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.shtml

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

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

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

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.postseconncet.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/theirwholelivesaheadofthem

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.nelliemaes.com/library/research.html
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.