

National Center for Education Statistics (NCES)

Organization within the U.S. Department of Education that is focused on collecting and analyzing education data

www.nces.ed.gov

Fast Facts

Compilation of statistical answers to education FAQs

nces.ed.gov/fastfacts

Digest of Education Statistics

Annual compilation of national education statistics covering prekindergarten to graduate school

nces.ed.gov/programs/digest

Condition of Education

Integrated collection of indicators about trends in enrollment, student progress, student achievement and other outcomes, and student and institution characteristics

nces.ed.gov/programs/coe

Surveys and Studies

Baccalaureate and Beyond (B&B)

Longitudinal tracking of college seniors

nces.ed.gov/surveys/b&b

Beginning Postsecondary Students Longitudinal Study (BPS)

Longitudinal tracking of college freshmen

nces.ed.gov/surveys/bps

Career/Technical Education Statistics (CTES)

Collection of statistics relating to career and technical education

nces.ed.gov/surveys/ctes

High School and Beyond (HS&B)

Longitudinal tracking of high school seniors and sophomores

nces.ed.gov/surveys/hsb

Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS)

Annual data collection from postsecondary institutions

nces.ed.gov/ipeds and nces.ed.gov/ipeds/datacenter

National Postsecondary Student Aid Study (NPSAS)

Quadrennial study of how undergraduate, graduate and professional students paid for postsecondary education

nces.ed.gov/surveys/npsas

Projections of Education Statistics

nces.ed.gov/programs/projections

State Education Data Profiles

nces.ed.gov/programs/stateprofiles

NCES Data Tools

Data Analysis System (DAS)

Tool for generating custom analyses of education statistics

nces.ed.gov/das

PowerStats and QuickStats

Simplified visual interfaces for analyzing education statistics

nces.ed.gov/datalab

Quick Tables & Figures

Tool for finding NCES tables, figures and charts

nces.ed.gov/quicktables

College Navigator

College search tool based on IPEDS data

nces.ed.gov/collegenavigator

Tips on Using the NCES Data Analysis System

Advice on avoiding common problems in crafting the right data queries and correctly interpreting the results

www.finaid.org/educators/ncesdastips.phtml

FinAid.org

Student Financial Aid Policy Analysis

Compilation of student aid policy papers by Mark Kantrowitz

www.finaid.org/studentaidpolicy

Cohort Default Rates (CDR)

Compilation of resources about student loan default rates

www.finaid.org/cdr

FAFSA Application Statistics

Analysis of U.S. Department of Education statistics about the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA)

www.finaid.org/fafsastats

GAO Student Aid Policy Papers

U.S. Government Accountability Office student aid analysis

www.finaid.org/gao

Student Financial Aid Calculators

www.finaid.org/calculators

Student Loan Debt Clock

www.finaid.org/studentdebtclock

U.S. Department of Education

Federal Student Aid Data Center (FSA Data Center)

Links to federal student aid statistics, including FAFSA application statistics, cohort default rates, loan volume
www.fsadatacenter.ed.gov

Annual Plans and Reports

www2.ed.gov/about/reports/annual/index.html

Office of Postsecondary Education (OPE)

www2.ed.gov/finaid/prof/resources/data/ope.html

U.S. Census Bureau

Educational Attainment

www.census.gov/hhes/socdemo/education

Enrollment

www.census.gov/population/www/socdemo/school.html

Postsecondary Students, Costs and Financial Aid

www.census.gov/population/www/socdemo/sch_cost.html

Statistical Abstract of the United States

www.census.gov/compendia/statab

Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS)

Earnings by Education

www.bls.gov/cps/earnings.htm#education

Employment and Unemployment by Educational Attainment

www.bls.gov/cps/demographics.htm#education

School Enrollment

www.bls.gov/cps/demographics.htm#enroll

Office of Management and Budget (OMB)

President's Budget

Key data in education appendix and supplemental materials
www.whitehouse.gov/omb/budget
www2.ed.gov/about/overview/budget/index.html

U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC)

Electronic Data-Gathering, Analysis and Retrieval (EDGAR)

Securitization prospectuses and quarterly/annual reports for student loans and education lenders
www.sec.gov/edgar.shtml

Internal Revenue Service (IRS)

IRS Tax Statistics

www.irs.gov/taxstats/index.html

Advisory Committee on Student Financial Assistance

ACSFA was established by Congress to advise it on student aid policy. Periodically publishes statistical and policy analyses.
www.ed.gov/about/bdscomm/list/acsfa/edlite-index.html

American Council on Education (ACE)

The American Council on Education (ACE) represents the chief executives of all U.S. accredited, degree-granting institutions

Center for Policy Analysis

www.acenet.edu/AM/Template.cfm?Section=CPA

Online Information Center

www.acenet.edu/Content/NavigationMenu/OnlineResources/InfoCenter

American Institutes for Research (AIR)

www.air.org/focus-area/education

Association for the Study of Higher Education (ASHE)

www.ashe.ws

Business-Higher Education Forum (BHEF)

Coalition of business, higher education and foundation leaders that proposes solutions to the nation's education challenges
www.bhef.com and www.StrategicEdSolutions.org

Center for Higher Education Policy Analysis (CHEPA)

Goals focused on improving postsecondary education (including outreach, access, retention and student aid)
www.usc.edu/dept/chepa

Center for the Study of Higher Education (CSHE)

Postsecondary education policy research center at Pennsylvania State University
www.ed.psu.edu/educ/cshe

Chronicle of Higher Education

Almanac Issue (Published Last Friday in August)

Annual compilation of education statistics
www.chronicle.com – Click on “Facts & Figures”

College Board

Trends in Student Aid

trends.collegeboard.org/student_aid

Trends in College Pricing

trends.collegeboard.org/college_pricing

Education Pays

trends.collegeboard.org/education_pays

Advocacy & Policy Center

advocacy.collegeboard.org

College Savings Plan Network (CSPN)

529 Plan Data

www.collegesavings.org/529PlanData.aspx

Committee for Education Funding

www.cef.org

Education Policy Institute (EPI)

Independent research and public policy organization with a special emphasis on student access and persistence
www.educationalpolicy.org
www.studentretention.org (Student Retention Microsite)
www.educationalpolicy.org/epss (Student Success Microsite)

Education Sector

Independent think tank focused on education policy, using data and analysis to improve student opportunities and outcomes
www.educationsector.org/issues/higher-education

Education Trust

Organization focused on improving education access, achievement and attainment and on closing gaps for low-income and minority students
www.edtrust.org
www.collegeresults.org (College graduation rates)

Grapevine

Compilation of data about state support of higher education
www.grapevine.ilstu.edu

Institute for Higher Education Policy (IHEP)

Non-profit public policy and research institute focused on access and success in postsecondary education
www.ihep.org

Lumina Foundation for Education

Independent foundation focused on expanding access and success in postsecondary education
www.luminafoundation.org

National Association of State Student Grant and Aid Programs (NASSGAP)

Annual Survey Reports
Annual surveys of state grant and scholarship programs from 1969-70 to the present
www.nassgap.org/viewrepository.aspx?categoryID=3

National Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators (NASFAA)

National professional membership organization for college student financial aid personnel

Journal of Student Financial Aid

Peer-reviewed publication of original research and policy analysis concerning postsecondary student financial aid
www.nasfaa.org Special Init → Journal of Student Financial Aid

Research Projects and Quick Scan Surveys

www.nasfaa.org/Advocacy/Research/Reports/Research.aspx

National Center for Higher Education Management Systems (NCHEMS)

Info. Center for State Higher Ed. Policymaking and Analysis
Collection of state-level higher education data and information, with an emphasis on higher education policy analysis
www.higheredinfo.org

National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education

Independent policy-research institute regarding opportunity, affordability and achievement in higher education
www.highereducation.org

Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD)

Comparisons of international education statistics
www.oecd.org and stats.oecd.org

Pathways to College Network

Alliance of organizations working on improving college access and success for underserved students
www.pathwaystocollege.net

Postsecondary Connection

State data linking high school preparation with college success
www.postseconnect.org (from achieve.org)

Postsecondary Education OPPORTUNITY

Newsletter and web site containing public policy data and analysis concerning educational opportunity in higher education
www.postsecondary.org (subscription required)

Public Agenda

Their Whole Lives Ahead of Them

Some of the reasons why students drop out of college
www.publicagenda.org/theirwholivesaheadofthem

Education Category

www.publicagenda.org/category/tags/-education

Sallie Mae (SLM)

How America Pays for College

www.salliemae.com/howamericapays

How America Saves for College

www.salliemae.com/howamericasaves

Nellie Mae Credit Card Studies

www.nelliemae.com/library/research.html

State Higher Education Executive Officers (SHEEO)

State Quick Facts

www.sheeo.org/sqf/sqf.htm

State Higher Education Finance (SHEF) – Annual Report

www.sheeo.org/finance/shef-home.htm

State Postsecondary Data Systems

www.sheeo.org/sspds/default.htm

SOAR: SHEEO Online Access to Resources

www.sheeo.org/SOAR2/soar.asp

Survey of State Tuition, Fees and Financial Assistance Policies for Public Colleges and Universities

www.sheeo.org/finance/tuitsurv-home.htm

Student Lending Analytics

Independent research and advisory firm focused on education lending with frequent blog posts about education loans

www.studentlendinganalytics.com/index.html

www.studentlendinganalytics.typepad.com (blog)

The Institute for College Access and Success (TICAS)

Project on Student Debt

State and campus-level student debt data

www.projectonstudentdebt.org

College InSight (formerly EconomicDiversity.org)

Data about affordability, diversity and student success

www.college-insight.org

UCLA Higher Education Research Institute (HERI)

Your First College Year Survey

www.heri.ucla.edu/yfcyoverview.php

CIRP Freshman Survey

www.heri.ucla.edu/cirpoverview.php

College Senior Survey

www.heri.ucla.edu/cssoverview.php

USA Funds

Research and White Papers

www.usafunds.org/community/Pages/Resources.aspx

Washington Higher Education Board

Annual survey of tuition rates for public institutions by state

www.hecb.wa.gov/research/issues/tuition.asp

Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education

State Policy Inventory Database Online (SPIDO)

www.wiche.edu/node/8690

WICHE Policy and Data Resources

www.wiche.edu/resources/policy/297

Tips for Using the NCES Data Analysis System

The data analysis system (DAS) is an easy-to-use web-based tool for writing and executing data queries. The trick is in crafting the right query and in correctly interpreting the results.

Be careful about hidden assumptions in the variables:

- Some variables restrict the data set to just dependent students. For example, the DEPINC variable measures the income of parents of dependent students, excluding independent students, while CINCOME is a continuous variable that measures both.
- Other variables restrict the data set to just Bachelor's degree students. For example, the COLLGRAD variable measures whether a student was a graduating senior. It assumes that the degree program (UGDEG) is a Bachelor's degree and that the student completed the degree program (PROGSTAT). Using the COLLGRAD variable will omit Associate's degree and Certificate recipients.
- The NPSAS includes two data sets, one for undergraduate students (UG) and one for graduate and professional students (G1P). Often researchers use just the undergraduate data set and are mystified as to why their data does not match national data for all colleges.
- Both the CENTILE and CENTILE>0 directives generate percentile distributions for a variable, but the latter omits zeros from the distribution.
- Institution level (2-year, 4-year) is not the same as degree program (Associate's degree, Bachelor's degree).
- Some data sources, such as the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS), are limited to first-time first-year undergraduate students and exclude transfers.

Read the variable descriptions carefully, especially if they reference another variable for further information. For example, the net cost, effort and need variables in the NPSAS exclude negative values and round up small values to \$10. This prevents calculations of student aid in excess of financial need.

Long-time users of the DAS add or subtract half a point (0.5) to numeric thresholds to test for equality (e.g., "< 1000.5" is the equivalent of "≤ 1000"). The modern DAS includes an "=" checkbox that should have the same effect, but there have occasionally been errors in its implementation.

The weighted sample sizes presented in the DAS reports can themselves be treated as data for analysis, not just the estimates in the report. For example, one can use them to calculate the distribution of recipients as opposed to dollars.

Become a power user of the DAS to save copies of your table parameter files (TPF), making it easier to reproduce results.