



IPEDS Data Tools Overview 2018-19 Data Collection Cycle



Welcome to this tutorial on online data analysis tools for the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System, also known as IPEDS. IPEDS is administered by the National Center for Education Statistics, or NCES, and is an annual institution level data collection system. Once data have been cleaned and processed, they are available to researchers, policy analysts, institutional administrators, and the general public.

NCES has developed a number of useful tools for analyzing and viewing IPEDS data. These include College Navigator, The Trend Generator, the College & Career Tables Library, and the Use the Data Portal. This tutorial will provide a general overview of each tool. Additional tutorials are available for each tool, should you want to learn more details about the specifics of each tool.

For the general public, and people interested in quick information, College Navigator is the easiest resource for accessing college and university data. In fact, College Navigator was designed for prospective college students, parents, guidance counselors, and other individuals conducting college searches. The online tool has an easy to follow interface and allows visitors to search for specific institutions or narrow a search by using a variety of variables, including state, institution type, test scores, and athletic teams.

After selecting an institution, a profile appears with the school's location and basic information, including website, awards offered, and student population. Additional data are available by expanding the headers.

For example, by selecting Tuition, Fees, and Estimated Student Expenses, we see a breakdown of finances by year.

We can also add institutions to a list of favorites and compare up to 4 institutions at once. From there, the comparison can be printed or downloaded to Excel for further analysis.

The Trend Generator is designed to provide users with a quick and easy means of viewing frequently accessed IPEDS data over time. Data are organized into subject areas, which are expandable on the homepage. Clicking on the major categories will drop down specific questions.

After selecting a question, you will see the answer. The page shows you the trend over time, but you can also choose to view the data as a bar chart or as a table. You may limit the results by variables to only include data from a specific subset of institutions or build a new table to further analyze the data.

After selecting the rows and columns, we can now see trend data for each by clicking on the variable you'd like to see.

The College & Career Tables Library includes a database of over 5,000 tables from NCES' postsecondary publications. Organized into 12 categories, we can search for tables by keyword, publication title or ID, or perform an advanced search by data source, year, and table release date.

Explore by Topic is a quick way to drill-down to a specific set of data. Many of the 12 categories have subcategories, providing us with more detailed information.

A simple search is good enough for us right now. After entering a keyword, the tables matching the search appear. Here, we see that 193 tables match the keywords Graduation Rates. The number of tables within each of the 12 main categories are displayed in the 'Explore by Topic' area.

Now, we see an actual table for Graduation Rate data. Any notes will be included at the bottom of the table. From here, we can view a printer-friendly version of the table, download it into excel for further analysis, view related tables, or go to the study's website.

The Use the Data Portal tool is the most complicated of the tools, but also offers the most options for analyzing data. Similar to the other tools, we can look up data on a single institution or multiple institutions. Data can also be trended for a single variable and group statistics can be calculated for a user-defined group of institutions. For example, the average enrollment of first-time, full-time students at public institutions in Pennsylvania with an enrollment over 5,000 students. For now, let's look at three of the Use the Data Portal options.

First, the Summary Tables option allows us to generate a wide-range of pre-formatted reports related to a variety of commonly referenced IPEDS data such as directory information, price and admissions trends, student enrollments and demographics, and completion and graduation rates, for one or more institutions in the IPEDS universe.

A second option is the ability to download complete or custom survey data files. Once downloaded, the files can be imported into a variety of statistical software packages, including SAS [said "sass"], SPSS, and STATA [said "state-uh"].

Finally, the IPEDS Data Feedback Report, or DFR, is an important report provided to all colleges on an annual basis. It is a publicly available document and each president receives a copy of their institution's report. Several years' worth of reports are available in the Use the Data and you can also create your own custom Data Feedback Report with variables not included in the standard DFR.

For more information, view AIR's online tutorials for each specific IPEDS data tool. You may also want to view the Help Guide for each tool, which is available for PDF download on this page. Finally, you can contact the IPEDS Data Tools Help Desk with specific questions.

