

C. Overview of Analysis Topics and Survey Items

The core 2008 National Postsecondary Student Aid Study (NPSAS:08) data elements are presented as a list of approximately 300 items arranged by topic. Table 11 presents the data elements for NPSAS, and Table 12 presents the data elements for members of the Baccalaureate and Beyond (B&B) cohort. Most of these data elements appeared in the previously approved NPSAS:04 and NPSAS: 2000 studies (the last NPSAS to include a B&B cohort). The data elements for the NPSAS:08 cover general topics that pertain to all students, such as financial aid, tuition, enrollment, and demographic characteristics. However, many items are only relevant to certain categories of students, including dependent undergraduates, 1st and 2nd year students, the B&B cohort of graduating seniors, graduate/first professional, or those working while enrolled. In this case, the particular category of student has been specified in the list of data elements.

Some of the additions to the NPSAS:08 study data elements were made at the suggestion of the Technical Review Panel (TRP). For example, data elements were added for the National Science and Mathematics Access to Retain Talent (SMART) and Academic Competitiveness Grants (ACG) programs and for information received in loan counseling about repayment options. Data elements specific to students completing their Baccalaureate degrees in 2008 for the B&B longitudinal follow-up were also added.

NPSAS is a particularly complex survey because it uses a large variety of sources and several sources may be available for the same data element. These are indicated in the sources columns, generally in the order of priority, as follows:

- **ACT:** Data from American College Testing service files on ACT college entrance examinations and student questionnaires.
- **CADE:** Data from institutional records collected through a computer assisted data entry (CADE) system at the institutions or submitted in electronic data files. These include records from the registrar, bursar, and financial aid office.
- **CATI:** Data from student interviews using either the web-based self-administered student interview or the computer assisted telephone interview (CATI).
- **FAFSA:** Data from the Central Processing System (CPS) for Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA), which includes student and parent demographic, income and asset information, and expected family contribution used in need analysis. The records are called Institutional Student Information Reports (ISIR).
- **IPEDS:** Data from the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) which includes institutional characteristics and enrollment.
- **NSLDS:** Data from the U.S. Department of Education's National Student Loan Data system (NSLDS), which has a record of all individual student loans ever borrowed and all Pell Grant payments since 1994.
- **SAT:** Data from the College Board files of SAT college entrance examinations.

Table 11. NPSAS:08 data elements

Data elements	Sources			Applies to	Purpose/issues
	1st	2nd	3 rd		
Institutional characteristics (NPSAS sample institution)					Survey administration
Name and address	IPEDS	CADE		All	Sample stratum
Control (public/private not-for-profit/private for profit)	IPEDS	CADE		All	
Level (less than 2-year/2-3 year/4+year)	IPEDS	CADE		All	
Highest degree offered (certificate/associate/bachelor/master/doctoral/first-professional)	IPEDS	CADE		All	
Affiliation (religious)	IPEDS	CADE		All	Institution description
Carnegie (2005) classifications	IPEDS	CADE		All	
Selectivity of institution	IPEDS			All	
State/region	IPEDS	CADE		All	
Enrollment size (undergraduate/graduate)	IPEDS	CADE		All	
Calendar system (semester/quarter/trimester/other/continuous)	IPEDS	CADE		All	Enrollment measurement
Name of term (fall/winter/spring/summer)	CADE			All	
Beginning and ending dates of terms (month, year)	CADE			All	
Clock/contact or credit hour	IPEDS	CADE		All	
Total length of programs (terms/hours)	CADE	CATI		All	
Do calendars, term dates, or credit hours vary by program? (specify)	IPEDS	CADE		All	
Scale used for GPA	CADE			All	
NPSAS Study Eligibility Criteria					Study eligibility
Enrolled at any time between July 1 to June 30.	CADE	CATI		All	
Enrolled in (a) an academic program	CADE	CATI		All	
or (b) at least one course for credit toward an academic degree	CADE	CATI		All	
or (c) vocational program that requires at least 3 months or 300 clock hrs	CADE	CATI		All	
and (d) not concurrently enrolled in high school	CADE	CATI		Undergraduates	
and (e) not enrolled solely in GED or high school completion program	CADE	CATI		Undergraduates	
Program of study/class level/GPA					Student classification
Undergraduate degree program (certificate/AA/AAS/BA/5-yr BA/ none)	CADE	CATI		Undergraduates	Academic programs
Graduate/first-professional degree program (MBA, MEd, PhD, JD, MD, etc./none)	CADE	CATI		Graduate/first-professional	

See notes at end of table.

Table 11. NPSAS:08 data elements—Continued

Data elements	Sources			Applies to	Purpose/issues
	1st	2nd	3rd		
Completed requirements for degree (y/n)	CADE	CATI	FAFSA	All	Degree completion
Date degree awarded or expected (month year)	CADE	CATI		All	B&B sample identification
Major/ field of study (on line coding of CIP codes/ no major/undecided)	CATI	CADE	FAFSA	All	
Type of classes (list)	CATI			Non-degree	
Undergraduate class level (1-5/unclassified/graduate taking undergraduate courses)	CADE	CATI	NSLDS	Undergraduates	Class level/years
SMART Grants (eligibility/knowledge about/change of majors)	CATI			Undergraduates	SMART grants
Graduate/first-professional year (1-3, 4+)	CADE	CATI	NSLDS	Graduate/first-professional	
Cumulative GPA	CADE	CATI		All	Academic performance
Enrollment /Attendance Status in NPSAS year					Enrollment classification
Terms or months enrolled	CADE	CATI		All	
Attendance status for each term (full time/half time/less than half time)	CADE	CATI		All	
Number of credits earned during term	CADE			All	
Attended other schools during NPSAS year (y/n)	CATI			All	
For each school attended during the year other than NPSAS school:	CATI			2+ institutions	
IPEDS code (on-line coding)	CATI			2+ institutions	
Name, city, state, level, control (on-line coding)	CATI			2+ institutions	
Attendance status (full time/ part time)	CATI			2+ institutions	
Education goals	CATI				Educational goals
Reasons for enrolling at this institution:					
– complete degree (certificate, AA, BA)					
– earn credits for degree elsewhere					
– prepare for transfer to 4-year					
– gain job skills					
– prepare for job certification/license					
– personal interest/recreation	CATI			Undergraduates	
Main reason for enrolling at this institution	CATI			Undergraduates	
Highest degree expected at this institution	CATI			All	
Highest level of education expect to complete in next 5-10 years	CATI			All	

See notes at end of table.

Table 11. NPSAS:08 data elements—Continued

Data elements	Sources			Applies to	Purpose/issues
	1st	2nd	3rd		
Prior education					Education background
Type of high school diploma (diploma/ GED/certificate/foreign high school/none)	CADE	CATI		Undergraduates	
Year high school diploma received	CADE	CATI		Undergraduates	
Type of high school (public/private)	CATI			Undergraduates	
Admissions test scores	ACT	SAT		Undergraduates under 30	
High school math courses	ACT	SAT	CATI	Undergraduates under 30	
High school GPA	CADE	CATI		Undergraduates under 30	
Earn credits at a college while in high school	CATI			Undergraduates under 30	
Academic Competitiveness Grant (ACG) (eligibility/knowledge about/course taking)	CATI	CADE		1st & 2nd year undergraduates	ACG grants
Date began at NPSAS institution	CATI	CADE		All	
Was NPSAS institution first school attended after high school (y/n)	CATI	CADE	FAFSA	Undergraduates	
Month and year first enrolled in first school	CATI			Undergraduates	
Received any previous degrees or certificates (specify)	CATI			All	
Ever taken courses at a community college (y/n)	CATI			Undergraduates	
Ever taken courses at a 4-year college (y/n)	CATI			Undergraduates	
Month and year received bachelor's degree	CATI	CADE		Graduate/first-professional	
Date began graduate enrollment in this program	CATI			Graduate/first-professional	
Enrolled mostly full-time or part-time in prior years	CATI			Graduate/first-professional	
Financial aid applications					Financial aid
Applied for aid (y/n)	FAFSA	CATI		All	
Date of application (YYYYMM)	FAFSA			All	
Reasons for not applying (multiple)	CATI			Non-applicants	
Federal aid amounts:					Financial aid
Pell Grant	NSLDS	CADE		Undergraduates	
Academic Competitiveness Grant (ACG)	NSLDS	CADE		Undergraduates	
SMART Grants	NSLDS	CADE		Undergraduates	
FSEOG (Supplemental Education Opportunity Grant)	CADE			Undergraduates	
Federal Work-Study	CADE			All	
Perkins Loan	CADE	NSLDS		All	
Subsidized Stafford Loan (Direct/FFELP)	NSLDS	CADE		All	

See notes at end of table.

Table 11. NPSAS:08 data elements—Continued

Data elements	Sources			Applies to	Purpose/issues
	1st	2nd	3rd		
Unsubsidized Stafford Loan (Direct/FFELP)	NSLDS	CADE		All	
PLUS Loan	NSLDS	CADE		All	
Other federal grants (list)	CADE			All	
Other federal loans (list)	CADE			All	
State aid amounts: (Names of major programs are listed for each state)					Financial aid
State need-based grant	CADE			All	
State merit-only grant/scholarship	CADE			All	
State need and merit-based grant	CADE			All	
State work-study program	CADE			All	
State special-purpose (non-need)	CADE			All	
State vocational rehabilitation	CADE			All	
State loans	CADE			All	
Institutional aid amounts: (Names of major programs are listed for each institution)					Financial aid
Institutional grants-need-based	CADE			All	
Institutional grants-merit only	CADE			All	
Institutional athletic scholarship	CADE			Undergraduates	
Institutionally-sponsored work-study program	CADE			All	
Tuition waivers or discounts (non-employees)	CADE			All	
Tuition waivers or discounts (employees)	CADE			All	
Institutional loan	CADE			All	
Other Institutional aid (specify)	CADE			All	
Graduate student assistantships/fellowships					
Teaching assistantship	CATI	CADE		Graduate/first-professional	Financial aid
Research assistantship	CATI	CADE		Graduate/first-professional	
Graduate assistantship	CATI	CADE		Graduate/first-professional	
Graduate Fellowship	CATI	CADE		Graduate/first-professional	
Traineeship	CATI	CADE		Graduate/first-professional	
Tuition paid with assistantship or by a research grant (y/n)	CATI			Graduate/first-professional	
Health insurance with assistantship (y/n)	CATI			Graduate/first-professional	
Other aid amounts:					Financial aid
Aid from student's employer	CATI	CADE		All	
Aid from parents' employer	CATI	CADE		All	
Alternative (private) loans	CATI	CADE		All	

See notes at end of table.

Table 11. NPSAS:08 data elements—Continued

Data elements	Sources			Applies to	Purpose/issues
	1st	2nd	3rd		
Grants & scholarships from other outside/private sources	CATI	CADE		All	
Federal veteran's benefits	CATI	FAFSA	CADE	All	
Other (listed or specify)	CADE			All	
Student borrowing/debt (cumulative)					Student debt
Total borrowed for undergraduate education	CATI	NSLDS		All	
Amount still owed on undergraduate loans	CATI	NSLDS		Borrowers	
Total borrowed for graduate/first professional education	CATI	NSLDS		Graduate/first-professional	
Amount still owed on graduate loans	CATI	NSLDS		Borrowers	
Cumulative amount of undergraduate Stafford loans		NSLDS		Borrowers	
Cumulative amount of graduate Stafford loans		NSLDS		Borrowers	
Cumulative amount of Perkins loans		NSLDS		Borrowers	
Cumulative amount of PLUS loans		NSLDS		Borrowers (include graduate)	
Federal loan amount outstanding		NSLDS		Borrowers	
Loan counseling received (repayment options/future salaries in major)	CATI			Borrowers	
Tuition and Student Budgets					College costs
Tuition and required fees charged	CADE			All	
Out-of-jurisdiction tuition charged (y/n)	CADE	CATI		All	
Total student budget	CADE			Aid applicants	
Room and board	CADE			Aid applicants	
Books and supplies	CADE			Aid applicants	
Computer or special equipment	CADE			Aid applicants	
All other expenses	CADE			Aid applicants	
Federal Need Analysis (aid applicants)					Need analysis
Dependency status (dependent/independent)	FAFSA	CADE		Aid applicants	
EFC formula type (dependent/independent without dependents/independent with dependents)	FAFSA			Aid applicants	
Expected Family Contribution (EFC)	FAFSA	CADE		Aid applicants	
EFC: Parental Contribution (dependents only)	FAFSA			Aid applicants	
EFC: Student Contribution	FAFSA			Aid applicants	
Student employment and earnings while enrolled					Student employment
Type and amount of assistantship (research/ teaching/ other)	CATI	CADE		Graduate/ first-professional	

See notes at end of table.

Table 11. NPSAS:08 data elements—Continued

Data elements	Sources			Applies to	Purpose/issues
	1st	2nd	3rd		
Teaching Assistantships: type of duties (discussion/grading/lab/office hours/student e-mail teaching)	CATI			Graduate teaching assistants	
Number of jobs for pay while enrolled	CATI	CADE		All	
Type of job					
– Work-study					
– Assistantship (undergraduate)					
– Co-op employment					
– Paid practicum/internship					
– Other job for the school					
– Private employer or other	CATI			All	
Work-study for community service or tutoring (y/n)?	CATI			Work-study jobs	
Job characteristics:					
Location (on/off campus)	CATI			Employed	
Type of employer (school/for-profit/nonprofit/government/military/self-employed)	CATI			Employed	
Related to major or coursework (y/n)	CATI			Employed	
Held same job before enrolling (y/n)?				Employed	
Average hours per week worked while enrolled	CATI			Employed	
Amount earned while enrolled (per period)	CATI			Employed	
Number of weeks worked while enrolled (all/most/half/less than half)	CATI			Employed	
Primarily: (1) a student who works; (2) employee taking courses	CATI			Employed	Effect of jobs
Reasons for working (spending money/tuition/job experience/expected by parents/send money home)	CATI			Undergraduates who work	
Afford to attend school without working (y/n)?	CATI			Undergraduates who work	
Employment during prior summer (y/n)	CATI			Undergraduates under 30	Source of funds
Amount saved from summer job for educational expenses	CATI			Undergraduates under 30	
Effect of job (restrict choice of classes/limit number of classes/limit class schedule/assist with coursework/career preparation/limit access to campus facilities)	CATI			Students who work	
Effect of job on grades (positive/negative/none)	CATI			Students who work	

See notes at end of table.

Table 11. NPSAS:08 data elements—Continued

Data elements	Sources			Applies to	Purpose/issues
	1st	2nd	3rd		
Student Demographic Characteristics					Student demographics
Gender (female/male)	CADE	CATI	FAFSA	All	
Birth date or age	CADE	CATI	FAFSA	All	
Marital status (never married/married/separated/divorced/widowed)	CATI	FAFSA	CADE	All	
US born (y/n)	CATI			All	
US citizenship (yes/resident alien/student visa)	CADE	CATI	FAFSA	All	
Country of origin	CADE			Student visas	
State of legal residence	FAFSA	CATI		All	
Ethnicity (Hispanic or Latino/ Not Hispanic or Latino)	CATI	CADE		All	
Hispanic type (Mexican/Cuban/Puerto Rican/other)	CATI			Hispanics	
Race (American Indian or Alaska Native/ Asian/Black or African American/ Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander/White)—select one or more	CATI	CADE		All	
Member of recognized tribe (y/n)	CATI			American Indians	
Language spoken in the home (English/ not English)	CATI			All except visa	
Number of dependent children	CATI			All	
Ages of dependent children	CATI			With dependents	
Number of children in daycare	CATI			With dependents	
Monthly expenses for daycare	CATI			With dependents	
Supporting any other dependents (y/n)	CATI			All	
Location and housing					College costs
Housing when enrolled (on campus/off campus/with parents)	CATI	CADE		Undergraduates	
Distance school from home	CATI			Undergraduates	
Distance school from work	CATI			Employed	
Military or Veteran Status					
Veteran of U.S. forces (y/n)	CATI	FAFSA		All	
Active duty or reserves of Armed Forces of U.S. (y/n)	CATI	FAFSA		All	
Parents of dependent students					Family background
Parents' marital status	FAFSA	CATI		Under 30	
Number of people supported by parents	FAFSA	CATI		Under 30	
Number of other siblings in college	FAFSA	CATI		Under 30	
Siblings in college before respondent	CATI			Under 30	
Parents taking college courses	CATI			Under 30	
Parents born in US (y/n)	CATI			All except visa	

See notes at end of table.

Table 11. NPSAS:08 data elements—Continued

Data elements	Sources			Applies to	Purpose/issues
	1st	2nd	3rd		
Parental support					Parental support
Did parents help pay for:	CATI			Under 30	
Tuition (y/n)	CATI			Under 30	
Housing (y/n)	CATI			Under 30	
Living expenses (y/n)	CATI			Under 30	
Other education expenses (y/n)	CATI			Under 30	
Parents' education					Family background
Father's highest level of education	CATI	FAFSA		All	
Mother's highest level of education	CATI	FAFSA		All	
Parent Finances					Family income
Total income (ranges in CATI)	FAFSA	CATI		Under 30	
Adjusted Gross Income	FAFSA			Under 30	
U.S. Income tax paid	FAFSA			Under 30	
Own home (y/n)	CATI			Under 30	
Business, farm or investments over \$10,000 (y/n)	FAFSA	CATI		Under 30	
Student finances					Family income
Student's own income in prior calendar year	FAFSA	CATI		All	
Spouse income in prior calendar year	FAFSA	CATI		Married	
Adjusted Gross Income (student and spouse)	FAFSA			All	
US income tax paid	FAFSA			All	
Receive any untaxed income (specify): (TANF/child support/worker's comp/disability/social security/food stamps)	CATI	FAFSA		All	
Own a home, (y/n)	CATI			24 and over	
Monthly mortgage or rent	CATI			All	
Own business, farm or investments over \$10,000 (y/n)	CATI			24 and over	
Credit cards					Student debt
Number of credit cards in your own name	CATI			Under 30	
Usually pay off balance most months?	CATI			Card holders	
Current amount outstanding	CATI			Card holders	
Use credit card to pay tuition bills (y/n)	CATI			Card holders	
Parents ever help pay (y/n)	CATI			Card holders	

See notes at end of table.

Table 11. NPSAS:08 data elements—Continued

Data elements	Sources			Applies to	Purpose/issues
	1st	2nd	3rd		
Remedial courses					Academic preparation
Ever taken any remedial or developmental courses (y/n)	CATI			Undergraduates	
Number of remedial courses this year	CATI			1st/2nd year undergraduates	
Distance education	CATI			All	Alternative instruction
Type (internet/pre-recorded/live)	CATI			All	
Location	CATI			All	
Number of courses	CATI			All	
Entire program via distance education (y/n)	CATI			All	
Satisfaction	CATI			All	
Civic participation					Student involvement
Registered to vote?	CATI			Citizens	
Ever voted in any national, state, local election?	CATI			Citizens	
Community Service					Student involvement
Perform any community service/volunteer work during last year (y/n)	CATI			All	
Type of community service activity (specify from list)	CATI			Volunteers	
Number of hours/month	CATI			Volunteers	
Work required for graduation or part of classes (y/n)	CATI			Volunteers	
Student limitations or disabilities	CATI			All	Disabilities
Any long lasting sensory condition (y/n)	CATI			All	
Any condition that limits physical activity (y/n)	CATI			All	
Any other condition lasting 6 months or more (y/n)	CATI			All	
Main limiting condition (specify from list)	CATI			With disabilities	

NOTE: IPEDS = Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System; CADE = computer assisted data entry; CATI = computer assisted telephone interview; FAFSA = Free Application for Federal Student Aid; SMART = National Science and Mathematics Access to Retain Talent grant; ACG = Academic Competitiveness Grants; NSLDS = National Student Loan Data System; FFEL = Federal Family Education Loan; PLUS = Parent Loan for Undergraduate Student; ETS = Educational Testing Service; B&B=Baccalaureate and Beyond.

Table 12. NPSAS:08 data elements for B&B sample members

Data elements	Sources			Applies to	Purpose/issues
	1st	2nd	3rd		
B&B Eligibility Criteria					
Completed or expect to complete bachelor's degree at NPSAS school between July 1 and June 30?	CATI	CADE?		Undergraduates	B&B eligibility determination
Date received/expect to receive bachelor's degree (year month)	CATI	CADE?		B&B	
Employment plans					
Employment plans for after graduation (have a job or firm offer/actively seeking a job/ not looking)	CATI			B&B	Labor market outcomes
If planning work, description (continuing same employment from before graduation/ beginning of career in occupation or industry/ temporary job while planning or preparing/ just paying bills/ etc.)	CATI			B&B work planners	
If planning work, employment status (full-time or part-time)	CATI			B&B work planners	
If planning work, occupation (on-line coding)	CATI			B&B work planners	Prospective teachers identification
If planning work, type of job search activities	CATI			B&B work planners	Transition to work
Ever taught at K-12 level in a school setting (y/n) (Do not count home-schooling of your own or others' children.)	CATI			All B&B	Pipeline definition
If yes... types of teaching positions held (regular, substitute, teacher's aide, support, itinerant, student teacher) Check all that apply.	CATI			B&B who have taught	
If yes to regular, support, or itinerant, year when first taught in any of those types of positions?	CATI			B&B who have taught	
Have you ever been certified to teach at the K-12 level (y/n) (Do not count emergency certificates or waivers.)	CATI			All B&B	
If y, when first certified to teach?	CATI			B&B ever certified	
If no, are you eligible to be certified or will you be eligible to be certified upon graduation?	CATI			B&B not ever certified	
Have you ever taken any of the following steps to prepare for a teaching career? Check all that apply.	CATI			B&B not ever certified and not eligible to be certified now or upon graduation	
Applied to teacher ed. program					
Taken Praxis or other examination to enter teacher education program					
Entered teacher ed. program					
Taken/taking courses toward teacher certification			Transcripts		

See notes at end of table.

Table 12. NPSAS:08 data elements for B&B sample members—Continued

Data elements	Sources			Applies to	Purpose/issues
	1st	2nd	3rd		
Completed/completing student teaching assignment, internship, or practicum		Transcripts			
Taken examination to receive teaching certificate/license				B&B who have not taught, have never been certified, are not eligible and will not be eligible for certification upon graduation, have not taken any steps to prepare	
Considering teaching at K-12 level (y/n)	CATI				
Graduate school plans					Graduate education
Taken/planning to take GRE or other graduate/first-professional entrance exams	CATI			B&B	
Applied/applying/intending to apply to graduate or professional schools for next academic year (be able to distinguish)	CATI			B&B	
Source(s) of information about graduate schools (advisor/faculty, other students, Internet, directly from institutions...)	CATI			B&B grad planners	
Intended degree program/field of study (online coding)	CATI			B&B grad planners	
Intend to enroll full-time (y/n)	CATI			B&B grad planners	
Do you plan to be working full-time, part-time, or not at all while you are enrolled?	CATI			B&B grad planners	
Number of schools applied/applying to	CATI			B&B grad planners	
Accepted at any graduate schools	CATI			B&B grad planners	
Reasons for pursuing graduate education (career goals/undecided about career/no job prospects/ academic interests/availability of aid/urged by parents/ etc.)	CATI			B&B grad planners	
Reasons for not applying to graduate school (financial/undergraduate debt/not required for career goals/ no academic interest/personal)	CATI			B&B NOT grad planners	
Plan to apply in the future (y/n); If yes, expected year to begin graduate study	CATI			B&B NOT grad planners	
Selected Undergraduate Experiences					Undergrad preparation
Ever studied abroad? Where? How long?	CATI	Transcripts?		B&B	
Ever taken language other than English? What? How long?	CATI	Transcripts?		B&B	
Original intended major in a STEM field (y/n)	CATI			B&B	
Ever attempted to transfer any credits to NPSAS institution? How many attempted/accepted	CATI	Transcripts?		B&B	

See notes at end of table.

Table 12. NPSAS:08 data elements for B&B sample members—Continued

Data elements	Sources			Applies to	Purpose/issues
	1st	2nd	3rd		
Opinions and attitudes					Educational and occupational outcomes
Self-ratings on traits compared to average person	CATI			B&B	
Personally important goals	CATI			B&B	
Locating Information	CATI			B&B	Follow-up tracing