

Net Price Calculator Quick Start Guide

For use in configuring and hosting a customized version of the United States Department of Education's Net Price Calculator application on your institution's website.

***For use with Internet Explorer 7.0 and above.**

Introduction

In accordance with the Higher Education Opportunity Act of 2008 (HEOA), beginning in 2011, each postsecondary institution in the United States will be required to post a net price calculator on its web site that uses institutional data to provide **estimated** net price information to current and prospective students and their families based on a student's individual circumstances.

In order to assist institutions in meeting this obligation, the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), in cooperation with IT Innovative Solutions Corp., has designed and developed a fully functional net price calculator available to all Title IV postsecondary institutions for use on their institutional websites.

Using both student-entered and institution-provided data, this calculator will allow prospective students to calculate their estimated net price at an institution based on the following basic formula: **Price of attendance minus grant aid**. The calculator was developed based on the suggestions of the IPEDS Technical Review Panel (TRP) which met on January 27-28, 2009, and included 58 individuals representing the federal government, state governments, postsecondary institutions from all sectors, association representatives, and others. There was also a 30-day public comment period following the meeting of the TRP from which additional feedback was received for its development.

Institutions may ultimately use either the net price calculator developed by the U.S. Department of Education, or one developed by the institution, as long as the calculator you develop includes "at a minimum the same data elements" found in the Department's calculator.

The following instructions are designed to walk you through the steps required to configure and host a customized version of the U.S. Department of Education's Net Price Calculator application on your institution's website. For immediate assistance with any additional questions or problems related to system usage, please contact **Ruba Nuwayhid of IT Innovative Solutions Corp. at (240) 252-1707, or Ruba@inovas.net.**

[Step 1: Access the Net Price Calculator Template](#)

Click on the link below to access the Institutional Data Maintenance portion of the Net Price Calculator. Here you will answer a series of questions, and enter the data necessary to produce a net price calculator customized for your institution.

<http://NPC.inovas.net/institution>

[Step 2: Enter Institutional Data](#)

1. Complete all screening questions as applicable for your institution.

Note: Your responses here will determine which data elements you are required to provide in the subsequent data input tables.

2. When the data input tables are displayed, enter the amounts requested for your institution.
 - Fill in each table as completely as possible.
 - Data in both tables should be for **full-time, first-time undergraduate students**, and should be for the **same year** – e.g., the most recent year for which data are available for both price and aid data.
 - Review the on-screen instructions carefully for additional information related to what data to include/exclude in the construction of the data tables.

Once you are satisfied with all entries, click Continue.

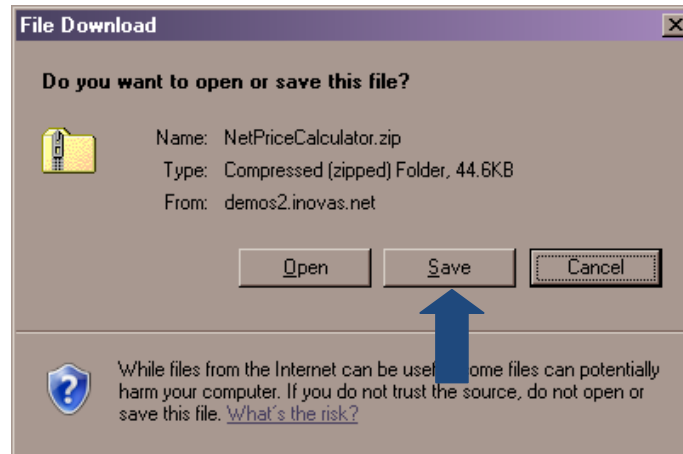
3. On the next screen, enter any additional information you wish to display in the form of Explanations and Caveats at the bottom of the calculator output screen.
 - Review the on-screen instructions carefully for information on the recommended use and placement of each *optional* Explanation field.

[Step 3: Review the Data You Have Provided](#)

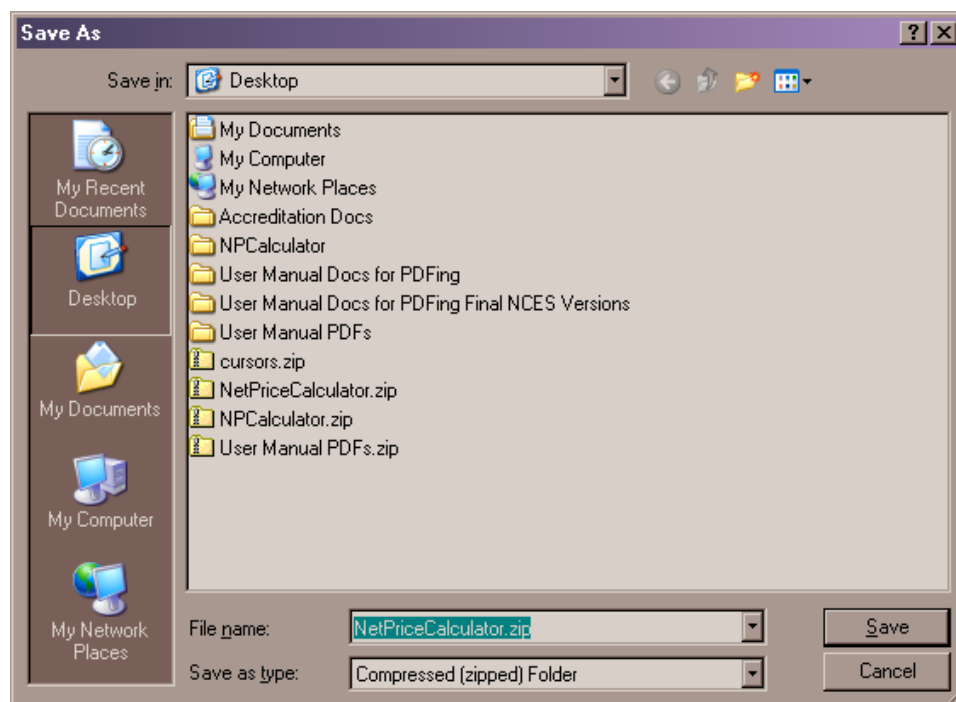
A summary screen will be displayed, detailing the information you have provided. You can click Modify to return to Step 1 and edit this information as needed; or if you are satisfied with your responses, click Continue to generate the Net Price Calculator for your institution based on the specifications shown.

Step 4: Download and Extract the Net Price Calculator Files

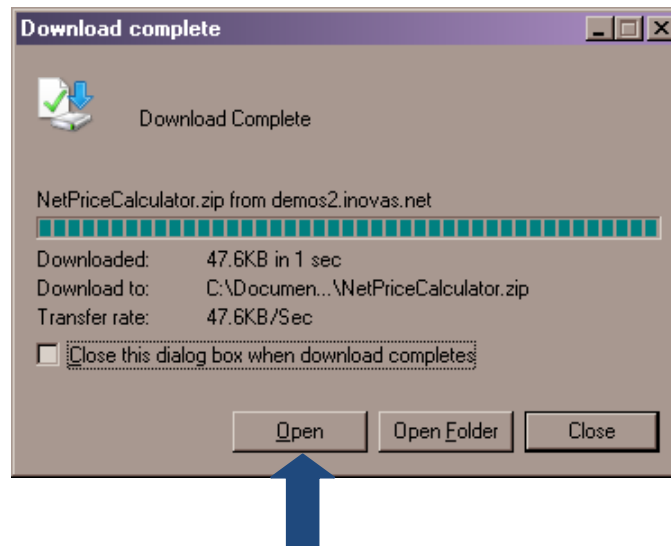
1. A zip file will be produced containing the files necessary to host the Net Price Calculator on your institution's website. When prompted, click **Save** to save the zip file to your computer's hard drive, as shown below:



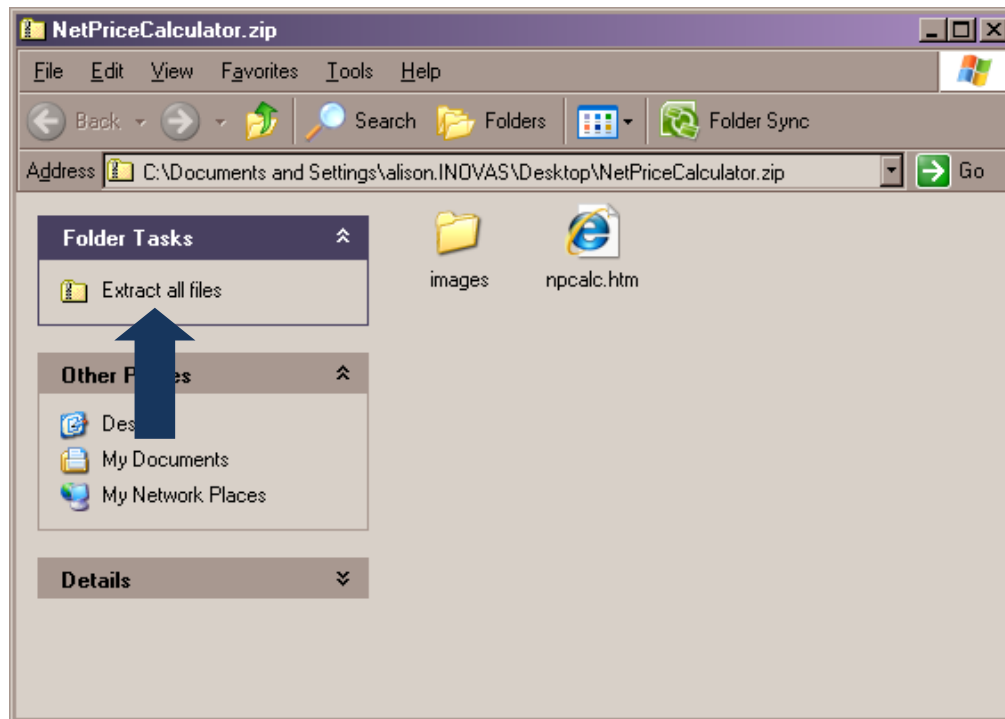
2. Enter the desired file name and destination; then click **Save**.



- When prompted, select **Open** to view the downloaded zip folder on-screen:



- Then click “Extract all files” to unzip the files, as shown below:



Note: While extracting the files, be sure to preserve the structure of the directory. In the example shown above, this is done automatically. When using Winzip, you will need to make sure that the box marked “Use Folder Names” is checked.

5. You may preview a local version of your institution's customized Net Price Calculator at this time by double-clicking the HTML document that appears as a browser link within the unzipped folder (in the example shown above, this is the file named *npcalc.htm*). If after previewing the calculator you wish to modify any of the data provided for your institution, you may do so by returning to **Step 1** of this Quick Start Guide and repeating the process outlined above to generate a new version of the Net Price Calculator for your institution.

Step 5: Host the Application on your Institution's Website

Once you have downloaded and extracted the necessary files, you are ready to host the application on your institution's website.

1. Start by creating a new folder for the Net Price Calculator within your website's home directory.

Note: The name chosen for this folder will be included in the link used to access the application, therefore a simple name, such as *NetPrice*, is recommended.

2. Move the files extracted in **Step 4** of this Quick Start Guide from their previous destination to this new folder.

3. The Net Price Calculator should now be accessible on your institution's website! You can verify this by entering the URL into your web browser as follows:

http://[Homepage URL]/[Folder Name]/[File Name]

For example, in the case illustrated above, the URL would look something like this:

http://inovas.net/NetPrice/npcalc

Tip: To change the URL above, you can rename the folder created within your home directory, or you can rename the HTML file within that folder. Just be sure to preserve the structure of the directory when making these changes.

Disclaimer: *If you choose to modify the files provided in any way, please be aware that we will no longer be able to guarantee assistance with any questions or issues regarding system usage.*

Glossary of Terms

Academic year	The period of time generally extending from September to June; usually equated to two semesters or trimesters, three quarters, or the period covered by a 4-1-4 calendar system.
Board charges	Charges assessed students for an academic year for meals.
Books and supplies	The average cost of books and supplies for a typical student for an entire academic year (or program). Does not include unusual costs for special groups of students (e.g. engineering or art majors), unless they constitute the majority of students at an institution.
Calendar system	The method by which an institution structures most of its courses for the academic year.
College work-study program (CWS)	(Higher Education Act of 1965, as amended, Title IV, Part C; Public Laws 89-329, 92-318, 94-482, et al; 42 USC 2751-2756b.) CWS provides part-time employment to eligible postsecondary students to help meet educational expenses. The program provides grants to institutions for partial reimbursement of wages paid to students.
Continuous basis (calendar system)	A calendar system classification that is used by institutions that allow students to enroll/start classes at any time during the year. For example, a cosmetology school or word processing school might allow students to enroll and begin studies at various times, with no requirement that classes begin on a certain date.
Degree/certificate seeking students	Students enrolled in courses for credit and recognized by the institution as seeking a degree, certificate, or other formal award. High school students also enrolled in postsecondary courses for credit are not considered degree/certificate seeking.
Differs by program (calendar system)	A calendar system classification that is used by institutions that have occupational/vocational programs of varying lengths. These schools may enroll students at specific times depending on the program desired. For example, a school might offer a 2-month program in January, March, May, September, and November; and a 3-month program in January, April, and October.

Expected Family Contribution (EFC)

The Expected Family Contribution (EFC) is the amount a family can be expected to contribute toward a student's college costs. Financial aid administrators determine an applicant's need for federal student aid from the U.S. Department of Education and other sources of assistance by subtracting the EFC from the student's cost of attendance (COA).

Federal grants

Grants provided by federal agencies such as the U.S. Department of Education, including Title IV Pell Grants and Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grants (SEOG). Also includes need-based and merit-based educational assistance funds and training vouchers provided from other federal agencies and/or federally sponsored educational benefits programs, including the Veteran's Administration, Department of Labor, and other federal agencies.

Financial aid

Grants, loans, assistantships, scholarships, fellowships, tuition waivers, tuition discounts, veteran's benefits, employer aid (tuition reimbursement), and other monies (other than from relatives/friends) provided to students to meet expenses. This includes Title IV subsidized and unsubsidized loans made directly to students.

First-time student (Undergraduate)

A student who has no prior postsecondary experience (except as noted below) attending any institution for the first time at the undergraduate level. This includes students enrolled in academic or occupational programs. It also includes students enrolled in the fall term who attended college for the first time in the prior summer term, and students who entered with advanced standing (college credits earned before graduation from high school). Institutions that do not have a standard fall term should consider all students entering the institution between August 1 and October 31 as first time students, provided they have no previous postsecondary experience.

Full-time student (Undergraduate)

A student enrolled for 12 or more semester credits, 12 or more quarter credits, or 24 or more contact hours per week each term.

In-district student

A student who is a legal resident of the locality in which he/she attends school and thus is entitled to reduced tuition charges if offered by the institution.

In-district tuition

The tuition charged by the institution to those students residing in the locality in which they attend school. This may be a lower rate than in-state tuition if offered by the institution.

In-state student	A student who is a legal resident of the state in which he/she attends school and thus is entitled to reduced tuition charges if offered by the institution.
In-state tuition	The tuition charged by institutions to those students who meet the state's or institution's residency requirements.
Institutional grants	Scholarships and fellowships granted and funded by the institution and/or individual departments within the institution (i.e. instruction, research, public service) that may contribute indirectly to the enhancement of these programs. Includes scholarships targeted to certain individuals (e.g., based on state of residence, major field of study, athletic team participation) for which the institution designates the recipient.
Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS)	The Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS), conducted by the NCES, began in 1986 and involves annual institution-level data collections. All postsecondary institutions that have a Program Participating Agreement with the Office of Postsecondary Education (OPE), U.S. Department of Education (throughout IPEDS referred to as "Title IV") are required to report data using a web-based data collection system. IPEDS currently consists of the following components: Institutional Characteristics (IC); 12-month Enrollment (E12); Completions (C); Human Resources (HR); Fall Enrollment (EF); Graduation Rates (GRS); Finance (F); and Student Financial Aid (SFA).
Loans to students	Any monies that must be repaid to the lending institution for which the student is the designated borrower. Includes all Title IV subsidized and unsubsidized loans and all institutionally- and privately-sponsored loans. Does not include PLUS and other loans made directly to parents.
Off-campus housing	Any housing facility that is occupied by students but is not owned or controlled by the educational institution.
On-campus housing	Any residence halls owned or controlled by an institution within the same reasonably contiguous geographic area and used by the institution in direct support of, or in a manner related to, the institution's educational purposes.
Other academic calendar	Category used to describe non-traditional calendar systems at 4-year and 2-year degree-granting institutions. These can include schools that offer primarily on-line courses or "one course at a time."

Other expenses	The amount of money (estimated by the financial aid office) needed by a student to cover expenses such as laundry, transportation, and entertainment. For the purposes of providing pricing data, room and board and tuition and fees should not be included here.
Out-of-state student	A student who is not a legal resident of the state in which he/she attends school.
Out-of-state tuition	The tuition charged by institutions to those students who do not meet the institution's or state's residency requirements.
Quarter (calendar system)	A calendar system in which the academic year consists of three sessions called quarters of about 12 weeks each. The range may be from 10 to 15 weeks as defined by the institution. There may be an additional quarter in the summer.
Required fees	A fixed sum charged to students for items not covered by tuition and required of such a large proportion of all students that the student who does not pay the charge is an exception.
Room charges	The charges for an academic year for rooming accommodations for a typical student sharing a room with one other student.
Scholarships	Grants-in-aid, trainee stipends, tuition and fee waivers, prizes, or other monetary awards given to undergraduate students.
Semester (calendar system)	A calendar system that consists of two sessions called semesters during the academic year with about 15 weeks for each semester of instruction. There may be an additional summer session.
State/Local Government Grants	Grant monies provided by the state such as Leveraging Educational Assistance Partnerships (LEAP) (formerly SSIG's); merit scholarships provided by the state; and tuition and fee waivers for which the institution was reimbursed by a state agency. Local government grants include scholarships or gift-aid awarded directly to the student.
Trimester (calendar system)	An academic year consisting of three terms of approximately 15 weeks each.

Tuition

The amount of money charged to students for instructional services. Tuition may be charged per term, per course, or per credit.

4-1-4 (calendar system)

The 4-1-4 calendar usually consists of four courses taken for four months, one course taken for one month, and four courses taken for four months. There may be an additional summer session.