



Graduate Institution-Level Licensed Data Set—2015 Database Overview

INTRODUCTION:

Since 1966, Peterson's has been at the forefront of collecting and publishing comprehensive data on graduate education. Peterson's Graduate Institution-Level Data Set for 2015 covers 2,231 institutions in the United States, Canada, and U.S. accredited institutions abroad that offer graduate and professional programs. Within this data set you will find information about institution names and addresses; institutional characteristics; enrollment figures; faculty makeup; expense information; fields of study offered; degrees offered; computer facilities and services; library facilities; research affiliations; and student services and housing.

This Overview is designed to give you a broad sense of the database. A Data Dictionary, comprised of detailed descriptions of the tables and fields in the database, is available in a separate document.

UNIVERSE:

To be included, an institution must grant a degree at the graduate (post-baccalaureate) level and must either have full accreditation or candidate-for-accreditation (preaccreditation) status granted by an institutional or specialized accrediting body that is recognized by the U.S. Department of Education or Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA). Specialized accrediting bodies exist in over forty different fields, each of which is authorized to accredit specific programs in its particular field. This can serve as the equivalent of institutional accreditation for specialized institutions offering programs in only a single field (e.g., schools of art, optometry, music, theology, etc.). Canadian institutions must be chartered and authorized to grant degrees by a provincial government, affiliated with a chartered institution, or accredited by a recognized U.S. accrediting body. Institutions from outside the U.S., its territories, and Canada that are accredited by recognized U.S. accrediting bodies are also included.

Each year, Peterson's conducts a comprehensive review of the membership lists of the regional, institutional, and specialized accrediting bodies. Newly listed schools are added to Peterson's listings and surveyed, while schools no longer accredited by the above standard are suppressed in the database.

TIME FRAME:

The database contains information collected for the previous academic year. The database is updated annually, in conjunction with the release of updated guides and electronic products. A field that shows the last year in which a survey was received and processing was completed is included with the master institution file for each school. Databases from the 1988-89 through the 1997-98 academic years are stored in legacy structures; databases from the 1998-1999 academic year forward are stored in structures consistent with the current set.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND DATA VERIFICATION:

Data collection for the Graduate Database begins in the spring and continues through August. Questionnaires are sent to the institutions meeting the criteria defined above (see "Universe"). For schools that have previously been included, responses from the preceding year are included on the questionnaires for guidance. Officials from the schools (usually institutional research personnel or the dean of the graduate school) submit responses by confirming that pre-existing information is correct or providing new or updated information. Throughout the season, our staff reaches out to non-responding institutions by phone, fax, and e-mail to update survey information. A comprehensive data cleansing process is employed after surveys are received to verify unusual figures and resolve discrepancies to ensure the greatest possible accuracy and comprehensiveness of the database.

It should be noted, however, that colleges can and often do change policies as they see fit, so data in the database can be most effectively viewed as a snapshot of the universe at a particular time.

GEOGRAPHIC COVERAGE:

As noted above, Peterson's Graduate Database includes accredited institutions in the United States and U.S. territories (2,062), Canada (107), Mexico (27), and 20 other nations (35).

DATABASE VERSATILITY AND EXTENT OF USE:

Peterson's Graduate Database is an important component of many products and services. Among these are:

- Peterson's Annual Guides to Graduate Study (a reference set):

Graduate & Professional Programs: An Overview

Graduate Programs in the Humanities, Arts & Social Sciences

Graduate Programs in the Biological/Biomedical Sciences & Health-Related Medical Professions

Graduate Programs in the Physical Sciences, Mathematics, Agricultural Sciences, the Environment & Natural Resources

Graduate Programs in the Engineering & Applied Sciences

Graduate Programs in Business, Education, Information Studies, Law & Social Work

- Peterson's Education Supersite (Graduate Schools Channel) at <http://www.petersons.com/>