**What will evaluators see?**
As noted above, the information collected during the AIU flows into other accreditation processes. Evaluators are provided with a data report which graphically displays the institution's five-year trends, as well as any comments made by the institution. The AIU page, visible on the institution’s portal, is only visible to the institution. Evaluators do not see the institution’s portal, or the institution's AIU page.

**What is the best way to prepare for the AIU?**
Each institution needs to determine its own approach to preparing for the AIU. Included in this approach, each institution should consider the following:

- The AIU is only open for a short period of time and late submissions or extensions are not allowed. The expectation is that institutions are preparing AIU materials in the weeks leading up to the opening.
- The Key Contacts in the institution portal should be updated so that all messages and emails from MSCHE are received by appropriate individuals at the institution.
- Senior administration should identify those who need to be involved in this year’s AIU validation and collection process.
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- Review the Data Dictionary for your institution’s control type (public, private for profit, or private nonprofit) and prepare the necessary data for entry.
- Determine whether the Student Achievement data provided in the AIU appropriately reflects the achievement of your institution’s students. If the data does not appropriately demonstrate student achievement at your institution, then prepare additional data uploads for submission that provide an alternative view of your institution’s student achievement.
- Gather necessary uploads (e.g., Catalog(s), most recent Audited Financial Statement, etc.).
- If your institution needs to respond to Recommendation Updates, these should be written and vetted by senior administration, prior to the opening of the AIU.

What Reminders/Notices can we expect during the AIU

All notices regarding the AIU will be sent to Key Contacts (President, CAO, CFO, and ALO). If others need to receive these messages, it is the responsibility of the institution to forward this information to the appropriate individuals. The schedule of regular messages is below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Subject</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>June 1</td>
<td>Re: MSCHE - Get Ready for the 2020 AIU Opening</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July 10</td>
<td>Re: The 2020 AIU Opens Monday</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July 13</td>
<td>Re: The 2020 AIU is Open</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August 7</td>
<td>Re: The 2020 AIU is Closing Soon</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Institutions that have not yet submitted their AIU will receive an urgent message reminding them of the close of the AIU:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Subject</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>August 13</td>
<td>Re: The 2020 AIU Closes Tomorrow</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August 14</td>
<td>Re: The 2020 AIU Closes TODAY</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In addition to the above reminders, institutions that have not shown progress completing the AIU will receive the below additional messages and may be contacted by MSCHE staff. “Progress” is defined as the institution having completed at least one section of the AIU, for each campus.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Subject</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>July 27</td>
<td>Re: The 2020 AIU: Important Update</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August 7</td>
<td>Re: The 2020 AIU: Important Update</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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**Enhancements**

**Improved Layout**

Your institution’s current AIU is found in the institution’s portal. To access it, click on the “Annual Update” tab, and then select “Current” from the drop-down. Rather than the previous one-page layout, this year’s AIU layout contains several tabs on the side of the data entry portal. The tabs break up the layout into easily navigable sections. When the tab is yellow, it indicates that there are items that require your institution’s attention. When the tab is green, it indicates that all required information has been filled.

Please review the below diagram for information about the new layout.

- (a) A black outline to the box indicates which tab currently viewed
- (b) A green colored tab indicates that all required information has been filled, in that section
- (c) A yellow colored tab indicates that required information is still needed to complete the section
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**Locations Tab**
Previously, upon submitting the AIU, an additional prompt appeared asking the institution to validate or update the institution’s locations. Based on feedback from member institution, this has been changed. This year, the AIU contains an additional Locations tab, where the institution can update the Name (except for the Name of the Main Campus), and Headcount of the institution’s locations.

Note: A location’s address cannot be updated within the AIU. To update the address of a location, or to update the name of the Main Campus, please contact Substantive Change at MSCHE (substantivechange@msche.org).

**Required Fields**
The AIU is now tailored to each institution, based on institutional characteristics. Accordingly, the AIU only requires fields that your institution should be able to provide. If it seems that the AIU requires your institution to provide information not relevant to your institution’s characteristics, please contact research@msche.org.

**Comment Boxes**
Institutions are no longer required to submit comments based on significant variances observed year-over-year, in the AIU. Instead, the institution will be able to provide context to trending information during the Mid-Point Peer Review process.

**Calculated Fields**
The AIU no longer displays calculated fields derived from provided metrics. Instead, institutions will receive definitions of any calculated or derived metrics, whenever a report based on metrics from the AIU is produced.

This change is due to the volume of questions received during previous AIU periods, regarding the definitions of the calculated fields. Additionally, peer evaluators suggested that the calculated metrics negatively impacted the performance of the AIU, as the scope of the AIU is intended to provide a mechanism for institutions to validate and submit data, not to discuss the definitions of calculated or derived metrics.
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**Why do I not see my institution’s previous year’s data?**
To streamline the AIU submission, the AIU no longer displays the previous Collection Year’s data on the current Collection Year page. Instead, the data submitted in previous Collection Years can be viewed by selecting “Historical” from the drop-down menu under the “Annual Update”.

![Historical menu](image)

The desired year can then be selected using the “Collection Year” drop down.

![Collection Year drop down](image)

Documents that have been uploaded will appear in their respective categories. Specific documents can be downloaded by clicking on the document name hyperlink.
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A printed version of reported data can be retrieved by printing a previous AIU via the “Additional Detail” button. A PDF report be compiled, and then downloaded to your computer reflecting the selected Collection Year.

How do I save my institution’s data without submitting the AIU?
Progress on the AIU can be saved, at any time, by clicking the “Save” button, found on the bottom of the screen. You do not need to save information each time you switch between the yellow or green tabs, only before you leave the portal. So, for example, if information is entered in the “Finance – Most Recent” tab, it will not disappear if you navigate to the “General Information” tab. However, you must save before you exit the portal, or your progress will be lost.
Data Dictionaries

Where do I access data definitions?
Definitions are available in two places. The complete Data Dictionaries, in PDF format, are available on the MSCHE website. The same definitions are also available on the AIU page in the institution’s portal. To access them through the portal, click on the next to the field in question, to view the complete definition for that item.

How do I use the AIU Data Dictionaries?
Many of the AIU metrics are from IPEDS, which decreases the amount of data each institution is required to enter, each year. To identify which data comes from IPEDS, and how to find each metric within IPEDS, the Data Dictionaries provide three key pieces of information for each field: Source, Input by, and Variable/Calculation:

Source – Indicates the source of prepopulated data. In the below example, the field is pre-populated from the IPEDS Fall Enrollment survey, Part A. A complete list of IPEDS materials is found on the NCES website along with forms, definitions, and additional information.

Input by – Identifies whether the data metric is uploaded by MSCHE into the field (for IPEDS institutions), or if the field requires a data metric to be inserted by the institution.

Variable/Calculation: The variable name points to the data point in the IPEDS database. The calculation identifies how MSCHE pulls the data from the database. This piece is important if your institution is unable to locate the exact metric, or if your institution is uncertain as to which metric from IPEDS is being requested. The IPEDS data sets are available on the NCES website, and they include the raw data files and documentation, with the list of variable names and definitions. The variables names do not change over years, whereas the definitions of the variables may change, slightly, from one year to the next.

Definition: The definition of the metric. The definition in the Data Dictionary, for each data metric that originates from an IPEDS collection, is very similar to the IPEDS definition. However, the NCES website provides much more detail about each IPEDS data point. This additional information may be useful to your institution, especially if you do not report to IPEDS.
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Example:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Part-time Fall Enrollment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Source:</strong> IPEDS Fall Enrollment, Part A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Input by:</strong> MSCHE uploads data from source (where available)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Variable/Calculation:</strong> ENRPT</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Definition:** Total men and women enrolled for credit part time in the fall of the academic year.

- **Part-time student**
  - Undergraduate — A student enrolled for either 11 semester credits or less, or 11 quarter credits or less, or less than 24 contact hours a week each term.
  - Graduate — A student enrolled for either 8 semester credits or less, or 8 quarter credits or less.

- **Credit** - Recognition of attendance or performance in an instructional activity (course or program) that can be applied by a recipient toward the requirements for a degree, diploma, certificate, or other formal award.

- **NOTE:** Enrollment reported is of the institution's official fall reporting date or October 15.
Finance Metrics

Why is there an additional finance section this year?
In the past, the majority of financial data in the AIU collection was downloaded directly from IPEDS. After reviewing feedback from peer evaluators and Commissioners, MSCHE is adding an additional section to this year’s AIU called “Finance – Most Recent.” In this section, the institution must provide the financial data from the institution’s most recently available and completed Audited Financial Statement. Because this information has yet to be reported to IPEDS, the institution must enter data for all fields in the section.

What is the year of my institution’s Most Recent Audited Financial Statements?
Each MSCHE member institution has a specified fiscal and academic year, which the Commission cannot pre-populate. Due to this, the institution must enter the data that corresponds to your institution’s most recently available Audited Financial Statement. The data should come from the most recent completed Audited Financial Statement that has occurred at the institution.

How do I find my institution’s finance numbers?
Each definition provides key aspects that will direct your institution toward the correct metric. In addition, the definition of each finance metric provides your institution with an additional location, for each piece of data, when it identifies the Line number

For example, the graphic below presents the definition for the an institution’s Total Unrestricted Net Assets. The Variable/Calculation is F1A17.

F1 – refers to the institution’s control type, in this case F1 indicates Public. If the Finance Variable begins with F2 it indicates non-Profit, and if it begins with F3 it indicates for-Profit.

A – refers to the part of the finance survey form where the metric is located.

17 – refers to the item, or line, number where the metric is located

Accessing your institution’s reported data forms on the IPEDS webpage will show you the historical data that has been provided to IPEDS.
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**Finance Example**

### Total unrestricted net assets

- **Source:** IPEDS Finance, Part A, Line 17
- **Input by:** MSCHE uploads data from source (where available)
- **Variable/Calculation:** F1A17

**Definition (Public):** Unrestricted net assets are net assets held by the institution upon which no restrictions have been placed by the donor or other party external to the institution.

#### Part A - Statement of Net Position Page 1

**Most recent fiscal year ending before October 2018**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Line no.</th>
<th>Assets</th>
<th>Current year amount</th>
<th>Prior year amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>01</td>
<td>Total current assets</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31</td>
<td>Depreciable capital assets, net of depreciation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Other non-current assets</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Restricted-nonexpendable</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td><strong>Unrestricted</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Net position</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

CV=[(A10+A19)-(A13+A20)]
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**Institutional Context FAQs**

**Will we be able to compare our institution’s performance with that of our peers?**

As of this time, institutions will only have access to their own data, not any data from other MSCHE member institutions.

**How should different degree levels be defined?**

Refer to the following table of definitions:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Postsecondary award, certificate, or diploma (less than 1 academic year)</td>
<td>An award that requires completion of an organized program of study at the postsecondary level (below the baccalaureate degree) in less than 1 academic year (2 semesters or 3 quarters) or designed for completion in less than 30 semester or trimester credit hours, or in less than 45 quarter credit hours, or in less than 900 contact or clock hours.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Postsecondary award, certificate, or diploma (at least 1 but less than 2 academic years)</td>
<td>An award that requires completion of an organized program of study at the postsecondary level (below the baccalaureate degree) in at least 1 but less than 2 full-time equivalent academic years; or designed for completion in at least 30 but less than 60 semester or trimester credit hours; or in at least 45 but less than 90 quarter credit hours; or in at least 900 but less than 1,800 contact or clock hours.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Postsecondary award, certificate, or diploma (at least 2 but less than 4 academic years)</td>
<td>An award that requires completion of an organized program of study at the postsecondary level (below the baccalaureate degree) in at least 2 but less than 4 full-time equivalent academic years; or designed for completion in at least 60 but less than 120 semester or trimester credit hours; or in at least 90 but less than 180 quarter credit hours; or in at least 1,800 but less than 3,600 contact or clock hours.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Associate's degree</td>
<td>An award that normally requires at least 2 but less than 4 years of full-time equivalent college work.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor's degree</td>
<td>An award (baccalaureate or equivalent degree, as determined by the Secretary, U.S. Department of Education) that normally requires at least 4 but not more than 5 years of full-time equivalent college-level work. This includes all bachelor's degrees conferred in a 5-year cooperative (work-study) program. A cooperative plan provides for alternate class attendance and employment in business, industry, or government; thus, it allows students to combine actual work experience with their college studies. Also includes bachelor's degrees in which the normal 4 years of work are completed in 3 years.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Postbaccalaureate certificate</td>
<td>An award that requires completion of an organized program of study beyond the bachelor's. It is designed for persons who have completed a baccalaureate degree but does not meet the</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Degree Type</th>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Master's degree</td>
<td>An award that requires the successful completion of a program of study of at least the full-time equivalent of 1 but not more than 2 academic years of work beyond the bachelor's degree.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post-master's certificate</td>
<td>An award that requires completion of an organized program beyond the master's degree but does not meet the requirements of academic degrees at the doctor's level.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doctor's degree</td>
<td>The highest award a student can earn for graduate study. The doctor's degree classification includes such degrees as Doctor of Education, Doctor of Juridical Science, Doctor of Public Health, and the Doctor of Philosophy degree in any field such as agronomy, food technology, education, engineering, public administration, ophthalmology, or radiology.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doctor's degree-professional practice</td>
<td>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 (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.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doctor's degree-research/scholarship</td>
<td>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.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doctor's degree-other</td>
<td>A doctor's degree that does not meet the definition of a doctor's degree - research/scholarship or a doctor's degree - professional practice.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The 2020 AIU opens on July 13, 2020 at 9am and closes on August 14, 2020 at 5pm (EST).

**Student Achievement FAQs**

**What types of files should be uploaded for the Context of Performance Uploads?**

An institution may upload up to three documents, containing supplemental data, to provide additional context for the institution’s Student Achievement data. For some institutions, the AIU data appropriately demonstrates the performance of its student population. In other cases, the AIU data represents only a portion of the student body. If the data provided in the AIU does not represent your institutions’ student performance, it is important that to upload alternative data reports so that evaluators can better understand your institutions’ student achievement.

Institutions which have no reported Student Achievement data within IPEDS (ex: 150% Graduation Rate), are required to upload at least one Context of Performance Upload so that evaluators can gain better understand your institution’s student achievement. The uploaded materials will be visible and utilized during the Mid-Point Peer Review and Self-Study processes.

**Do the Context of Performance Uploads need to be the same every year?**

The Context of Performance uploads do not have to be identical every year. However, some level of consistency will make reviewing the data easier for evaluators.