

FAQs in Minority Serving Institution (MSI) status at UNCG

What is MSI status?

MSI is a descriptive term that allows universities to concisely indicate that they enroll at least 25% of a specific minority group. The 25% threshold is consistent with the definition used in a report on MSIs that was issued by the Institute of Education Sciences (IES) at the U.S. Department of Education (DOED) (<http://nces.ed.gov/pubs2008/2008156.pdf>).

Does UNCG have MSI status?

UNCG is a Minority Serving Institution for African-American Students.

This designation is based on the definition provided by the DOED IES, in the following,

“Black-serving non-HBCUs: institutions that are not HBCUs/TCUs but in which Black students constitute at least 25 percent of the total undergraduate enrollment, while students of all other individual minority groups each constitute less than 25 percent of the total undergraduate enrollment” (<http://nces.ed.gov/pubs2008/2008156.pdf>)

Will UNCG continue to maintain MSI status?

As of Fall 2015, 27% of all enrolled undergraduate students at UNCG self-report as African-American. Because this percentage is gradually increasing, it is expected that UNCG will continue to maintain MSI status.

Does a federal agency provide a list of MSIs?

There is no federal agency that provides a list of MSIs. This is because the term MSI is not defined by legal statute. Although the term MSI is used in reports issued by the DOED (e.g. <http://nces.ed.gov/pubs2008/2008156.pdf>), they do not officially designate any institutions of higher education as MSI.

If MSI is not an official designation, then should we use this term?

Similar to many other universities that use this term, the term MSI simply indicates that UNCG meets the commonly accepted convention of 25% enrollment for a specific group of students. The use of MSI status in your scholarly work or grant applications is a matter of personal choice.

What is the best way to describe MSI status in publications, grants, and the media?

The use of MSI will depend on the context, and is up to the individual. In general, you may wish to describe MSI status based on the following example,

“UNCG is a Minority Serving Institution, with an undergraduate student body in 2015 consisting of approximately 27% African Americans and 7% Hispanic or Latino Americans.”

In addition, you may also wish to distinguish UNCG’s designation as a Title III Part A institution, per the following example,

“UNCG serves a significant proportion of students with financial need, with approximately 45% of UNCG students eligible for need-based Pell Grants, leading the U.S. Department of Education to officially recognize us as a Title III Part A institution.”

How does MSI status compare with other official and unofficial designations?

MSI is sometimes confused with terms such as Minority Institution (MI), Historically Black College or University (HBCU), or Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI), all which are defined by legal statute, and therefore may be officially listed by the DOED (<https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/edlite-minorityinst.html>).

At UNCG, MSI may also be confused with UNCG’s official status as an eligible institution under Title III Part A of the Higher Education Act of 1965. This Title III Part A status is officially recognized by the DOED, and is based on the significant enrollment of students that are eligible for need-based Pell Grants (45% as of Fall 2015). The confusion may stem from the fact that Title III of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (and as subsequently amended) provides definitions for a variety of institutions (e.g. HBCU, HSI, and several others) that may qualify for specific federal programs, and also includes Part A that UNCG qualifies under. Here is a link to the DOED list of universities that have Title III/V status:

<http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ope/idades/eligibility.html#el-inst>

Does MSI status and Title III Part A designation allow UNCG faculty to apply for additional grant funding opportunities?

Yes, MSI status will open up additional avenues to fund academic programs, research and scholarly activities; however, read the guidelines of the funding agency and the specific funding opportunity very carefully.

For example, some funding mechanisms from the DOED allow all Title III eligible institutions to apply, while other mechanisms from DOED might exclude institutions with Part A of Title III from eligibility. As with DOED, NIH criteria varies from one funding mechanism to another. In general, most “Minority Institution” funding from NASA and NSF will exclude UNCG’s MSI status, instead using a very specific definition (<http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/edlite-minorityinst-list.html>). In some examples, funding announcements were not very clear, and we have written to the program officer (typically a couple of months in advance of the application deadline), to confirm eligibility. The Office of Sponsored Programs continues to make a concerted effort to identify appropriate funding opportunities, and is available to help evaluate eligibility for any specific funding announcements that you find.

What are some specific examples of funding opportunities that UNCG has been or will likely be eligible for based on MSI and/or Title III Part A status?

1. Dept of Education: Title III part A, “Strengthening Institutions Program (SIP)”
 - a. The program helps eligible IHEs to become self-sufficient and expand their capacity to serve low-income students.
 - b. <http://www2.ed.gov/programs/iduestitle3a/index.html>
 - c. NOTE: We have a current SIP grant at UNCG.
2. Dept of Education: Curriculum Development Stipends

- a. Through funding from the U.S. Dept. of Ed., six Title VI National Resource Centers award stipends to faculty at community colleges and minority-serving institutions to develop and incorporate greater content about Russia, Eastern Europe, and Eurasia into the curricula of the institutions at which they teach.
 - b. <https://slaviccenter.osu.edu/curriculum-development-stipends>
3. Dept of Education: National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research (NIDRR) FIELD-INITIATED PROJECTS
 - a. Topics include employment, independent living, medical rehabilitation and development of new technologies, and address all disability populations.
 - b. <http://www2.ed.gov/programs/fip/applicant.html>
4. Dept of Defense: Research and Education Program for Historically Black Colleges and Universities and Minority-Serving Institutions (HBCU/MI)
 - a. Basic research proposals are requested in areas of scientific interest to the Agencies. Information about these areas is available in the funding announcement above.
 - b. http://www.arl.army.mil/www/pages/8/FY2015_DoD_HBCUMI_BAA_Research_Education_Nov2015.pdf
5. Dept of Defense: DEFENSE UNIVERSITY RESEARCH INSTRUMENTATION PROGRAM (DURIP)
 - a. The DURIP program is for the acquisition of major equipment by U.S institutions of higher education to augment current or develop new research capabilities to support research in technical areas of interest to the DoD.
 - b. <http://www.wpafb.af.mil/library/factsheets/factsheet.asp?id=9301>
 - c. <http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/view-opportunity.html?oppld=182573>
6. National Institutes of Health: Support of Competitive Research (SCORE) Research Advancement Award (SC1)
 - a. The SCORE Program is a developmental program designed to increase the research competitiveness of faculty and research base of institutions with a historical mission or demonstrated commitment to training students from backgrounds underrepresented in biomedical research.
 - b. <http://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/pa-files/PAR-14-019.html>

Who may I contact with additional questions?

For questions about grant applications in which you wish to mention MSI status, or if you want to discuss grant eligibility, please contact Aubrey Turner (336-334-4920 or aubrey.turner@uncg.edu). For general questions about MSI status, please contact Rod Wyatt at (336) 334-3241 or jrwyatt@uncg.edu