



Oregon
University
System

May 5, 2009

Memorandum

To: SCARF Contacts

From: Tom North, Associate Director, OUS Institutional Research

Subject: SCARF Race/Ethnicity Changes

This memorandum outlines changes to the collection of ethnicity and race in the Student Centralized Administrative Reporting File (SCARF). The changes are prompted by the U.S. Department of Education's requirement that students be given the opportunity to identify their ethnicity separately from their race, and to identify with more than one race. For IPEDS reporting, the requirement takes effect in 2010-11.

To accommodate the new data collection and reporting requirement, we're adding RACE_ETHNICITY to the set of tables we collect through SCARF. As the accompanying documentation explains, RACE_ETHNICITY has a repeating structure; it will include a separate record for each race or ethnicity currently in effect for a student. We'll collect both ethnicity and race in the same table.

We'll begin collecting the RACE_ETHNICITY table with the summer 2009 SCARF submission, but it will be optional during 2009-10. Campuses may choose to add the table to their SCARF submission at any term during the coming academic year, but they won't be required to add it until summer 2010. Those campuses that do not submit a RACE_ETHNICITY table will continue to supply race or ethnicity in the ETHNIC field of the STUDENT and DEGREE tables, and campuses that introduce the RACE_ETHNICITY table can continue to populate the STUDENT.ETHNIC field if they choose to.

Adding RACE_ETHNICITY to SCARF as an optional table introduces a complication to our reporting of students' race and ethnicity. We have agreed as a system to wait until 2010-11 to use the new (and enlarged) set of race/ethnicity categories for IPEDS surveys. But suppose that, during 2009-10, a campus submits the repeating RACE_ETHNICITY table in SCARF, and suppose that a student in that table has two race records – for instance, one indicating that the student is Asian and a second indicating that the student is also Black or African American. How should we report the student on IPEDS surveys? Once we move to the new set of IPEDS race/ethnicity categories in 2010-11, it's simple: the student will be reported in the "two or more races" category. However, in 2009-10 we'll still be using the old set of IPEDS race/ethnicity categories, and the old set does not include that category.

Our first thought was to delay introduction of the repeating RACE_ETHNICITY table to summer 2010. We would continue to collect a single race or ethnicity value in the STUDENT.ETHNIC field during 2009-10, and campuses that had migrated to the new race/ethnicity data structure would need to retrofit their SCARF script to continue populating that field. But that seemed likely to cause campuses additional work. So, we decided to continue with our plan to accept RACE_ETHNICITY as an optional table in summer 2009, and we will report multiple records submitted in the RACE_ETHNICITY table according to the following scheme:

1. Hispanic/Latino ethnicity together with one or more races will be reported as "Hispanic."
2. Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander together with Asian will be reported as "Asian or Pacific Islander."
3. Any other combination of two or more races will be reported on IPEDS surveys as "Race and Ethnicity Unknown," as now happens when we are sent a value of "Multiple Ethnicities" in the STUDENT.ETHNIC field. (Here, "race" means any of the five racial categories recognized for IPEDS reporting. For example, Asian and White are distinct races, but Chinese and Indonesian are not.)
4. In addition, a single record in the RACE_ETHNICITY table of either Asian or Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander will be reported as "Asian or Pacific Islander."

At the same time, because we will continue to accept a value in the STUDENT.ETHNIC field during 2009-10, campuses are free to use that field to override this scheme. For instance, suppose that a campus submits two records for a student in the RACE_ETHNICITY table, one indicating that the student is Asian and the other that the student is also Black or African American. The campus can direct us to report the student as "Black, non-Hispanic" by populating the STUDENT.ETHNIC field with that value.

In other words, during 2009-10, values in the STUDENT.ETHNIC field will take precedence over values in the RACE_ETHNICITY repeating table. We will continue our current practice of relying on the STUDENT.ETHNIC field to report race/ethnicity, and we will turn to the new RACE_ETHNICITY repeating table only when the STUDENT.ETHNIC field is null. That way, campuses can switch to submitting the RACE_ETHNICITY table during 2009-10 at their own convenience. Campuses can wait until summer 2010 to switch if they wish to, and campuses introducing the table mid-year can control the race/ethnic value we report for a student by populating the STUDENT.ETHNIC field.

In summer 2010, we will discontinue our reliance on the STUDENT.ETHNIC field, and every record in the SCARF STUDENT table will need to have at least one corresponding record in the RACE_ETHNICITY repeating table.

I hope these guidelines are useful as campuses adapt their SCARF scripts to the new race/ethnicity data collection and reporting requirements. If you have questions or need further information, please don't hesitate to write or telephone (tom_north@ous.edu; 541-346-5713).