



Larry Hogan
Governor

Boyd K. Rutherford
Lt. Governor

James D. Fielder, Jr., Ph. D.
Secretary

MEMORANDUM

DATE: November 11, 2020

TO: Institutional Research Staff, Maryland Colleges and Universities

FROM: Barbara Schmertz, Ph.D., Director of Research and Policy Analysis

SUBJECT: Distance Education and COVID-19: Reporting and Definitional Clarifications for 2021

Update to Temporary Reporting Guidelines tied to COVID-19 – 2021 collections

In July 2020, the Maryland Higher Education Commission (MHEC) issued guidance for institutions regarding reporting courses in their data collections as face-to-face instruction shifted to forms of distance education. This guidance aimed to clarify spring, summer, and fall 2020 data collections, namely the Course Information System (CIS) and the Enrollment Information System (EIS). As institutions continue to manage the disruptions to operations due to the COVID-19 virus, it seemed prudent for MHEC to share guidance for the 2021 collections as well.

See below for the following guidelines:

- Per the agency's original memo, for the *fall 2020 semester* institutions should, to the best of their ability, report enrollment and course information based upon the modality of instruction as defined at the time of the student's registration/start of the course.
- Institutions should follow the same guidance for the *spring 2021 semester*.
- This means, for both terms:
 - Courses should be categorized by the instruction type (DD125) at the time of the start of the course/beginning of registration. These include: traditional instruction, blended hybrid, online, and other modalities listed in the [definition](#).
 - Students should be identified as enrolled in "some," "none" or "all" (DD100) distance education courses based on the modality of instruction for the course at the time of the student registration/ start of the course(s).
 - Institutions should follow the standard instructions in the Data Cookbook for the Distance Education Location Code (DD101) and Instructional Location (DD126).

MHEC is aware that some institutions may not have the ability to follow these guidelines due to the nature of their student registration systems; however, all effort should be made to do so.

Because of this possible limitation, MHEC will use caution when interpreting these data make note, as appropriate, to the possible inconsistency in institutional reporting on these variables.

Please note that these guidelines may change due to the continually evolving nature of the pandemic. MHEC will continue to provide guidance throughout the remainder of the academic year, as needed.

If you have any questions regarding these reporting guidelines and definitions, please feel free to contact Dr. Barbara Schmertz (Barbara.Schmertz@maryland.gov).