

U.S. Department of Education announces changes to College Scorecard, plans for future expansion

July 19, 2019

In late May the U.S. Department of Education (the Department) [announced](#) several changes to its [College Scorecard](#), a tool that is intended to help students and their families make informed decisions about postsecondary enrollment. Then, in July – in a [final rule](#) in which the Department [announced](#) that it would rescind its "gainful employment" regulations effective July 1, 2020 – the Department explained that it plans to expand the program-level and institution-level data available from the College Scorecard in the future. The purpose of the expansion is to help students "make enrollment choices informed by debt and earnings data, thus enabling a market-based accountability system to function" and to "help taxpayers understand where their investments have generated the highest and lowest returns."

In addition to updating the College Scorecard with the most recent data on certain existing metrics, as of May 2019 the Department added information about additional types of institutions and new categories of data:

- **Updated data:** The Department updated the College Scorecard to include more recent data for metrics such as average annual cost and graduation rate, as well as information about student demographics. Previously, the Department has updated the College Scorecard each fall; going forward, the Department will update certain data multiple times throughout the year as the data become available.
- **Added non-degree-granting institutions:** For the first time, the College Scorecard includes information about more than 2,100 non-degree granting institutions (i.e., institutions that award only certificates). Previously, the College Scorecard provided profiles for approximately 3,700 degree-granting institutions.
- **Expanded outcomes data:** The updated College Scorecard includes new information about graduation rates for part-time students and non-first-time students, the percent of students who transfer out, and the number of students who are still enrolled after eight years in a bachelor's program. Previously, the College Scorecard included only graduation rates for first-time, full-time undergraduates – a category that may not be representative of all students at some institutions.

- Added program-level student debt data: Additionally, the Department has released information about student loan debt data at the program level, including for graduate programs. Previously, information about student loan debt was available only on an institutional level. Currently, the College Scorecard webpage presents preliminary data, which will be updated in the fall. The preliminary program-level debt dataset can be downloaded [here](#).

In its July 1 [final rule](#), the Department acknowledged concerns that as a result of the rescission of the gainful employment rules, "some students would be more likely to make poor educational investments." In response, the Department plans to expand the College Scorecard to include certain program-level data, including:

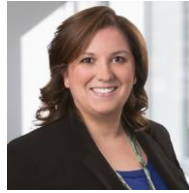
- Program size.
- The median federal student loan debt and the monthly payment associated with that debt based on a standard repayment period.
- The median Graduate Parent Loans for Undergraduate Students (PLUS) loan debt and the monthly payment associated with that debt based on a standard repayment period.
- The median Parent PLUS loan debt and the monthly payment associated with that debt based on a standard repayment period.
- Student loan default and repayment rates.

The Department also plans to continue to include institution-level data, including about admissions selectivity, student demographics, and student socioeconomic status. The Department said that such data "will provide important context to help students compare outcomes among institutions that serve demographically matched populations or that support similar educational missions."

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