Align Module 1: Creating a Map in the Align Tool

This tutorial will provide an introduction to the Common Education Data Standards Align Tool and walk you through the process for creating a map, or data dictionary aligned to CEDS.

The Align Tool is designed to assist education stakeholders in sharing data between educational sectors and across state lines. Users can import one or more data dictionaries, align to CEDS, and then compare themselves with others.

Create Map (Topic 1)

This section will explain how to create a map in the Align tool. To create a map in the Align Tool, you must have a CEDS user account. To learn how to create a CEDS user account, view the Getting Started with the Tools tutorial.

A CEDS map is a data dictionary aligned to the Common Education Data Standards. To begin, log in to the CEDS site and select Tools>Align from the green menu bar. You will be taken to the Align Tool main menu. This is where you can access the various features of the tool.

You can get started with a new map by selecting CREATE Maps under the Build section on the left of the screen. In this tutorial we will be creating a Postsecondary map. However, the same instructions apply for all educational sectors.

When creating your Map Name, be sure to give it a name that will describe to others a little about your map. It is useful to include your state name, agency name or other descriptive information here.

The State field is for defining the state in which the education stakeholder resides. This information will be useful when creating reports. The majority of users will select a specific state. However, some education stakeholders cross state lines. When this is true, select More Than One State. Some education stakeholders, such as a national association, do not relate to a specific state. When this is true, select Not Applicable.

The Domain field is for defining within which domain your data system resides. Options for this field include Early Learning, K12, Postsecondary, Career and Technical Education, Adult Education, Workforce, Assessments, P20W, and Other. This information will be useful when creating reports. The Domain will also drive additional selections on the second page of the Create New Map wizard.

The SLDS Map field is for identifying maps that are related to the Statewide Longitudinal Data System. This refers to a data system that spans multiple years and allows tracking of data for a cohort over time. This may or may not refer to a P20W system. We will select No as this map does not relate to a Statewide Longitudinal Data System.

After completing the fields we just reviewed, select Next.

On the second screen of the Create New Map wizard, select an Affiliation Type. The Affiliation Type changes based on the Domain selected previously. Since Postsecondary was selected earlier in this example, the options are Coordinating Board, Governing Board, IHE (or Institution of Higher Education), and Other. If Other is chosen, you will be prompted to complete additional information. For this demonstration, we will select Governing Board.

Now you need to enter the Affiliation Name. Next is the NCES or IPEDS Unit ID depending on the domain chosen earlier. This ID is not a required field.

If you selected Postsecondary for the Domain, you can also complete the fields for Institutional Coverage and Control (of Institution), though these fields are not required.

In the Map Description field, you can enter a brief explanation of what this map will contain. When selecting maps during report creation, the Map Description will display allowing users to ensure that they are choosing the right map.

Finally, select Create Map. Your new map is immediately available in the map list as you can see here.

This completes Align Module 1: Creating a Map in the Align Tool. For information on how to manage your maps, upload a data dictionary, align elements to CEDS, or create reports, please view the other Align tutorials available on the CEDS website.