



Award Category Definitions

To request your historical award category issued [CLICK HERE](#), or to lookup your previous category [CLICK HERE](#).

Non-Traditional / Online Only / Vocational

These schools can be For Profit and Non-Profit institutions. This category would include all For Profit schools that do not fit the traditional definitions of the additional categories.

Non-Traditional Schools: Non-traditional schools refer to educational institutions that deviate from the conventional structure and delivery methods of education. They often cater to students who may not fit into the traditional school system due to various reasons, such as working adults, homeschoolers, individuals with special needs, or those seeking alternative learning approaches. Non-traditional schools may include online schools, charter schools, virtual schools, alternative education programs, and more.

Online Only Schools: Online-only schools, also known as virtual schools, deliver education exclusively through online platforms. These schools conduct classes, assessments, and interactions over the Internet, enabling students to study remotely from any location with Internet access. Online schools provide a flexible and convenient learning environment, which is beneficial for students who have other commitments, geographical constraints, or prefer self-paced learning.

Vocational Schools: Vocational schools, also referred to as trade schools or career schools, focus on providing specialized training and education for specific trades, professions, or industries. These schools emphasize practical skills development and hands-on training to prepare students for careers in fields such as automotive technology, culinary arts, healthcare, cosmetology, welding, construction, and more. Vocational schools often offer certification programs or associate degrees that lead directly to employment in their respective fields.

Small Community College

This Category does not include Private or for-profit institutions; if you are a private or for-profit institution, please see the definitions for Non-Traditional / Online Only / Vocational, Private not offering Doctorate, or Private Offering Doctorate. Public Institutions at which the highest level of degree awarded is an associate's degree. Schools that fall into the category of Small Community Colleges are institutions of higher education that offer two-year associate degree programs, certificate programs, and workforce training in various fields. These community colleges are characterized by their relatively small size, both in terms of student enrollment and campus facilities. While the specific definition of a "small" community college can vary, they generally serve a more limited geographic area and have smaller student populations compared to larger community colleges or four-year universities. 90% of the degrees offered are Associates Degrees or other programs, not including BA. Less than 10% of the degrees offered are BACCALAUREATE.

The smaller student population allows for more personalized attention and a close-knit community with student enrollment below 4500. If your historical category is different than noted above it may be due to your region size. Please choose the same category listed in your previous awards unless a significant change in enrollment has occurred. To request your historical award category issued [CLICK HERE](#), or to lookup your previous category [CLICK HERE](#).

Large Community College

Schools that fall into the category of Large Community Colleges are institutions of higher education that offer two-year associate degree programs, certificate programs, and workforce training. This Category does not include Private or for-profit institutions; if you are a private or for-profit institution, please see the definitions for Non-Traditional / Online Only / Vocational, Private not offering Doctorate, or Private Offering Doctorate. These community colleges are characterized by their relatively large size, both in terms of student enrollment and campus facilities. The definition of a "large" community college can vary, but they generally serve a significant number of students and may offer a wide range of academic programs and services. Large Community Colleges typically have a substantial student enrollment, often ranging from several thousand to tens of thousands of students. The larger student body accommodates a diverse group of students with varying interests and goals.

90% of the degrees offered are Associates Degrees or other programs, not including BA. Less than 10% of the degrees offered are BACCALAUREATE. This category of institutions traditionally have a student enrollment above 4500. If your historical category is different than noted above, it may be due to your region size or geographical location. Please choose the same category listed in your previous awards unless a significant change in enrollment has occurred. To request your historical award category issued [CLICK HERE](#), or to lookup your previous category [CLICK HERE](#).

Small Public

Schools that fall into the category of Small Public schools are educational institutions that are publicly funded and operated, but they have a relatively small student population compared to larger public schools. The specific criteria defining a "small" school depend on the region and educational authorities, but generally, small public schools tend to have a smaller enrollment compared to their counterparts. If you are considered a rural 4 year institution, this would be the category that you choose. This Category does not include Private or for profit institutions.

Includes institutions where baccalaureate or higher degrees represent at least 50 percent of all degrees but where fewer than 50 master's degrees or 20 doctoral degrees were awarded during the update year. (Some institutions above the master's degree threshold are also included; [see Exception](#).) This Category does not include Private or for-profit institutions; if you are a private or for-profit institution, please see the definitions for Non-Traditional / Online Only / Vocational, Private not offering Doctorate or Private Offering Doctorate.

Enrollment Size: Small Public schools typically have a limited number of students, often ranging from a few dozen to a few hundred students. The smaller student population allows for more personalized attention and a close-knit community with student enrollment below 9,000. If your historical category is different than noted above it may be due to your region size. Please choose the same category listed in your previous awards unless a significant change in enrollment has occurred. To request your historical award category issued [CLICK HERE](#), or to lookup your previous category [CLICK HERE](#).

Large Public

This category does not include Private or for-profit institutions; if you are a private or for-profit institution, please see the definitions for Non-Traditional / Online Only / Vocational, Private not offering Doctorate or Private Offering Doctorate. Schools that fall into the category of Large Public are educational institutions that are publicly funded and operated and have a significant student population, making them one of the largest public universities in their respective regions. The definition of a "large" public university can vary depending on the specific country or state, but generally, these universities have a substantial number of enrolled students and offer a wide range of academic programs and services.

This category traditionally has a student enrollment greater than 9,000. If your historical category is different than noted above it may be due to your region size. Please choose the same category listed in your previous awards unless a significant change in enrollment has occurred. To request your historical award category issued [CLICK HERE](#), or to lookup your previous category [CLICK HERE](#).

Private not offering Doctorate

Institutions of higher learning that fall into the category of Private not offering Doctorate are privately funded and operated educational institutions that offer various undergraduate and graduate degree programs, but they do not offer doctoral degree programs. They may receive some traditional, state, or federal funds, but this would not be the primary funding stream. They are also typically defined as nonprofit institutions that are not classified as public universities by the Department of Education. These institutions typically focus on providing high-quality education at the undergraduate and master's level, emphasizing strong teaching and close student-faculty interactions.

If your historical category is different than noted above, it may be due to your school's Carnegie classification. Please choose the same category listed in your previous awards unless a significant change in enrollment has occurred. To request your historical award category issued [CLICK HERE](#), or to look up your previous category [CLICK HERE](#).

Private Offering Doctorate

Institutions of higher learning that fall into the category of Private non-profit schools that offer Doctorate programs are privately funded and operated educational institutions that have achieved non-profit status and offer doctoral degree programs. These universities focus on providing advanced education and research opportunities, offering a wide range of doctoral programs across various disciplines. They are often known for their academic excellence, research contributions, and commitment to serving the educational needs of their students and society.

These universities offer doctoral programs, allowing students to pursue advanced research and scholarship in specific fields. Doctorate degrees offered may include Ph.D., Ed.D., Psy.D., J.D., M.D., and other professional and research-oriented doctorates. Private non-profit universities with doctoral programs emphasize research and scholarship, providing opportunities for faculty and students to engage in cutting-edge research and contribute to academic advancements. In addition to doctoral programs, these universities typically offer a wide range of graduate and professional degree programs, including master's degrees and specialized professional degrees.

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Graduate School

Institutions of higher learning that fall into the category of Graduate schools are educational institutions that primarily offer advanced education and research opportunities beyond the undergraduate level, greater than 95% of degrees offered. These schools focus on providing graduate and professional degree programs, such as master's degrees, doctoral degrees, and specialized professional degrees.

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Tier 1 Research

Institutions of higher learning that fall into the category of Tier 1 Research are universities or colleges with a high level of research activity and scholarly productivity. The term "Tier 1 Research" is often used to indicate the highest level of research engagement and impact among academic institutions. These universities are recognized for their substantial contributions to research, innovation, and scholarly advancements across various academic disciplines.

Tier 1 Research institutions are known for their extensive research output. They produce a significant volume of scholarly publications, research papers, and academic articles that contribute to the advancement of knowledge in their fields. These institutions typically offer a wide range of doctoral programs, including Ph.D., Ed.D., Psy.D., J.D., M.D., and other research-focused doctorates. Graduate students are actively involved in research projects and contribute to the research community. These institutions have a Carnegie classification defined as R1: Doctoral Universities – Very high research activity. To view a list of Tier 1 institutions, [Click Here](#).

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Tier 2 Research

Institutions of higher learning that fall into the category of Tier 2 Research are universities or colleges that exhibit a moderate level of research activity and scholarly productivity. The term "Tier 2 Research" is often used to indicate institutions that are actively engaged in research and scholarship but may not have the same level of research output and impact as Tier 1 Research institutions. These institutions have a Carnegie classification defined as R2: Doctoral Universities – High research activity. To view a list of Tier 2 institutions [Click Here](#).

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