

The 2019 AIU Opens April 15, 9am and Closes May 17, 5pm ET.



**Middle States Commission on Higher Education**

3624 Market Street, Philadelphia, PA 19104 Tel: 267-284-5000 [www.msche.org](http://www.msche.org)

# ANNUAL INSTITUTIONAL UPDATE FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

2019.01

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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 you should 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. There are three Key Contacts that are granted access by MSCHE. These are the President, CFO, and Accreditation Liaison Officer (ALO). These Key Contacts have the ability to grant access to one other individual known as the "Portal Delegate."

### **Why am I not receiving emails about the AIU?**

The AIU is part of your institution's portal and per policy the individual primarily responsible for completing the AIU is your institution's Accreditation Liaison Officer (ALO). All communications regarding the AIU are sent to the President, 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 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, but it is an annual collection of key performance metrics and contextual information that will be later viewed 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 the appropriate documentation.**

#### **How will this information be used by the Commission?**

MSCHE staff will review five-year trends annually looking for anomalies that may require outreach to the institution. A formal review of information collected during the AIU will be conducted by peers during the Mid-Point Peer Review (MPPR). The information collected during the AIU will also be 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 five-year trends and any comments made by the institution. The AIU page, visible on the Institution's Portal, is *only* visible to the institution. Evaluators do not actually see the Institution's Portal, or the institution's AIU page.

#### **What is the best way to prepare for the AIU?**

Each institution will need to determine its own approach to preparing for the AIU but should consider the following:

- 1. The AIU is only open for a short period of time and late submissions or extensions will not be allowed. The expectation is that institutions are preparing their materials in the weeks leading up to the opening.**
2. Be certain your Key Contacts in the Institution Portal are up to date so that all messages are being received by appropriate individuals at the institution.
3. Senior Administration should be engaged in identifying who needs to be involved in this year's AIU validation and collection process.
4. Review the dictionary for your institution's control type and prepare the necessary data for entry.
5. Determine whether or not the Student Achievement data being provided in the AIU appropriately reflects the achievement of your students. **If the data does not appropriately demonstrate how students are achieving at your institution, then what additional data uploads will be submitted to provide an alternative view of your student's achievement.**
6. Gather the necessary uploads (e.g., Catalog(s), audited financial statement, etc.)
7. If your institution is responding to **Recommendation Updates, these should be written and vetted 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 the Key Contacts (i.e., President, 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:

<b>March 1</b>	<b>Re: MSCHE - Get Ready for AIU 2019 Opening</b>
<b>April 1</b>	<b>Re: AIU Starts in 2 Weeks</b>
<b>April 12</b>	<b>Re: AIU Opens Monday</b>

Institutions which have not yet submitted their AIU will receive reminders of the close of the AIU.


<b>May 10</b>	<b>Re: AIU Closing Soon</b>
<b>May 16</b>	<b>Re: AIU Closes Tomorrow</b>
<b>May 17</b>	<b>Re: AIU Closes TODAY</b>

In addition to the above reminders, **institutions which have not shown progress completing the AIU** will receive the below messages and may be contacted by MSCHE staff. **Progress in this case means at least one section indicated as complete for each campus.**

<b>April 29</b>	<b>Re: AIU Special Update (URGENT)</b>
<b>May 10</b>	<b>Re: AIU Special Update (URGENT)</b>
<b>May 17</b>	<b>Re: AIU Special Update (URGENT)</b>

## Data Dictionaries

### Where do I access definitions?

Definitions are available in two places for the AIU. The complete data dictionaries in PDF format are available on our website <http://go.msche.org/AIU>. These same definitions are also available on the AIU page in-line with the items being defined. Simply click on the  to get the complete definition for that item

### How do I use the AIU data dictionaries?

Many of the AIU metrics are from IPEDS, and indeed most member institutions are not entering data but merely double checking the uploaded data. With this in mind, the data dictionaries provide three key pieces of information: Source, Input by, and Variable/Calculation:

**Source** – The source of the data informs institutions where prepopulated data came from. In the below example this field is pre-populated from the IPEDS Fall Enrollment survey, Part A. A complete list of [IPEDS materials](#) can be found on the NCES website along with the forms, definitions, and additional information regarding exactly what this metric is and is not.

**Input by** – Identifies whether or not this piece of data should be uploaded by MSCHE, for IPEDS institutions or whether this is a field that is something that must be inserted by the institution.

**Variable/Calculation:** Over the years the names and locations of IPEDS fields have sometimes changed, but the variable name, has always been consistent. If you are unable to locate the exact metric, or you are uncertain exactly which metric from Fall Enrollment, Part A is the number in the AIU, then you can track back to the exact variable in IPEDS. The [IPEDS data sets](#) are available on the NCES website including actual data files and documentation with the list of variable names and definitions.

**Definition:** Finally, the definition explaining the metric is included. For metrics coming directly from IPEDS, there is always additional information on the NCES website providing much more detail regarding what should be included and what should not for each data point collected in IPEDS. This additional information may be useful to institution's who do not use IPEDS.

#### Example:

Part-time enrollment

- Source: IPEDS Fall Enrollment, Part A
- Input by: MSCHE uploads data from source (where available)
- Variable/Calculation: ENRPT

Definition: ...

## How do I find the finance numbers?

As mentioned above, each definition provides key aspects that will direct you to the metric that is used. In addition to what is noted above, the finance metrics provide you with the very nearly the exact location of each piece of data.

For the below example the Variable/Calculation is **F1A17**.

**F1** – refers to the control (Public), F2 for non-Profit, and F3 for for-Profit

**A** – is the part of the form where this metric will be found

**17** – is the item number

Going to your institutions reported data forms will take you exactly to the exact item for the finance area.

### Finance Example

Total unrestricted net assets			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Source: IPEDS Finance, Part A, Line 17</li> <li>• Input by: MSCHE uploads data from source (where available)</li> <li>• Variable/Calculation: F1A17</li> </ul>			
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			
If your institution is a parent institution then the amounts reported in Parts A and D should include ALL of your child institutions			
Line no.		Current year amount	Prior year amount
	<b>Assets</b>		
01	Total current assets		
31	Depreciable capital assets, net of depreciation		
04	Other noncurrent assets		
16	Restricted-nonexpendable		
17	Unrestricted CV=[A18-(A14+A15+A16)]		
18	Net position CV=[(A06+A19)-(A13+A20)]		



## Data FAQs

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

Because MSCHE is importing most of the data from the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS), the Annual Institutional Update data will follow the reporting years used by IPEDS that are publicly available each April.

Section	Subsection	Source Year
<b>General Information</b>		Academic year 2017-18
	Catalog	Most Recent Catalog Available
<b>Institutional Context</b>	Fall Enrollment Headcounts	Academic year 2017-18
	Fall Enrollment Race-Ethnicity Percentages	Academic year 2017-18
	Fall Enrollment Age Percentages	Academic year 2017-18
	12-Month Enrollment	July 1, 2016 – June 30, 2017
	Distance Education Headcounts <sup>1</sup>	Academic year 2017-18
	Select metrics for peer reviewers to see <sup>2</sup>	Academic year 2017-18
	Programs Offered	July 1, 2016 – June 30, 2017
<b>Student Achievement</b>	Retention Rates	Academic year 2017-18
	First-Time Full-Time Enrollment	Academic year 2017-18
	Graduation Rates 150%	Status of student as of August 31, 2017
	Graduation Rates 200%	Status of student as of August 31, 2017
	Graduation Rate Gender	Status of student as of August 31, 2017
	Graduation Rate Ethnicity	Status of student as of August 31, 2017
<b>Financial Results</b>	General <sup>3</sup>	Academic year 2017-18
	Financial Results	Fiscal year 2016-17

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	Education and General Expenses	Fiscal year 2016-17
	Most Recent Financial Audit Metrics	Most recent fiscal year available
	Financial Documents to Upload	Most recent fiscal year available

<sup>1</sup> With the exception of “Programs Offered via distance education,” for which institutions should report data from July 1, 2016 - June 30, 2017.

<sup>2</sup> 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, 2016 - June 30, 2017.
- “Percent First Generation” and “Default Rate”, which are being populated by data from NSLDS 2015-16 and 2016-17 pooled cohorts

<sup>3</sup> With the following exceptions, for which institutions should report data from Fiscal Year 2016-17:

- “Is your institution responsible for retirement/pension?”
- “What are the pension or post retirement amount in your audit?”

### **What metrics have criteria that require further comment?**

**Associate Graduation Rate 150%:** The institution will be asked to provide explanatory comments if the value in this field is less than 15% **OR** if the change in the value of this field from last year to this year has decreased more than 4%. **Additionally, if the value is below 15% the institution is required to provide at least one Context of Performance document.**

**Bachelor Graduation Rate 150%:** The institution will be asked to provide explanatory comments if the value in this field is less than 25% **OR** if the change in the value of this field from last year to this year has decreased more than 4%. **Additionally, if the value is below 25% the institution is required to provide at least one Context of Performance document.**

**Fall Enrollment Headcounts - Total:** The institution will be asked to provide explanatory comments if the absolute value of the change in the value of this field from last year to this year is greater than 8%.

**Fall Enrollment Headcounts - FTE:** The institution will be asked to provide explanatory comments if the absolute value of the change in the value of this field from last year to this year is greater than 5%.

**Default Rate:** The institution will be asked to provide explanatory comments if the value in this field is greater than or equal to 30%.

**Net Assets Change Over Year:** The institution will be asked to provide explanatory comments if the value in this field is less than 0.

### **Why do some metrics require further comments?**

If a comment box appears next to one of your data points, this is because your data has exceeded the expected year-to-year fluctuations. The text box is there for you to provide information regarding how the institution is addressing this change. These comment boxes will only appear next to critical data elements. Both the data and the comments made are provided to Evaluators. Fully describing how the institution has addressed the fluctuation observed or below expected performance in the numbers is a critical part of the AIU process. **Additionally, these comments are extremely valuable to evaluators in their decision making process as they provide context to the numbers.**

### **What metrics are calculated?**

The AIU open period is for institutions to validate uploaded data and enter data that cannot be obtained from other sources. Also, on the AIU page are a number of calculated fields. **The fields completed by the institution represent the institution's AIU submission, while the calculated fields demonstrate how the submitted data are used to create other evaluation metrics.**

As such, the calculated fields are not static like the submitted AIU data. Indeed, updates and changes to these fields are expected as feedback from Evaluators is obtained and further analyses conducted. The calculated fields are present on the 2019 AIU page, but will be moved in 2020 to make their separation from the submission clearer. A list of calculated fields is below.

**Primary Reserve Ratio**

**Viability Ratio**

**Return on Net Assets Ratio**

**Operating Revenues Ratio**

**Net Income Ratio**

**Debt Burden Ratio**

**Tuition Discount Ratio**

**CFI**

**Expendable Net Assets**

### **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 aggregated data from other MSCHE member institutions.

## Institutional Context FAQs

### Are the metrics in the “Select metrics for peer reviewers to see” section optional?

While institutions can choose which of these metrics will be included or excluded from the peer review process, **all the fields must be completed for every collection.** Note, however, that if your institution submits data to IPEDS, six of the nine fields in this section will be pre-populated by MSCHE.

### If we select metrics for peer reviewers to see this year can we change it next year?

Institutions are able to select the metrics they want Evaluators to see the year after their MPPR and the year after their Self-Study. These are the only two times the selections can be altered.

## How should different degree levels be defined?

Refer to the following table of definitions:

Term	Definition
<b>Postsecondary award, certificate, or diploma (less than 1 academic year)</b>	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.
<b>Postsecondary award, certificate, or diploma (at least 1 but less than 2 academic years)</b>	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.
<b>Postsecondary award, certificate, or diploma (at least 2 but less than 4 academic years)</b>	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.
<b>Associate's degree</b>	An award that normally requires at least 2 but less than 4 years of full-time equivalent college work.
<b>Bachelor's degree</b>	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.
<b>Postbaccalaureate certificate</b>	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 requirements of a master's degree. NOTE: Even though Teacher Preparation certificate programs may require a bachelor's degree for admission, they are considered sub-baccalaureate undergraduate programs, and students in these programs are undergraduate students.
<b>Master's degree</b>	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.

<b>Post-master's certificate</b>	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.
<b>Doctor's degree</b>	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.
<b>Doctor's degree-professional practice</b>	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.
<b>Doctor's degree-research/scholarship</b>	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.
<b>Doctor's degree-other</b>	A doctor's degree that does not meet the definition of a doctor's degree - research/scholarship or a doctor's degree - professional practice.

## **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 data to provide additional context for the institution's Student Achievement data. For some institution's the data in the AIU appropriately demonstrate the performance of your student population. In other cases, these data may be largely empty (e.g., graduate degree only institutions) or the achievement data may only represent a small portion of your total student population. If the data does not represent your students' performance, it is important that you upload alternative data reports so that Evaluators can better understand the achievement of your students.

### **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. That being said some level of consistency will make reviewing the data easier for Evaluators.

### **Why is our first Context of Performance upload a required field?**

If your institution's graduation rate is below the established benchmarks of 15% for a two-year institution or 25% for a four-year institution, then at least one context of performance document is required to be uploaded. This Context of Performance upload should provide alternative graduation performance data and/or include evidence of work to improve the graduation rates at the institution.