National Longitudinal Surveys

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College Experience

Created Variables

CV_ASSOC_CREDITS and CV_BA_CREDITS. Calculates the fraction of credits toward an associate's or bachelor's degree that each respondent attending college has earned as of each round's interview date.

CVC_AA_DEGREE and CVC_BA_DEGREE. Provides the date that an associate's or bachelor's degree was received in a continuous month format. Additionally, all colleges are coded with an Integrated Postsecondary Education Data Systems (IPEDS) code to facilitate the extraction of additional data about the institution. These IPEDS codes are available only on the restricted-use Geocode CD.

CV_COLLEGE_TYPE. Indicates whether respondent's college or university is public, not-for-profit private, or for-profit private.

CV_ENROLLSTAT. Informs the user about whether the respondent is enrolled; whether enrolled respondents are in grades K-12 or in a 2- or 4-year college or graduate program; and what level of degree or diploma (or GED certificate) respondents have obtained.

PSTRAN. Post-secondary transcript data made available in the public dataset in 2015.

Note: For information about created variables related to highest degree received, go to Educational Status & Attainment (/content/cohorts/nisy97/topical-quide/education/educational-status-attainment).

Event History Variables

Starting in round 2, four types of monthly arrays are created. Each array captures information for each month from the respondent's interview date in round 2 to present. The Codebook Supplement Appendix 6 (/content/cohorts/nlsy97/other-documentation/codebook-supplement/appendix-6-event-history-creation-and) provides a program to help users take a deeper dive into respondents' event histories. In addition, Appendix 7 (/content/cohorts/nlsy97/other-documentation/codebook-supplement/appendix-7-continuous-month-scheme) provides a crosswalk document that provides actual dates corresponding to numbered months.

SCH_COLLEGE_STATUS. This array reports the respondent's enrollment status during each month from the round 2 interview date through the current interview date. Coding categories include unknown, not enrolled, in a two year college, in a four year college and in graduate school.

SCH_COLLEGE_TERM. These variables report the respondent's school type and grade for each month in the time period. The first two digits represent the type of school (public = 10, private = 20 and unknown = 40). The last two digits provide the respondent's term in college (1-98; 99 means no term information provided).

SCH_COLLEGE_ID. This variable permits users to link array information to the school roster in the main data file and access other information about the school. The variable uses the same ID codes as the identification variable on the school roster in the main data set (for example, NEWSCHOOL_PUBID.01).

SCH_COLLEGE_DEGREE. This variable shows what type of degree the respondent is trying to obtain. The first two digits track if the respondent is going to college full-time (code = 1), part-time (code = 2) or their status is unknown (code = 3). The last two digits provide the type of degree (1 = Associates; 3 = BA or BS; 4 = MA, MBA, MS; 5 = Ph.D.; 6 = MD, JD; 10 = Joint BA/MA; 40 = Unknown).

Important Information About Using College Experience Data

- 1. Researchers should refer to Education, Training & Achievement Scores: An Introduction ((content/cohorts/nlsy97/topical-guide/education-training-achievement-scores-introduction) for a description of the structure of the schooling section in each round of the survey
- 2. The school roster organizes information about each school in a matrix of data. The roster variables should be used rather than the raw data in analyses (question names will contain the prefix "NEWSCHOOL").

The NLSY97 contains a number of questions that gather information about the college experiences of respondents, including characteristics of enrollment, such as the degree sought, credits required, and financial aid, and characteristics of the respondent's attendance during each term, including tuition, major, and remedial classes taken.

Questions about each college

- For each college attended, the respondent reports the total number of credits he or she earned at that college, as well as the number he or she earned from sources outside that college (e.g., another college, placement test, or college course(s) taken during high school).
- 2. The respondent states the type of diploma or degree sought (e.g., associate, vocational, bachelor's) and the total number of credits the college requires to graduate with that degree.
- 3. The surveys also ask about characteristics of each school: whether each school was public or private; the term system of the school (i.e., semester, quarter, trimester, or other); and the grading scale used to figure the students' grade point average (GPA).

Questions about each term at a college

For each college, after establishing the dates of each term attended, the surveys enter a loop that asks a set of questions about each term. Respondents state (1) the number of course credits taken, (2) the number of credits earned, (3) whether they attended full- or part-time, (4) their GPA, (5) their primary and secondary majors, (6) whether any remedial English, writing, or math classes were taken during that term and (7) the total number of hours per week that these classes met.

Respondents in rounds 1-13 indicated their college majors from a pick list. Beginning in round 14, college majors were collected in a verbatim format and then coded using the CIP (Classification of Instructional Programs) 2010 codes from NCES (National Center for Education Statistics).

College costs (asked term by term)

The survey records information about college costs, although the exact questions have varied. In round 1, respondents first stated the annual tuition and fees for a full-time student. Both in-state and out-of-state rates were reported for publicly supported institutions. Within the term-specific loop, respondents who were attending part-time stated the amount of tuition and fees for that number of credits in that term, and all respondents were asked about the cost of room and board in each term. The annual tuition and fees question was dropped after round 1. Questions in the term-specific loops asked respondents to report the amount of tuition and fees for the number of credits taken by the youth. Round 2 also asked about the cost of room and board for each term.

Financial aid (asked term by term)

The respondent is questioned about source(s) of financial aid received during his or her tenure at each college. Non-institutional sources include loans from relatives or friends. Follow-up questions on these sources ask the youth to state the amount he or she was not expected to repay and the amount owed as of the interview date. After one term has been reported, the respondent is asked if the information for the next term has changed from the previous term, and if it has not, the information is not recollected. The youth is also questioned on the amount of financial assistance received from institutional sources such as grants or scholarships, loans, work-study, or employer assistance. Respondents state the amount received from these sources as well as the amount owed to the government from subsidized or other types of loans. They are also asked about other types of loans as well. Finally, each youth is asked to state the amount that he or she paid toward college expenses using earnings or savings. In Round 19, a summing-up question was added asking how much respondents had borrowed total for each college they had attended.

Other topics

The round 1 survey asked each respondent who reported college enrollment to state the total number of years he or she attended any 2-year colleges and any 4-year colleges and the total number of different colleges attended by the round 1 interview date.

In rounds 2 and up, respondents who had earned a degree by the survey date reported the type of degree (e.g., associate, bachelor's, master's) and the month and year it was received. Currently enrolled college students also answered the question series on school-towork programs; see School-Based Learning Programs (/content/cohorts/nlsy97/topical-guide/education/school-based-learning-programs) for more information.

College Choice

A college choice series was administered in rounds 7-15 to respondents from the two youngest birth cohorts (1983 and 1984) who had completed either the 12th grade or a GED at the time of interview. Respondents provided information about each college they applied to, including name and location. Information about technical schools was also included if respondents were seeking to earn an associate's or bachelor's degree there. Information was asked about each application cycle (those applications submitted for the same start date, such as fall session 2004). Respondents were also queried about any transferable financial aid they may have received. Other questions recorded whether each college to which the respondents applied had accepted them for admission, along with the type of financial aid offered. The actual IPEDS codes of the colleges are available only on the geocode release.

Parent Questionnaire (round 1)

If any home-schooled youth was age 16 or older at the time the parent was interviewed, the round 1 survey gathered data from the parent on whether the youth had ever enrolled in and received credit for college courses and, if so, the specific years that this occurred.

Following Colleges Across Rounds

Users may find it challenging to match up information for a specific college reported across multiple rounds or to make sense of semesters or terms within that college reported both within the same round as well as across rounds. The following example illustrates how to link information both within and across rounds for terms reported within the same school:

In round 5 (2001), respondent 2905 reported attending a four-year college. We know this because this college is identified on the round 5 NEWSCHOOL roster for this respondent. NEWSCHOOL_SCHCODE.02 =5, which is the value that indicates a four year college or university, and the public id for this school for this particular respondent can be found in variable NEWSCHOOL_PUBID.02, which =501. In the round 5 data, we can find a detailed set of information about the respondent's activities at this college by searching for questions inside loop #2 of the schooling section, which corresponds to line #2 of the NEWSCHOOL roster.

A search of the round 5 schooling data for this respondent (R) turns up the following information:

YSCH-20400.02.01 shows that R was enrolled in a term at this college in August 2001. The ".02" in the Question Name identifies the school number which corresponds to the NEWSCHOOL roster, and the ".01" refers to the nested loop of terms which is collected for each college reported on the NEWSCHOOL roster.

In YSCH-20500.02.01, R reports taking 17 credits in this first term.

In YSCH-20900.02.01, R reports a GPA of 3.90 for this term.

In YSCH-25400.02.01, R reports total financial aid of 7500 for this term.

In YSCH-21300.02.01, R reports majoring in English.

As of the end of the round 5 interview, this particular respondent had only reported completing one term at this particular college. However, in round 6 (2002), it can be determined that the respondent continued her enrollment at this same college because the value of NEWSCHOOL_PUBID.01 in round 6 =501 is the same value as appears on line 2 of the NEWSCHOOL roster in round 5. In round 6, however, information concerning this college will now be found in loop 1 of the schooling section, as the college is now located on line 1 of the NEWSCHOOL roster.

In examining the respondent's round 6 information for college 501, the following information can be found:

R reports two terms of enrollment this round, one starting in 1/2002 (see YSCH-20400.01.01) and the other starting in 9/2002 (see YSCH-20400.01.02).

R reports taking 17 credits during the first term reported in round 6 (YSCH-20500.01.01) and 17 credits during the second term reported in round 6 (YSCH-20500.01.02).

R reports a GPA of 4.0 for the first term (YSCH-20900.01.01). The GPA for the second term is not yet available (see YSCH-20750.01.02) R reports total financial aid of 7500 for the first term (YSCH-25400.01.01) and indicates no changes for financial aid for the second term (YSCH-22005.01.02)

R continues to report majoring in English in both the first term and the second term (YSCH-21300.01.01 and YSCH-21300.01.02)

Respondents are encouraged not to report on terms that are still in progress. Thus, most interviews that are conducted in November and early December will not include reports on fall college terms for the current calendar year. This information would be collected in the next interview.

College Transcript Data

College transcript data for NLSY97 respondents were collected in 2012-2013 (see NLSY97 variable names beginning with the prefix PSTRAN) for 3,818 youths who had reported at least one post-secondary enrollment as of the round 15 interview and signed a waiver allowing NORC to request a transcript from their post-secondary institution(s). These data include variables for each institution from which a transcript was received (such as degrees awarded), term-level variables (such as dates and total credits earned), and course-level variables including a course code assigned according to the 2010 College Course Map. These can be matched with survey data through the NEWSCH_PUBID variable, which is given for every transcript available in the data. For more information, see https://example.com/appendix-12-post-secondary-transcript).

Comparison to Other NLS Surveys: NLSY79 respondents have provided information on their major field of study in college, the total number of credits earned at each college attended, and the amounts of educational loans. The NLSY79 Young Adults report their college major, financial aid information, and degree sought, and they answer a series about their college application process. Young Women and Young Men have stated their major field of study, cost of tuition, and financial aid received. Major field of study and the number of hours and weeks attended since the last interview have been collected from the Mature Women. Older Men simply stated the year they last attended college and the highest degree they received. Consult the appropriate cohort's User's Guide for more information.

Survey Instruments: Questions on college experience are found in the schooling section (question names begin with YSCH) of the Youth Questionnaire and in section PC8 of the round 1 Parent Questionnaire.

 School-Based Learning Programs (/content/cohorts/nlsy97/topical-guide/education/school-based-learning-programs).

 Assets & Debts (/content/cohorts/nlsy97/topical-quide/income/assets-debts).

 Main Area of Interest
 Education: College Experience

Supplemental Areas of Interest

College Experience | National Longitudinal Surveys

Education: Achievement Tests

Assets & Debts

Education: Educational Status & Attainment

Education: School Characteristics