

College Scorecard Data

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Change Log

This page includes a description and timeline for the changes that have been made to either the College Scorecard tool or to the underlying data. Check back for updates to learn more about the updates and improvements we have made.

December 2017



In December 2017, the Department updated three data elements that appear on the consumer website and/or the downloadable data files/API with more recent data values:

- Currently Operating Status Flag
- Heightened Cash Monitoring Flag
- Accrediting Agency and Code
- Title IV Approval Date

In addition, the Department added twenty-eight new data elements corresponding to information from the Outcome Measures survey component of IPEDS. These data provide additional information about completion, transfer, and continued enrollment for cohorts of students beyond (but including) the full-time first-time students captured in most other IPEDS outcomes metrics within the Scorecard data.

September 2017



Consumer Website: In September 2017, the U.S. Department of Education (the Department) updated the College Scorecard consumer website with an annual refresh that includes newer, updated data for virtually all elements. In addition, the Department made some changes to how data are presented on the consumer website. Key changes include:

- **School Comparison feature.** The consumer website has been updated with a new page for comparing user-selected schools. Users of the website can select schools by clicking on the “Add to Compare” star-icon and then visiting the new page.
- **Replaced “National Average” text with “National Median”.** The College Scorecard consumer website has been displaying the National Median values for various metrics to show how schools measure up to other schools. This “average” label, however, was misleading as it was actually the median value. The consumer website now adequately labels these values appropriately.

Downloadable Data Files and API: In addition to providing newer, updated data in the College Scorecard downloadable data files and API, the Department updated and replaced all previously published NSLDS metrics with values calculated with a newer NSLDS data extract. These metrics include repayment rates, student loan cumulative debt percentiles, and NSLDS completion rates.

In addition, the Department made minor changes in the methodology of how data values were calculated for a small subset of variables. In some cases, the Department recalculated data values and replaced previously published data values. Key changes include:

- **The method of calculating the Predominant Award and Highest Award classifications** has been changed to count institutions that award only graduate certificates as graduate institutions rather than certificate institutions. In addition, some institutions that previously did not have values of Predominant Award assigned could be classified as certificate institutions using a value of the IPEDS Institutional Category variable (not included in the Scorecard data) that was not used in prior Scorecard releases.

January 2017



In January 2017, the Department updated three data elements that appear on the consumer website and/or the downloadable data files/API with more recent data values:

- Currently Operating Status Flag
- Heightened Cash Monitoring 2 Flag
- Accrediting Agency

The Department also made corrections to three elements, improving data quality:

- The OPEID of two institutions now correctly identifies the institution as the main campus (as opposed to a branch campus)
- The flag indicating that an institution is a main campus was removed for five institutions across eight years of data, correctly identifying them as branch campuses
- Repayment rates were recalculated for all institutions across all years of data.

After identifying an error in the code that generates repayment rates, the Department fixed the error and recalculated all repayment rates and replaced the previously published repayment rate data values with revised values. The error was a technical one in the coding that caused undercounting of some borrowers who had not reduced their balances, and therefore inflated repayment rates for almost all schools. This revision includes all repayment rate data values in all of the merged data files and all versions of repayment rates including repayment rates for each repayment rate cohort, the 1-, 3-, 5-, 7-year repayment rates, and all repayment rates disaggregated by demographic category (e.g. first-generation status, gender, etc.). The relative difference—that is, whether schools fall above, about, or below average— is modest; over 90 percent of institutions on the College Scorecard tool do not change categories from the previously published to the new rates. However, in some cases, the nominal differences are significant.

The Department also updated the data dictionary to resolve an issue that prevented the repayment rate data elements and one additional data

September 2016



Consumer Website: In September 2016, the U.S. Department of Education (the Department) updated the College Scorecard consumer website with an annual refresh that includes newer, updated data for virtually all elements. Please note that the Department made a minor change to the methodology for calculating the median debt presented on the website. See the description for median loan debt below for more details. In addition, the Department made some changes to how data are presented on the consumer website. Key changes include:

- Presenting completion rates as graduating within 150% of time for all institutions regardless of institutional characteristics. In contrast, the previous consumer website version presented completion rates of either 150% or 200% depending on whether the institution was a four-year institution or a two-year institution, respectively.
- Identifying minority-serving institutions (MSIs) in the specialized mission category based on the institution's eligibility to apply for Department MSI grants. In contrast, the previous consumer website version presented only recent grant recipients as MSIs.

Downloadable Data Files and API: In addition to providing newer, updated data in the College Scorecard downloadable data files and API, the Department made minor changes in the methodology of how data values were calculated. In some cases, the Department recalculated data values and replaced previously published data values. Key changes include:

- NSLDS derived data elements:
 - To improve data quality and to better protect individual privacy, many NSLDS-derived data elements, including those describing earning cohorts, have been subject to statistical imputation and minor data improvement recalculations. Many NSLDS-generated data values previously published in the previous data files have been replaced with recalculated data values.
 - In addition, the Department recalculated and replaced earning cohort data previously calculated by the Treasury.

March 2016



In March 2016, the Department updated two data elements with more recent data values that appear on both the consumer website and downloadable data files/API:

- Currently Operating Status Flag
- Heighten Cash Monitoring Flag

February 2016



In February 2016, the Department expanded the number of institutions that are presented on the College Scorecard consumer website to include roughly 700 less-than-two-year institutions (institutions that predominately award undergraduate certificates) that offer and award Associate and/or Bachelor's degrees. The previous version of the consumer website did not include these predominantly less-than-two-year institutions.

For more information about the College Scorecard data, click here to see our [data documentation](#). You can also learn more about the data through our full [Documentation Report](#) and the [Data Dictionary](#).

For those who want to understand more about ways to use the data, the [Technical Paper](#) offers an in-depth exploration of the data and methodologies considered and used for this project.

See our work on [GitHub](#) | [v1.11.0](#)

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