

METHODOLOGY AND TECHNICAL NOTES

Survey and Sample

The survey, *Occupational Programs in Postsecondary Education Institutions* was conducted through the National Center for Education Statistics' (NCES) Fast Response Survey System (FRSS). The sample of postsecondary institutions was restricted to 2-year and less-than-2-year institutions that were eligible for federal financial aid under Title IV. A stratified random sample of 1,289 institutions was selected, including 689 2-year institutions and 600 less-than-2-year institutions.

The sample of 2-year postsecondary institutions was drawn from the Postsecondary Education Quick Information System (PEQIS) panel, which was constructed from the 1995-96 Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) Institutional Characteristics (IC) file. The PEQIS frame included 4-year, 2-year, and less-than-2-year institutions of higher education located in the 50 states and the District of Columbia: a total of 5,353 institutions. Only 2-year institutions that were eligible for federal financial aid were included for selection from the PEQIS panel.

The sampling frame for the supplementary sample of less-than-2-year institutions was the 1996-97 Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) Institutional Characteristics file. The institutions eligible for the supplementary sample were all less-than-2-year institutions in the 50 states and the District of Columbia (the same geographic area used for the PEQIS panel) that reported eligibility for Title IV. A total of 1,898 institutions met these requirements.

Respondents and Response Rates

Questionnaires with letters explaining the purpose of the study were mailed in mid-April 1999 to PEQIS coordinators at 2-year institutions and administrators at less-than-2-year institutions. The questionnaire was to be completed by the person most knowledgeable about occupational programs at the institution. Telephone followup of nonrespondents started in late May, and data collection ended in early July 1999. Of the 1,289 postsecondary institutions sampled for the study, 103 were out of scope for the study; 57 of these institutions were closed, and 38 did not have Title IV eligibility. The survey was completed by 1,100 2-year and less-than-2-year postsecondary institutions, yielding an overall unweighted response rate of 94 percent. The weighted response rate was also 94 percent.

Sampling and Nonsampling Errors

The responses were weighted to produce national estimates. The weights were designed to adjust for the variable probabilities of selection and differential nonresponse. The findings in this report are based on the sample selected and, consequently, are subject to sampling variability.

The survey estimates are also subject to nonsampling errors that can arise because of nonobservation (nonresponse and noncoverage) errors, errors of reporting, and errors made in data collection. These errors can sometimes bias the data. Nonsampling errors may include such

problems as misrecording of responses; incorrect editing, coding, and data entry; differences related to the particular time the survey was conducted; or errors in data preparation. While general sampling theory can be used in part to determine how to estimate the sampling variability of a statistic, nonsampling errors are not easy to measure and, for measurement purposes, usually require that an experiment be conducted as part of the data collection procedures or that data external to the study be used.

A number of actions were taken to minimize nonsampling error. The questionnaire was pretested with respondents like those who completed the survey. During the design of the survey and survey pretest, an effort was made to check for consistency of interpretation of questions and to eliminate ambiguous items. The questionnaire and instructions were extensively reviewed by the National Center for Education Statistics and the Office of Vocational and Adult Education, U.S. Department of Education. Manual and machine editing of the questionnaire responses were conducted to check the data for accuracy and consistency. Cases with missing or inconsistent items were recontacted by telephone. Data were keyed with 100 percent verification.

Variances

The standard error is a measure of the variability of estimates due to sampling. It indicates the variability of a sample estimate that would be obtained from all possible samples of a given design and size. Standard errors are used as a measure of the precision expected from a particular sample. If all possible samples were surveyed under similar conditions, intervals of 1.96 standard errors below to 1.96 standard errors above a particular statistic would include the true population parameter being estimated in about 95 percent of the samples. This is a 95 percent confidence interval. Estimates of standard errors for this report were computed using the jackknife replication method.

Terms and Variables

An **occupational program** was defined as a sequence of courses designed to prepare students for an occupation (e.g., nurses' aide) that typically requires education below the baccalaureate level. To allow institutions to report noncredit courses, a noncredit occupational program could have included only one course or more than one course.

A **skill competency** was defined as a concept, skill, or attitude that is essential to an occupation; the level of attainment or performance established for a skill competency is a skill standard. Because these terms tend to be used interchangeably in practice, "skill competencies" was used to refer to both skill competencies and skill standards.

The main classification variable was level of institution (2-year, less-than-2-year). Constructed variables are not included in the data files.

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
NATIONAL CENTER FOR EDUCATION STATISTICS
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20208-5651

FORM APPROVED
O.M.B. NO.: 1850-0733
EXPIRATION DATE: 07/1999

**SURVEY ON OCCUPATIONAL PROGRAMS IN
POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS**
POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION QUICK INFORMATION SYSTEM

This survey is authorized by (P.L. 103-382). While you are not required to respond, your cooperation is needed to make the results of this survey comprehensive, accurate, and timely.

DEFINITIONS USED IN THIS SURVEY

Occupational program: For this survey, an occupational program is defined as a sequence of courses designed to prepare students for an occupation (e.g., nurses' aide) that typically requires education below the baccalaureate level. A non-credit occupational program may consist of only one course or more than one course.

Skill competency: A skill competency is a concept, skill, or attitude that is essential to an occupation; the level of attainment or performance established for a skill competency is a skill standard. In this survey, we use the term "skill competencies" to refer to both skill competencies and skill standards.

Note: This questionnaire asks about occupational programs and courses taken by postsecondary students. If your school offers any programs and courses that are taken only by other types of students (e.g., only secondary students), do not include those programs and courses.

LABEL

IF ABOVE INSTITUTION INFORMATION IS INCORRECT, PLEASE UPDATE DIRECTLY ON LABEL.

Name of person completing form: _____ Telephone: _____

Title/position: _____ E-mail: _____

Best days and times to reach you (in case of questions): _____

THANK YOU. PLEASE KEEP A COPY OF THIS SURVEY FOR YOUR RECORDS.

PLEASE RETURN COMPLETED FORM TO:

WESTAT
Attention: Parsad, 716608
1650 Research Boulevard
Rockville, Maryland 20850

IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS, CONTACT:

Basmat Parsad at Westat
800-937-8281, ext. 8222 or 301-251-8222
Fax: 1-800-254-0984
E-mail: Parsadb1@westat.com

According to the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, no persons are required to respond to a collection of information unless it displays a valid OMB control number. The valid OMB control number for this information is 1850-0733. The time required to complete this information collection is estimated to average 30 minutes per response, including the time to review instructions, search existing data resources, gather the data needed, and complete and review the information collected. If you have any comments concerning the accuracy of the time estimate(s) or suggestions for improving this form, please write to: U.S. Department of Education, Washington, D.C. 20202-4651. If you have comments or concerns regarding the status of your individual submission of this form, write directly to: National Center for Education Statistics, 555 New Jersey Avenue, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20208.

4. For each of the occupations for which your institution offers an **occupational program** in 1998-1999:

- Indicate in **column A** whether that program is accredited by an industry, business, or trade organization (e.g., the National Automotive Technicians Education Foundation).
- Indicate in **columns under B** what credentials students in each program can work toward. (For example, if a nursing program prepares students to take a state licensing exam, check that a "state registration, license, or certificate" is available.) Include credentials that may be attained through non-credit courses.

Occupation area/ occupation	A. Check if program is accredited by industry, business, or trade	B. Credentials that students in each program can work toward:				
		Associate's degree	Institutional certificate/ diploma	State registration, license, or certificate	Industry/ trade certificate or diploma	Company certificate (e.g., NOVELL)
		<i>(Check ALL that apply in each row.)</i>				
Business & Marketing Occupations						
a. Accountant/bookkeeper	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. Administrative assistant/secretary	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c. Restaurant/food service manager	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d. Sales associate	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Technical & Mechanical Occupations						
a. AC/heating/refrigeration repair technician	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. Auto body repairer	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c. Automotive mechanic/technician	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d. Computer programmer	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e. Computer graphic designer	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
f. Computer technician	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
g. Electronics technician	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
h. Engineering technician	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
i. Drafter or CADD operator	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
j. Machinist	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Building Trades						
a. Bricklayer or mason	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. Carpenter	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c. Electrician	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d. Plumber	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e. Welder	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Health/Life Sciences Occupations						
a. Emergency medical technician	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. Medical or dental assistant	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c. Nurses' aide or home health aide	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d. Licensed practical (vocational) nurse	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e. Registered nurse	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
f. Medical/life science lab technician	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
g. Agriscience technician	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
h. Veterinary assistant	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Service Occupations						
a. Chef/cook	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. Cosmetologist	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c. Childcare worker	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d. Teachers' aide	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e. Paralegal/legal assistant	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

THANK YOU. PLEASE KEEP A COPY OF THIS SURVEY FOR YOUR FILES.