

WE NEED GREATER TRANSPARENCY IN COLLEGE ADMISSIONS... BUT NOT LIKE THIS

HOW TO FIX THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION'S PROPOSED ADMISSIONS SURVEY COMPONENT

What is ACTS?

The Department of Education plans to introduce the Admissions and Consumer Transparency Supplement (ACTS) survey component to the agency's annual Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) **this academic school year.**

- Approximately 1,700 institutions will be required to report highly detailed, disaggregated data on undergraduate and graduate applicants, admittees, and enrollees including
 - sex
 - race
 - test scores
 - high school GPA
 - college GPA
 - graduation rates
 - parental income
 - parental education
 - admissions cycle, and more.
- ACTS could add **more than 20,000 data fields** to IPEDS each year.
- Institutions will be required to share the data for the **past 5 years.**
- The Trump Administration's stated intention for ACTS is to increase transparency in admissions and "expos[e] unlawful practices and ultimately [rid] society of shameful, dangerous racial hierarchies."

Problems with ACTS

- Institutional research (IR) staff have insufficient time to prepare.
- IR staff have not seen the questions and fields in the proposed data collection.
- Many proposed data points lack consistent definitions (e.g., HS GPA).
- Institutions do not have access to some of the requested data (e.g., parental income, test scores).
- Data broken down by multiple characteristics will create subsets so small they will threaten student privacy.
- Collecting and standardizing graduate admissions across departments and programs.
- Lack of access to five years of historical data for new survey items.
- Lack of guidance on how to handle these problems. Diminished staffing at the agency makes timely guidance and training very challenging.



TAKE ACTION TO PRESERVE THE INTEGRITY OF ADMISSIONS DATA

How to Improve ACTS

Delay implementation by at least one year in order to share a full preview of the survey component with institutions of higher education at least 12 months in advance, as is customary.

- Work with stakeholders over the next 6 to 12 months to identify the most useful data components for a smaller survey and provide clear, standardized definitions for each.
- Delay the collection of historical data until the successful completion of at least one cycle of collecting, analyzing, and publishing data. Limit data collection to three years of historical data, in accordance with the Paperwork Reduction Act.
- Delay the collection of data on graduate education until the successful completion of at least two cycles of collecting, analyzing, and publishing data on undergraduate education.
- Fully staff the National Center for Education Statistics and reinstate key contracts.

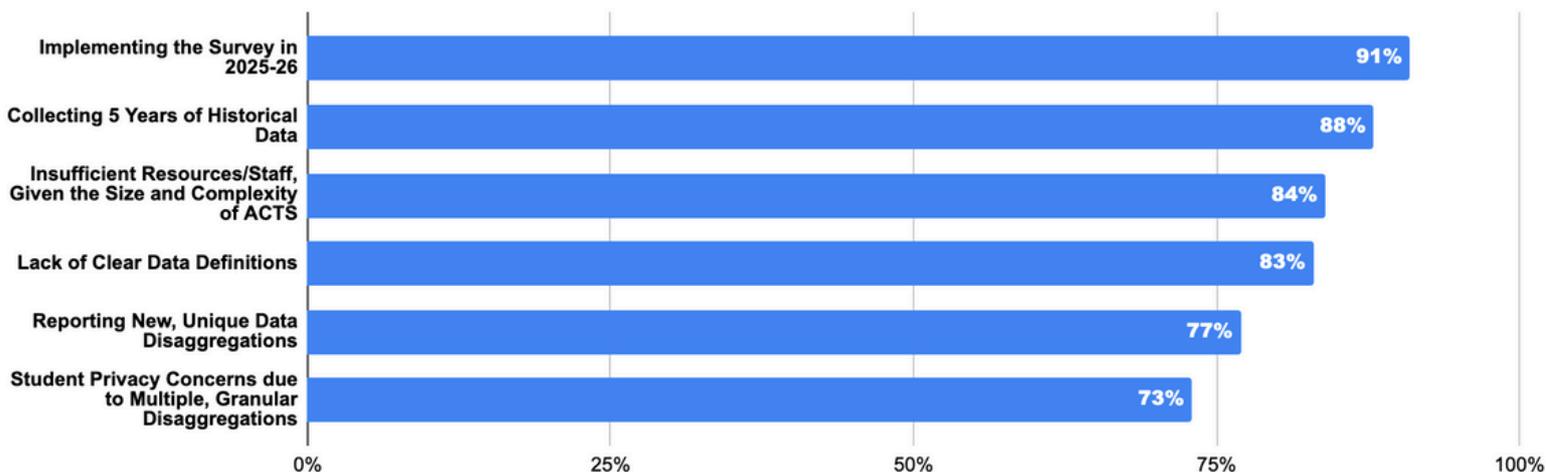
Submit a comment [here](#) on the proposed changes to IPEDS by October 14, 2025.

Some issues you may want to address, using concrete examples from your institution:

- The rushed timeline and need to delay ACTS.
- The administrative and financial burden ACTS will put on multiple departments and divisions at your institution.
- The need to develop new data extracts, coding, system changes, validation, staff training, quality checks, etc., and reconfigure student information system platforms and data warehouses in order to capture and export the detailed disaggregations that ACTS requires.
- Challenges your institution will have reporting some data.
- The lack of technical specifications, worked examples, guidance, and training opportunities.
- The privacy risks associated with small cell sizes.

Almost All Institutional Research Professionals Have Serious Concerns about the ACTS Survey Component

Source: AIR Survey Results: Feedback to the Proposed Admissions and Consumer Transparency Supplement, n=583



The percentage of IR professionals who are extremely or very concerned about specific challenges with ACTS