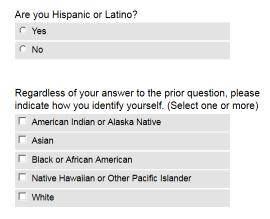# FAQs for Race/Ethnicity data collection at TCNJ

1. **Why collect race/ethnicity data?**

2. **Where does race/ethnicity data come from?**

3. **Why is data collected in this two-part format?**

4. **How do these data get reported externally (to the Federal government, on the Common Data Set, etc.)?**

5. **How do these data get reported internally (to the TCNJ community)?**

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1. Why do we collect race/ethnicity data?

The College of New Jersey, along with all other higher education institutions, is mandated to report to the federal government certain aggregate statistics about its students, faculty, and staff. These required statistics include breakdowns of each group by demographic categories, including race/ethnicity.
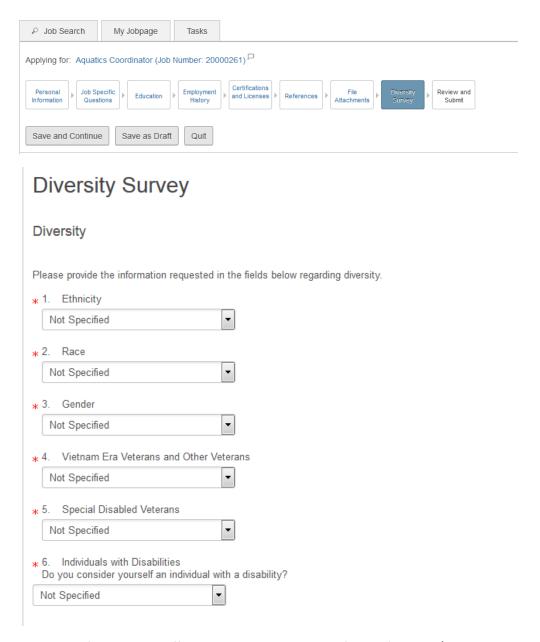
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2. Where does race/ethnicity data come from?

For students, race/ethnicity data is stored in PAWS, which is where it is pulled from for reporting purposes. The race/ethnicity data in PAWS is initially sourced from the application that students fill out for admission to TCNJ, i.e., the Common Application. On the Common App, the race/ethnicity questions are posed as follows:

Are you Hispanic or Latino?
- ○ Yes
- ○ No

Regardless of your answer to the prior question, please indicate how you identify yourself. (Select one or more)
- ☐ American Indian or Alaska Native
- ☐ Asian
- ☐ Black or African American
- ☐ Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
- ☐ White

After enrolling at TCNJ, students are able to change their self-identified race/ethnicity at any time. This is done through PAWS self-service. More information on updating PAWS demographic information can be found on the PAWS Help webpage.

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For faculty and staff, initial race/ethnicity data is sourced from their Taleo job application:

Once hired, faculty and staff are able to change their self-identified race/ethnicity at any time through the Oracle Cloud HCM module.

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3. Why is data collected in this two-part format?

On October 19, 2007, the U.S. Department of Education posted to the Federal Register the "Final Guidance on Maintaining, Collecting, and Reporting Racial and Ethnic Data to the U.S. Department of Education." (See the *Federal Register,* Volume 72, Number 202, pp. 59266-59279). The proposed changes were necessary for the Department to implement the Office of Management and Budget's (OMB) 1997 Standards for Maintaining, Collecting and Presenting Federal Data on Race and Ethnicity.

The Standards state:

> *This classification provides a minimum standard for maintaining, collecting, and presenting data on race and ethnicity for all Federal reporting purposes. The categories in this classification are social-political constructs and should not be interpreted as being scientific or anthropological in nature. They are not to be used as determinants of eligibility for participation in any Federal program. The standards have been developed to provide a common language for uniformity and comparability in the collection and use of data on race and ethnicity by Federal agencies.*

The minimum categories for data on race and ethnicity for Federal statistics, program administrative reporting, and civil rights compliance reporting are defined by OMB as follows:

American Indian or Alaska Native. A person having origins in any of the original peoples of North and South America (including Central America), and who maintains tribal affiliation or community attachment

Asian. A person having origins in any of the original peoples of the Far East, Southeast Asia, or the Indian subcontinent including, for example, Cambodia, China, India, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, Pakistan, the Philippine Islands, Thailand, and Vietnam

Black or African American. A person having origins in any of the black racial groups of Africa.

Hispanic or Latino. A person of Cuban, Mexican, Puerto Rican, South or Central American, or other Spanish culture or origin, regardless of race.

Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander. A person having origins in any of the original peoples of Hawaii, Guam, Samoa, or other Pacific Islands.

White. A person having origins in any of the original peoples of Europe, the Middle East, or North Africa.

OMB recommends that separate questions be used wherever feasible for collecting race and ethnicity data. Respondents are always offered the option of selecting one or more racial designations. When race and ethnicity are collected separately, OMB suggests that ethnicity shall be collected first, and the minimum designations are:

> *Ethnicity:*
> - *Hispanic or Latino*
> - *Not Hispanic or Latino*
>
> *Race (select all that apply):*
> - *American Indian or Alaska Native*
> - *Asian*
> - *Black or African American*
> - *Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander*

- *White*

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4. How do these data get reported externally (to the Federal government, on the Common Data Set, etc.)?

When race/ethnicity data are collected as described above, they are stored in six Yes/No fields: Hispanic/Latino, American Indian or Alaska Native, Black or African American, Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander, and White. *For reporting purposes, a single racial/ethnicity designation for each individual is necessary to avoid counting individuals more than once.* The [*Federal Registrar* (Volume 72, Number 202, pp. 59266-59279)](#) describes how race/ethnicity data should be condensed/categorized for reporting purposes:

The Department will require educational institutions and other recipients to report aggregated racial and ethnic data in the following seven categories: (1) Hispanic/Latino of any race; and, for individuals who are non-Hispanic/Latino only, (2) American Indian or Alaska Native, (3) Asian, (4) Black or African American, (5) Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander, (6) White, and (7) Two or more races.

In addition, the [Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System requires](#) that individuals who are non-resident aliens be reported as a separate category:

Nonresident alien – *A person who is not a citizen or national of the United States and who is in this country on a visa or temporary basis and does not have the right to remain indefinitely. NOTE – Nonresident aliens are to be reported separately, in the boxes provided, rather than included in any of the seven racial/ethnic categories.*

Therefore, for external reporting purposes, data are combined into a single field according to the following rules:

- All individuals who are not US citizens or permanent residents are classified as "Non-resident alien"

- All non-foreign individuals who indicate they are Hispanic or Latino are classified as Hispanic/Latino, regardless of race

- All remaining individuals who select only one of the five race options are categorized as that race

- All remaining individuals who select two or more of the five race options are categorized as "Multiracial"

- All those missing data on race/ethnicity are classified as "Unknown"

Note that this coding scheme necessarily undercounts the numbers of students identifying in any individual racial/ethnic group. For example:

- A student who identifies as Black and Hispanic is categorized as Hispanic, not Black;

- A student who is a non-resident alien who identifies as Hispanic is categorized as non-resident alien, not Hispanic;

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- A non-Hispanic student who identifies as White and Asian is categorized as two or more races, not White or Asian.

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5. How do these data get reported internally (to the TCNJ community)?

Historically, TCNJ has used only the Federal guidelines described above to report race/ethnicity data to both external and internal audiences. However, starting in the fall of 2020, **TCNJ will begin reporting a supplemental version of our race/ethnicity data to internal audiences using a separate methodology.** This "new" methodology uses the data retrieved from the Common Application, as is also the case with the IPEDS data. The significant difference will be that students will be represented in the manner in which they have chosen to self-identify, inclusive of all categories selected. This will be known as the *Self-Identified Demographic Data*, to distinguish it from the *IPEDS data*. For instance, with a student who indicates that they are ethnically *Hispanic/Latino* and racially *Black* and *White* will be grouped into the category *"Hispanic/Latino, Black and White"* as opposed to the IPEDS classification that would only allow the student to fall into the one category of Hispanic/Latino.