

Preparing Higher Education for IPEDS Admissions Reporting Reform & Civil Investigative Demands

BACKGROUND

The U.S. Department of Education (ED) is proposing significant changes to the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS), requiring institutions to report detailed admissions data, including applicant demographics and admissions criteria, for both undergraduate and graduate programs.

In the first year, institutions will be expected to submit up to six years of admissions data, enabling ED to evaluate potentially illegal gender and race/ethnicity differences in admissions outcomes. These analyses will assess whether race and sex disparities exist in admissions decisions after controlling for academic factors such as grade point average (GPA), SAT, and graduate record examination (GRE) scores along with other admissions factors.

Additionally, the Department of Justice (DOJ) has sent several civil investigative demands (CIDs) to private employers, including higher education institutions, asking for information about potentially illegal diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) programs. Other federal agencies have also initiated investigations into related educational institution practices. Given this changing landscape, institutions of higher education should be prepared for a government investigation that scrutinizes various practices, including those related to employment, admissions, and pay.

DCI'S HIGHER EDUCATION SERVICES

To help institutions prepare for this new regulatory landscape, DCI offers a comprehensive suite of services tailored to the evolving IPEDS requirements and CIDs. With more than two decades of experience partnering with higher education institutions, DCI combines a deep understanding of both employment and admissions practices in the educational context with both applied statistical expertise and unique insight into the evolving federal landscape.

This distinctive set of expertise can assist institutions in preparing for and responding to federal agency scrutiny and allegations of potentially illegal discrimination. It is recommended that such studies be conducted under attorney-client privilege to ensure confidentiality.

Admissions and IPEDS Services

Admissions DEI Risk and Office of Institutional Research (OIR) Training

DCI experts can equip university staff with the knowledge to identify and mitigate risks in admissions practices. DCI experts can assist in training OIR teams on how to conduct both basic and advanced analyses evaluating potentially illegal gender and race/ethnicity differences using rigorous professionally accepted techniques.

Admissions Practice Review

Using social science research and industry recommended practices, DCI experts can assess current admissions processes that balance institutional missions with potential compliance risks. For example, federal agencies have prioritized the identification of admissions criteria that may constitute “proxy” discrimination due to correlation with protected characteristics. Our experts understand that compliance with both federal and local legislative requirements can be complex and multi-faceted given the holistic nature of admissions policies. Educational institutions strive to meet a wide variety of objectives with admissions policies, which often include curriculum achievement as well as mission- and community-based standards intended to retain talent in their community. An expert practice review may be particularly important now as the compliance landscape shifts in real time.

Data Preparation for IPEDS Submission

DCI compliance experts can support institutions in compiling and validating admissions data for the new IPEDS reporting, ensuring accuracy and completeness. This process includes flagging data inconsistencies and working with institutional leaders to rectify any data errors prior to submission.

Investigation Readiness Support

DCI experts can also prepare datasets for advanced statistical analyses to assess potentially illegal gender and race/ethnicity differences in admissions outcomes. It is anticipated that both (1) standard admissions factors commonly included in IPEDS submissions and (2) unique, situation-specific elements such as state and local legislative requirements and mission-based considerations will be essential for inclusion in statistical analyses. Institutions have the option to collaborate with DCI to design rigorous, customized analyses using traditional statistical tests and advanced techniques in order to identify potentially illegal gender and race/ethnicity differences. This approach helps pinpoint areas of concern and supports proactive compliance before submitting information.

Preparation for a Civil Investigative Demand (CID)

Pay Equity Analysis

DCI experts have many decades of experience in conducting faculty and staff pay equity studies based on standards established in Title VII of the Civil Rights Act. DCI can control for merit variables that affect your institutional compensation decisions. Our industrial-organizational psychologists and labor economists are experts at developing Similarly Situated Employee Groups (SSEGs) and conducting complex statistical analyses under the direction of an attorney.

Equal Employment Opportunity Disparity Analysis for Employment

Equal employment opportunity (EEO) disparities can occur in employment practices when a seemingly neutral selection practice has a disproportionate effect on members of a protected class. The current administration is interested in identifying ‘proxy’ discrimination and DCI experts can conduct advanced analytics on your organization’s hiring, promotion, and termination data to identify potential flags based on statistical and practical indicators.

Employee Selection

DCI experts can identify the key characteristics necessary for success in your institution’s workforce and develop customized hiring processes to select candidates most likely to perform well on the job and achieve various other organizational goals. Our expertise in industrial-organizational psychology can help your institution improve effectiveness, defensibility, and fairness of your employment processes.

WHY WORK WITH DCI?

EXPERTISE IN HIGHER EDUCATION COMPLIANCE

DCI has a proven track record supporting dozens of educational institutions with compliance, data integrity, and analytical support.

THOUGHT LEADERSHIP

Our team includes published experts in disparity analysis and EEO compliance.

STRATEGIC INSIGHT

We help clients anticipate enforcement trends and prepare defensible admissions practices.

Contact us to schedule a consultation or request a tailored proposal. DCI is ready to help your institution navigate the complexities of IPEDS admissions reform and build a robust compliance strategy.



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