

# Institutional Characteristics (IC)

Institutional characteristics include data related to an institution's boundary (defining the campus for purposes of reporting), its operational characteristics (the context in which it operates) and its demographics and academics (programs, students, staff, and faculty). This information provides valuable context for understanding and interpreting STARS data. Thus, all information documented in the sections below will be displayed in the institution's public STARS report.

Some of the values reported here are also required to pursue specific STARS credits. Such reporting fields may be populated in the online Reporting Tool for editing from the data provided in the Institutional Characteristics section.

IC 1	Institutional Boundary	Required
IC 2	Operational Characteristics	Required
IC 3	Academics and Demographics	Required

# IC 1: Institutional Boundary

## Required for submission

Each institution is expected to include its entire main campus when collecting data. Institutions may choose to include any other land holdings, facilities, farms, and satellite campuses, as long as the selected boundary is the same for each credit. If an institution finds it necessary to exclude a particular unit from its submission, the reason for excluding it must be provided in the appropriate reporting field, below.

## Reporting Fields

### Required

- ☐ [Institution type](#) (Associate, Baccalaureate, Doctorate, or Master's)
  - ☐ Institutional control (Public, Private for-profit, or Private non-profit)
  - ☐ A brief description of the institution's main campus and other aspects of the institutional boundary used to complete this report
  - ☐ Which of the following features are present on campus and which are included within the institutional boundary?
    - ☐ Agricultural school
    - ☐ Medical school
    - ☐ Other professional school(s) with labs and clinics (e.g., dental, nursing, pharmacy, public health, veterinary)
    - ☐ Satellite campus
    - ☐ Hospital
    - ☐ Farm (larger than 5 acres or 2 hectares)
    - ☐ Agricultural experiment station (larger than 5 acres or 2 hectares)
- If there are features present that are not included within the boundary, provide:*
- ☐ The rationale for excluding any features that are present from the institutional boundary

### Optional

- ☐ Additional documentation to support the submission (upload)
- ☐ Data source(s) and notes about the submission

## Standards and Terms

### Institution type

Each institution is classified into one of four basic types adapted from [Carnegie U.S. Classifications](#):

- Associate's Colleges include institutions where all degrees are at the associate's level, or where baccalaureate degrees account for less than 10 percent of all undergraduate degrees.
- Baccalaureate Colleges include institutions where baccalaureate degrees represent at least 10 percent of all undergraduate degrees and where fewer than 50 master's degrees or 20 doctoral

degrees are awarded annually. (May include some institutions above the master's degree threshold.)

- Master's Colleges and Universities generally include institutions that award at least 50 master's degrees and fewer than 20 doctoral degrees annually.
- Doctorate-granting Universities include institutions that award at least 20 research doctoral degrees annually (which may include doctoral-level degrees that qualify recipients for entry into professional practice, such as the JD, MD, PharmD, DPT, etc).

Each institution should report the institution type that is most appropriate given its context and with consideration for the criteria outlined above. For example, a U.S. Carnegie-classified Special Focus institution or Tribal College should select the institution type that best reflects the number and type of degrees offered.

# IC 2: Operational Characteristics

## Required for submission

Operational characteristics are variables that provide information about the context in which the institution operates. Report the most recent data available within the three years prior to the anticipated date of submission.

## Reporting Fields

### Required

- ☐ [Endowment](#) size (US/Canadian dollars)
- ☐ Total campus area (i.e., the total amount of land within the institutional boundary) (acres/hectares)
- ☐ [Locale](#) (Large city, Urban fringe of large city, Mid-size city, Urban fringe of mid-size city, Large town, Small town, or Rural)
- ☐ [IECC climate zone](#) (1 - Very Hot; 2 – Hot; 3- Warm; 4 – Mixed; 5 – Cool; 6 – Cold; 7 - Very Cold; 8 - Subarctic)
- ☐ [Gross floor area of building space](#) (gross square feet/metres)
- ☐ Floor area of [laboratory space](#) (square feet/metres)
- ☐ Floor area of [healthcare space](#) (square feet/metres)
- ☐ Floor area of other [energy intensive space](#), e.g., data centers, food production space, convenience stores (square feet/metres)

### Optional

- ☐ Additional documentation to support the submission (upload)
- ☐ Data source(s) and notes about the submission

## Standards and Terms

### Endowment

Consistent with the U.S. Department of Education, endowment funds are defined as “funds whose principal is nonexpendable (true endowment) and that are intended to be invested to provide earnings for institutional use. Also includes term endowments and funds functioning as endowment.”

### Energy intensive space

Energy intensive space includes “laboratory space”, “healthcare space”, and “other energy intensive space”. “Other energy intensive space” is reported separately from laboratory space and healthcare space and may include data centers, food production space, convenience stores, and other facilities that the institution has determined to have an average energy use intensity (EUI) that is at least twice that of office/administrative space. (Energy use intensity is a unit of measurement that represents the energy consumed by a building relative to its size, e.g., 1,000 MMBtu per square metre). For more information, see [ENERGY STAR Portfolio Manager Technical Reference: U.S. Energy Use Intensity by Property Type](#).

### **Gross floor area of building space**

Gross floor area of building space refers to the total amount of building space that is included within the institutional boundary. Any standard definition of building space may be used (e.g. ASHRAE, ANSI/BOMA, IECC) as long as it is used consistently. Parking structures are included. For guidance on calculating gross square footage of a building, you may also consult [3.2.1 Gross Area](#) of the U.S. Department of Education's *Postsecondary Education Facilities Inventory and Classification Manual*.

Buildings within the overall STARS boundary that the institution leases entirely (i.e. the institution is the only tenant) should be included.

Buildings that are not owned by the institution and in which the institution is one of multiple tenants may be excluded. If the institution chooses to include such buildings, it must include all multi-tenant buildings that are included in the institution's overall STARS boundary and in which the institution is a tenant; institutions cannot choose to include some leased spaces and omit others. If an institution chooses to include leased spaces, the institution should count only the square footage of building space it occupies and not the entire building.

### **Healthcare space**

The total amount of building space within the institutional boundary that may be categorized as "Health Care Facilities" (e.g., codes in the 800 series under the [Space Use Codes](#) in the US Department of Education's *Postsecondary Education Facilities Inventory and Classification Manual*). To simplify reporting, institutions with hospitals may report all floor area within hospitals as healthcare space.

### **IECC climate zone**

Climate zones are consistent with the climate designations used by the International Energy Conservation Code (IECC) and the American Society of Heating, Refrigerating and Air-Conditioning Engineers (ASHRAE). The zones correspond to these generalized climate categories:

1 - Very Hot; 2 – Hot; 3 – Warm; 4 – Mixed; 5 – Cool; 6 – Cold; 7 - Very Cold; 8 - Subarctic

For further guidance, see [IECC/ASHRAE Climate Zones](#) (U.S) and [ANSI/ASHRAE/IESNA Standard 90.1-2007](#) (international).

### **Laboratory space**

The total amount of building space within the institutional boundary that may be categorized as "research laboratories" (e.g., code 250 under the [Space Use Codes](#) in the US Department of Education's *Postsecondary Education Facilities Inventory and Classification Manual*). To simplify reporting, institutions may report all floor area within buildings that contain research laboratories as laboratory space.

### **Locale**

The locale or setting of institution's main campus may be classified as one of the following:

- Large City: A central city of a consolidated metropolitan statistical area (CMSA) or metropolitan statistical area (MSA), with the city having a population greater than or equal to 250,000.
- Mid-size City: A central city of a CMSA or MSA, with the city having a population less than 250,000.
- Urban Fringe of a Large City: Any territory within a CMSA or MSA of a Large City and defined as urban by a national census bureau or the equivalent.

- Urban Fringe of a Mid-size City: Any territory within a CMSA or MSA of a Mid-size City and defined as urban by a national census bureau or the equivalent.
- Large Town: An incorporated place or census-designated place with a population greater than or equal to 25,000 and located outside a CMSA or MSA.
- Small Town: An incorporated place or census-designated place with a population less than 25,000 and greater than or equal to 2,500 and located outside a CMSA or MSA.
- Rural: Any territory designated as rural by a national census bureau or the equivalent.

# IC 3: Academics and Demographics

## Required for submission

This section includes variables that provide information about the institution's academic programs, students, faculty and staff. Report the most recent data available within the three years prior to the anticipated date of submission. Some population figures are used to calculate "[weighted campus user](#)", a measurement of an institution's population that is adjusted to accommodate how intensively certain community members use the campus.

## Reporting Fields

### Required

- ☐ Number of [academic divisions](#) (e.g., colleges, schools)
- ☐ Number of [academic departments](#) (or the equivalent)

[Headcounts](#). Report the unduplicated total number of students enrolled and workers employed over a 12-month period (e.g., as reported on the U.S. [Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System](#) 12-Month Enrollment and Human Resources forms) or else representative headcounts (e.g., autumn figures).

- ☐ Number of [students enrolled for credit](#)
- ☐ Total number of employees (staff + faculty)

[Full-Time Equivalents](#) (FTE). Report the institution's best estimates, annualized as feasible and/or calculated according to relevant national, regional or international standards (e.g., as reported on the U.S. IPEDS 12-Month Enrollment form or calculated using the IPEDS formulas). [Non-credit students](#) may be included.

- ☐ Total full-time equivalent student enrollment (undergraduate and graduate)
- ☐ Full-time equivalent of students enrolled exclusively in [distance education](#) (If FTE is not regularly tracked, institution may estimate FTE attributable to distance education, e.g., by multiplying the percentage of students that are enrolled exclusively in distance education by total FTE enrollment.)
- ☐ Full-time equivalent of employees (staff + faculty)

On-Campus Residents. Report annualized headcounts as feasible or else representative snapshots (e.g., autumn headcounts).

- ☐ Number of students [resident on-site](#)
- ☐ Number of employees resident on-site
- ☐ Number of other individuals resident on-site, e.g., family members of employees, individuals lodging on-site (by average occupancy rate), and/or [staffed hospital beds](#) (if applicable)

### Optional

- ☐ Additional documentation to support the submission (upload)
- ☐ Data source(s) and notes about the submission

## Standards and Terms

### Academic departments

An academic department is an administrative division of a college, university, or school faculty that is devoted to a particular academic discipline (e.g., Economics, Environmental Science, Sociology) or a closely related set of disciplines (e.g., Asian Studies or Physics & Astronomy). Departments may exist under other nomenclature and with coarser or finer divisions, depending upon each institution's context. Fields of study, programs, subject areas or the equivalent may be considered to be "departments" in the absence of traditional administrative divisions.

### **Academic divisions**

An academic division is an administrative division of a college, university, or school faculty that is devoted to a subset of students (e.g., Undergraduate School) or a particular academic degree program or discipline (e.g., School of Architecture). Divisions may exist under other nomenclature and with coarser or finer divisions, depending upon each institution's context.

### **Annualized**

An annualized population figure is the average of all periods (e.g., quarters, semesters, months) during an academic or calendar year (e.g., adding fall, winter, spring and summer enrollment figures and dividing by 4).

Consistent with the U.S. IPEDS, an institution may calculate and report annual FTE student enrollment based on instructional activity (i.e., the [credit](#) and/or [contact hours](#) reported by the institution over a 12 month period) rather than annualized counts.

Likewise, an institution may calculate and report annual FTE employees based on level of service rather than annualized counts. For example, an institution may define one "annualized FTE" as 12 months of service at 100 percent time. When an appointment is less than 12 months service or less than 100 percent time, the annualized FTE would be reduced proportionately. See also "Full-time equivalent".

### **Distance education**

Consistent with U.S. [IPEDS](#), distance education is education that "uses one or more technologies to deliver instruction to students who are separated from the instructor and to support regular and substantive interaction between the students and the instructor synchronously or asynchronously".

A distance education course is one in which "the instructional content is delivered exclusively via distance education. Requirements for coming to campus for orientation, testing, or academic support services do not exclude a course from being classified as distance education."

A distance education program is one for which "all the required coursework for program completion is able to be completed via distance education courses". Distance education students are students who are enrolled in distance education programs, or else exclusively in distance education courses.

### **Full-time equivalent**

Consistent with [Eurostat](#), full-time equivalent (FTE) is defined as follows:

A full-time equivalent, sometimes abbreviated as FTE, is a unit to measure employed persons or students in a way that makes them comparable although they may work or study a different number of hours per week.

The Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) further elaborates in regard to [FTE students](#):



A full-time equivalent (FTE) measure attempts to standardize a student's actual course load against the normal course load. Calculating the full-time/part-time status requires information on the time periods for actual and normal course loads. For the reduction of head-count data to FTEs, where data and norms on individual participation are available, course load is measured as the product of the fraction of the normal course load for a full-time student and the fraction of the school/academic year.

[FTE = (actual course load/normal course load) \* (actual duration of study during reference period/normal duration of study during reference period).]

When actual course load information is not available, a full-time student is considered equal to one FTE. An institution should report its best estimates for FTE figures, annualized as feasible and calculated according to relevant national, regional or international standards (e.g., as calculated or reported on the U.S. IPEDS 12-Month Enrollment form and using the [IPEDS formulas](#)).

### **Headcount**

Consistent with the [Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development \(OECD\)](#), “headcount” is defined as:

The number of individuals [...] counted, regardless of the intensity of participation/length of their program. In other words, a headcount measures the total number of students or employees, irrespective of course-load or employment status.

### **Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System**

The [Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System](#) (IPEDS) is a system of interrelated surveys conducted annually by the U.S. Department of Education's National Center for Education Statistics (NCES). IPEDS gathers information from every college, university, and technical and vocational institution that participates in the federal student financial aid programs.

### **Non-credit students**

Non-credit or community education students are students who are enrolled in courses for personal or professional interest and are not seeking a [degree](#) or formal award, for example:

- Students enrolled exclusively in courses that cannot be applied towards a formal award
- Students enrolled exclusively in Continuing Education Units (CEUs)
- Students exclusively auditing classes

### **Resident on-site**

Individuals are resident on-site when they are living in a housing facility within the institutional boundary that is owned or controlled by the institution. To avoid double-counting, count student resident assistants (RAs) as students, even if they are also considered to be employees. The number of staffed hospital beds is used as a proxy for the number of hospital patients resident on-site.

**Staffed hospital beds**

Consistent with [Practice Greenhealth](#), staffed hospital beds:

...are those in-service and patient-ready for more than half of the days in the reporting period.

Staffed beds does not include beds ordinarily occupied for less than 24 hours, such as those in the emergency department, clinic, labor (birthing) rooms, surgery and recovery rooms and outpatient holding beds.

**Students enrolled for credit**

Consistent with U.S. [IPEDS](#), students enrolled for credit include all students enrolled in courses or programs that can be applied towards the requirements for a postsecondary degree, diploma, certificate, or other formal award, regardless of whether or not they are seeking a degree or certificate. This includes:

- Students enrolled for credit in off-campus centers
- High school students taking regular college courses for credit
- Students taking remedial courses if the student is degree-seeking for the purpose of student financial aid determination
- Students from overseas enrolled in U.S. courses for credit (e.g., online students)
- Graduate students enrolled for thesis credits, even when zero credits are awarded as these students are still enrolled and seeking their degree.

**Weighted campus user**

“Weighted campus user” is a measurement of an institution’s population that is adjusted to accommodate how intensively certain community members use the campus. This figure is used to normalize resource consumption and environmental impact figures in order to accommodate the varied impacts of different population groups. For example, an institution where a high percentage of students live on campus would witness higher greenhouse gas emissions, waste generation, and water consumption figures than otherwise comparable non-residential institution since students’ residential impacts and consumption would be included in the institution’s totals.

STARS calculates the figure according to the following formula. Please note that users will not have to calculate this figure themselves; the result will be calculated automatically when the data are entered into the online Reporting Tool.

$$\text{Weighted campus users} = (A + B + C) + 0.75 [(D - A) + (E - B) - F]$$

A = Number of students resident on-site

B = Number of employees resident on-site

C = Number of other individuals resident on-site and/or staffed hospital beds

D = Total full-time equivalent student enrollment

E = Full-time equivalent of employees (staff + faculty)

F = Full-time equivalent of students enrolled exclusively in distance education