An entity category describes a set of characteristics or capability of interest to the federation community. We express an entity’s (an identity provider or a service provider) qualification, adherence, or support for a category by tagging it with a digital "badge", or entity attribute in the entity’s federation registered metadata.

Research & Education identity federations around the world tag metadata with these entity attributes to convey to participants what to expect from each registered entity.

Depending on the entity category’s nature, an entity attribute may be formally assigned by the federation. Where no external vetting is required, an entity’s operator may self-assert support or qualification for a category.

To see the entity category assignment in the InCommon Federation, see:

- InCommon entity categories registry
- Identity Providers certified under the InCommon Assurance Program

### Entity Categories in the InCommon Federation

The following entity categories are available in InCommon:

#### REFEDS Research & Scholarship

The REFEDS Research & Scholarship (R&S) entity category aims to streamline researchers’ access to on-demand collaboration and other federated services by certifying those services as meeting specific criteria for purpose, security, and operational maturity.

Learn more about Research and Scholarship category

#### REFEDS Security Incident Response Trust Framework for Federated Identity (Sirtfi)

The REFEDS Security Incident Response Trust Framework for Federated Identity (Sirtfi) category indicates entity’s compliance with REFEDS’s framework for security incident response.

Learn more about Sirtfi category

#### Registered by InCommon

The Registered By InCommon Category indicates that the entity metadata is registered by the InCommon Federation. It also expresses that the registered entity meets the terms of the InCommon Participant Agreement.

#### REFEDS Hide from Discovery

The REFEDS Hide From Discovery category tags identity providers that wish to be excluded from general-purpose discovery service. An example use is that an IdP registering in federation metadata is not ready for live production use; a user should not be able to choose it when looking for his/her home organization’s IdP in a discovery service.

Learn more Hide from Discovery category

### Deprecated Entity Categories

(deprecated) InCommon-only Research & Scholarship

This is a deprecated entity category. It has been replaced by the REFEDS Research and Scholarship entity category. See Research and Scholarship Category for more information.

(deprecated) InCommon Bronze and Silver
InCommon Bronze and Silver are entity categories defined under the InCommon Assurance Program. They indicate compliance with NIST Assurance Levels 1 and 2, respectively. The InCommon Assurance Program is closing, so these categories have been deprecated.

Learn more about Registered by InCommon category

Other Entity Categories

To learn more about other Entity Categories in use or being planned, see REFEDS Entity Categories page.

Additional Information

The SAML V2.0 Metadata Extension for Entity Attributes is a standards-based Entity Attribute Profile of SAML Metadata.

Also see The Entity Category SAML Entity Metadata Attribute Type (draft-macedir-entity-attribute-00.xml)

An entity attribute is a SAML Attribute in a container of type mdattr:EntityAttributeType defined by the SAML V2.0 Metadata Extension for Entity Attributes, an entity attribute profile of SAML metadata.

An entity attribute profile of SAML metadata describes how SAML Attributes and Assertions may be added to SAML metadata extensions.

An entity category profile of SAML entity attributes describes a specific entity attribute for categorizing entities according to some Entity Attribute Profile of SAML Metadata.

A service category is a group of service providers with a common purpose. For example, the Research & Scholarship category is a service category whose goal is to make attribute release more scalable.

A support category is a group of entities that support a particular entity category in some fashion. If that entity category is itself a service category, the corresponding support category is a group of IdPs that support the service category in some manner. A given entity category may have multiple support categories. For example, there are two Research & Scholarship Support Categories used in the InCommon Federation.

Additional entity categories are under development at REFEDS. See the REFEDS wiki for more information.