Research and Scholarship Category

InCommon has partnered with its peer R&E federations worldwide to create the Research and Scholarship Entity Category (R&S), a simple and scalable way for Identity Providers to release minimal amounts of required personal data to Service Providers serving the Research and Scholarship Community. Institutions that certify their IdP for R&S realize the following:

- Convenience for faculty and researchers: they instantly access participating services using campus credentials without administrator involvement
- Enable collaboration: When a research project adds a service to the category, collaboration across participating campuses is immediate
- Vetted services: InCommon reviews each service application for adherence to the category definition and requirements
- Save time and resources: once enabled, there is no additional involvement of IT staff to provision new R&S services

A list of all current R&S IdPs and SPs is available for your perusal.

How It Works

The Research & Scholarship (R&S) Category defines specific criteria for SPs that are designed to facilitate IdP policy decisions to release a controlled set of low-risk attributes to them without local review for each SP. InCommon also provides metadata and technology tools to further facilitate automatic, but controlled, release of attributes to the R&S SPs, as well as aiding user support.

IdPs leverage this to simplify the management of their Attribute Release Policies by taking advantage of the R&S Category. With a one-time addition to their default release policies they can specify a set of attributes to release to all SPs that are in the R&S Category. This addition then applies to SPs that are added to the category in the future, without the IDP administrator having to make any changes. IdPs also assert their support for R&S in federation metadata, allowing R&S-certified SPs to enhance the user experience of those IdPs' researchers.

R&S Application Process

Certifying your IdP or SP for R&S is easy, although SPs do require a review period to verify compliance with the requirements. See How to Apply for the Research and Scholarship (R&S) Entity Category for details. For more information specific to IdPs and SPs, see:

- Research and Scholarship for IdPs
- Research and Scholarship for SPs

Historical Legacy: InCommon-Only R&S

When the R&S Category was first introduced for InCommon, it was available only to InCommon Participants. When REFEDS created the global Research and Scholarship Entity Category described in this document, therefore, InCommon-only R&S lost most of its relevance. All InCommon-only R&S SPs were converted to global R&S automatically, but due to changes to the requirements, that could not be done for IdPs. (See Migrating an IdP to Global Research and Scholarship for additional historical context.) InCommon-only R&S has been deprecated and is no longer issued to IdPs or SPs, but a number of IdPs still retain their InCommon-only status.

It is highly recommended that InCommon-only IdPs add support for R&S SPs internationally; see How to Apply for the Research and Scholarship (R&S) Entity Category for more information.