

# DataLab Tables Library

## Tutorial Script

### 2020-21 Data Collection Cycle

The National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) conducts several longitudinal studies for pre-K, secondary and post-secondary education. Numerous summary tables are generated every year in multiple subject areas, using multiple data resources. These tables are accessible through the DataLab Tables Library; formerly known as the College and Career Tables Library. This is a portal provided by NCES to index, search and retrieve official statistical tables.

To access the DataLab Tables Library, type “college and career” or “DataLab Tables Library” into the search bar in the right-hand corner of the NCES or IPEDS website. Now, select the first option, DataLab Tables library.

The main page of DataLab Tables Library is divided into five designated areas.

First, the SEARCH TABLES view allows you to search for tables using either a keyword, a publication title, or a table ID. You may narrow your search for a specific data source. NCES provides six designated data sources for the search, including IPEDS - the integrated postsecondary education data system. You may also narrow your search using a designated time frame. Pre-set time frames are provided by the search engine.

Second, "EXPLORE BY TOPIC" view allows you to search for tables using 12 designated categories. Each of the categories will have additional sub-categories. For example, the "Cost of Attendance" is divided into five categories, of which one is divided into two additional sub-categories.

Third, a link to the “ABOUT THE TABLES LIBRARY” in the middle of the page provides users with the option to download the Tables Library Overview. Under this is a link to NCES USER REQUESTED TABLES.

Fourth, the section "What's New" will periodically present recent updates, publications and relevant changes to the DataLab Tables Library.

And last, the field "In the Spotlight" will present tables that are of high interest. Mostly, it will highlight tables from recent NCES publications. Users can click on “View table” to see the related table and data. Both "What's New" and "In the Spotlight" are rotating fields which are updated periodically. We will revisit this area shortly.

We will now conduct a search for key tables using some of the key functions available. Under the section "IN THE SPOTLIGHT" we noticed a key topic area covered "How much are students borrowing for each credit that they earn?" Let's click on "view table" under the spotlighted topic to examine a relevant table:

In this case, we can immediately link to recently published tables associated with the topic. We see a relevant table to the subject area, in this case: the average borrowing rate per credit for both college completers and non-completers. In our example, the information is broken into institutional categories and the data source is provided as a footnote.

On the left menu, we have three designated areas. "VIEW TABLE", "VIEW MORE", and "DOWNLOAD". By default, we will begin at "VIEW TABLE".

The view always begins with the table estimates. However, we can immediately switch our view to receive additional information.

For example, let's click on the "Standard errors" on the left menu. You will now see the error rates in the amount of dollars borrowed on average. The error rate is provided in the units of the measurement. In our case, it would be US dollars. You may also switch to "printer-friendly version". This option will, on most internet browsers, automatically open the print menu, so you can print a copy of the table for your records.

Now, under "View More", let's select "View Related Tables".

We will now see a list of related tables associated with our initially searched table. For each table, a table title describing its content, the data source, and the publication year are provided. In addition, on the right column you will see a direct link to the table.

We will now click on "View Related Report"

This function would direct us from the DataLab Tables Library to the NCES report in which the table was initially published. In this case "Federal Student Loan Debt Burden of Non-completers" (Published April 2013). The reference page would include a short description of the report, as well as a link to download the report. It would be useful as a direct source for relevant information on the subject area.

We will now go back to the DataLab Tables Library.

Under the "View More" section we can also go the study website to learn more. By clicking on "View Study Website" we will be able to go directly to NCES' website describing the data collection used to generate the table. In this case, BPS (Beginning Postsecondary Studies).

When we go back to the DataLab Tables Library there are three more functions available for us under the "Download" section.

Here we can download the table in Excel Format. We can choose to download the actual estimates or select the link to download the standard errors. Please note that all data sources notes are included in

the file.

The last option will allow you to download the table specification files. Those files enable a user's replication of the table using PowerStats and may allow a user to create customized adjustments of the relevant table. This function is beyond the scope of this tutorial. To learn more about PowerStats you can click on the link to the DataLab in the top right of the page.

Let's go back to the DataLab Tables Library main screen.

This time, we would like to search for tables associated with student debt. We will simply type the expression "debt" into the search field and click on the magnifier sign on the right to conduct a search.

NCES' search engine offers us more than 1500 tables that would fit the search. In addition, it offers additional keywords that may be used under "View results for similar terms". Clearly, the number of tables offered is too large. We will narrow the list using "advanced search".

We are interested in the debt or borrowing burden of recent baccalaureate degree graduates. For that reason, we will select "baccalaureate and beyond" as our data source. This is a longitudinal survey conducted by NCES of recent baccalaureate degree graduates.

We will select the most recent collection available "08/09", and for Table Release Date, we will select "2013" since this is the most recent table release date.

We will now have a subset of 34 tables out of the initial 1500. This set is much more reasonable for a search.

Let's look at the first table in the search.

The table is titled "PROPORTION WHO BORROWED: Percentage of first-time bachelor's degree recipients who borrowed for their undergraduate education by degree-granting institution type: 1992–93, 1999–2000, and 2007–08". The years selected are based on information collected by NCES.

We can see that the percent borrowing to fund their undergraduate education has increased over time. The percentage who borrowed for undergraduate education was only greater than 90 for private for-profit 4-year institutions.

Once again, using the left menu, we may print the information, download the information, or access additional sources including reports associated with the table. Those will not necessarily be the same sources we explored before using the "spotlight" function. For that reason, you may wish to explore them on your own.

Let's go back to the main screen and use the function "EXPLORE BY TOPIC"

To maintain our example, focus, we will explore the topic "Cost of Attendance and Prices Charged".

In this topic, we have sub-categories that may be selected. We will pick "average net price". In parenthesis, NCES elaborates that this topic addresses the "total cost of attendance minus all grants and

scholarships". DataLab Tables Library suggests that 57 tables may be a direct fit to our subject area.

Let's explore the first table, Dependent Undergraduate Out-of-Pocket Net Price Minus All Aid, by Institution Control and Level and Family Income, 2015-16.

This table provides an overview of the average out-of-pocket net price of college attendance by sector of institution (public, private nonprofit, and private for-profit), by level of institution (2-year vs. 4-year) and by family income quartiles. As noted on the table's title, it refers to the price of attendance minus total aid among all undergraduates.

This table can also be downloaded and further explored. It is very useful to further explore the table and its source by clicking on "View Study Website" as this table uses a third data source NPSAS, which stands for National Postsecondary Student Aid Study. This is a third data source used by NCES to explore the cost associated with students' college attendance.

At the bottom left side of the screen you'll notice a link to two additional data collections of NCES that may be relevant. Both of them would be familiar: BPS was used when we looked into the "spotlight" topic, and B&B was used when we searched for information using the keyword "debt". As a matter of fact, using the simple search functions bundled in DataLab Tables Library, we covered three of five central data sources available for use under this tool.

In this overview video, we have explored the functionality and data available in the DataLab Tables Library. The DataLab Tables Library allows users to explore a topic area using multiple sources. We identified three unique ways to explore data in the DataLab Tables Library: spotlight topic areas, keywords search and explore by topic. In addition, we saw three unique data sources for each topic: BPS-beginning postsecondary studies, focusing on students at their entrance to college; B&B-baccalaureate and beyond- focusing on students who completed their degree; and NPSAS-National Postsecondary Student Aid Study, focusing on aid recipients. These three sources together allow us to build a comprehensive view of various topics. Further, additional resources regarding the special topic area are available through direct links to relevant reports and studies.

We encourage you to choose a topic and further explore the functionality of the DataLab Tables Library.