



DataOnDemand

How-To Guide

Using the New Group Wizard

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Comparison Groups

DataOnDemand is a robust database of salaries, demographic information, and benefits of more than 260,000 full-time faculty by discipline and rank and more than 500,000 administrators and staff. DataOnDemand is the go-to tool for benchmarking the higher education workforce because it puts HR professionals in the driver's seat of its comprehensive database. A subscription to DataOnDemand allows you to benchmark against the peer institutions that you choose. We call a group of peer institutions that you choose a **comparison group**.

This is the definitive guide to DataOnDemand's New Group Wizard feature, which allows you to create a peer group of institutions based on institution characteristics such as size or location. You do not need to know the name of your peer institutions to use the New Group Wizard. If you already know the names of the institutions you want in your comparison group, [see our New Group From Scratch How-To Guide](#).



Step 1: Determine Your Peer Institution Characteristics

The most important step of creating a comparison group using the New Group Wizard occurs offline. First, you need to determine the characteristics of your peer institutions for the purposes of this benchmarking project. Often, this step will occur in collaboration with your colleagues. When in doubt, always bring this process back to your institution's compensation philosophy and the goals for this project.

Confidentiality Standards: Limitations on Comparison Groups

DataOnDemand complies with Department of Justice Safe Harbor Guidelines to ensure confidentiality of salary data. When creating any comparison group, keep in mind the following:

- A comparison group must include a minimum of eight institutions.
- Each comparison group created must differ by at least three institutions from all other comparison groups owned by users at your institution; this restriction applies to both existing and deleted groups.
- Even if you successfully create a comparison group, no salary data are reported for positions with fewer than five responding institutions or, when using incumbent-level statistics, if one institution's data represents 25% or more of the total incumbents.

The New Group Wizard can filter institutions based on the following criteria (see the [Appendix](#) for more detail on each option, including the location in the Wizard and selection options):

- **Classification**

The [2025 Carnegie Classification](#) organizes and classifies institutions using multiple dimensions. The New Group Wizard allows you to filter for institutions based on highest degree awarded (i.e., Associate, Bachelor's, Master's, Doctorate), award level focus (e.g., Associate/Baccalaureate, Undergraduate/Graduate-Master's, Graduate-focused), and classification (e.g., Mixed Associate Small, Professions-focused Undergraduate/Graduate-Doctorate Large). Other variables from the 2025 Carnegie Classifications are included later in the Wizard.

- **Control**

Institution control indicates whether an institution is controlled and primarily funded by the government (i.e., public) or not (i.e., private). The New Group Wizard provides the ability to select institutions with one or more of the following controls: Public, private not-for-profit, and private for-profit.

- **Research Activity Designation**

From the 2025 Carnegie Classifications, you can select Research 1 (i.e., spend at least \$50 million on research and development and award 70 research doctorates), Research 2 (i.e., spend at least \$5 million on research and development and award 20 research doctorates), and Research Colleges and Universities (i.e., institutions not classified R1 or R2 that spend at least \$2.5 million on research and development).

- **Total Expenses**

The New Group Wizard allows you to select institutions within a range of total expenses based on the most recent year the institution provided us with data.

- **Institution Size**

The New Group Wizard allows users to select based on institution size defined by one of the following definitions: 2025 Carnegie Classification designation (i.e., very small, small, medium, large, very large), student full-time equivalent (FTE), faculty FTE, or staff FTE. FTE variables are based on the most recent year the institution provided us with data.

- **Location**

The New Group Wizard allows you to select institutions based on geographic location. You can constrain your peer list to institutions located within a particular US Census Division, state/province, or Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA). In addition, you can select institutions based on their setting (e.g., residential, primarily online).

- **Collective Bargaining**

The New Group Wizard allows you to filter institutions based on whether certain employee types have a collective bargaining agreement or not. You can select institutions based on whether or not they have collective bargaining for staff, full-time faculty, adjunct or part-time faculty, or graduate students.

- **Special Affiliations**

The New Group Wizard allows you to filter for institutions that have a medical school or center, are land-grant institutions, or are a women's college or university.

- **Populations Served**

The New Group Wizard allows you to select institutions that serve specific populations (e.g., Hispanic Serving Institutions, Historically Black Colleges and Universities, Tribal Colleges and Universities).

- **Entity Type**

The New Group Wizard automatically constrains results to higher education institutions both within and outside of a university system. You can change this setting to only include institutions in a system, or only institutions not within a system (i.e., single unit institutions).

- **Survey Participation**

The New Group Wizard allows you to filter institutions based on whether they participated in a survey in a given year. If you are only interested in benchmarking positions in a particular survey, this setting is useful for constraining your comparison group to institutions that provided data for that survey. Be careful: If you plan to use a comparison group in future years, constraining participation history will likely result in your future reports not containing all possible data.

TIP

For best results, aim for at least 30 institutions in your comparison group.

To add institutions, eliminate or broaden your selection criteria.



Step 2: Open New Group Wizard

Once you decide on the characteristics of your peer institutions, log in to [Surveys Online](#), and navigate through the menu to *DataOnDemand* > *Comparison Groups*. Click on the *New Group Wizard* button to get started.

Comparison Groups



A **Comparison Group** is a set of higher ed institutions that you create for benchmarking.

Create New Comparison Groups

New Group Wizard



Use **New Group Wizard** when you want to create a comparison group based on institutional characteristics (e.g., size, classification, research activity, operating expenses, location, etc.) or survey participation.



Step 3: Select Institution Characteristics

Select your criteria in the wizard.

Keep in mind the following:

- You can filter as much as you want in the New Group Wizard, but the more criteria you select, the fewer institutions there will be in your comparison group.
- Selecting multiple options within one selection box results in “OR” selection logic and will return institutions with either of those labels. For instance, this selection would return institutions that have an award level focus of undergraduate/graduate-master’s or undergraduate/graduate-doctorate:

Award Level Focus

- Associate
- Associate/Baccalaureate
- Baccalaureate
- Undergraduate/Graduate-Master's
- Undergraduate/Graduate-Doctorate
- Graduate-focused

- Selecting options in two (or more) selection boxes results in “AND” selection logic and will return institutions that fit both of those criteria. For instance, this selection would return institutions that are public *and* designated as Research 1:

Control

Public

Private not-for-profit

Private for-profit

Research Activity Designation

Research 1: Very High Spending and Doctorate Production

Research 2: High Spending and Doctorate Production

Research Colleges and Universities

No research designation



Our example institution is a public institution designated as Research 1. They want to benchmark against other public Research 1 institutions that are similar in size (i.e., large or very large).

Criteria	Location in Wizard	Selection	Example Screenshot
Include only public institutions	<i>Control</i>	Public	<div style="border: 1px solid #ccc; padding: 5px;"> <p>Control</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Private not-for-profit</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Private for-profit</p> </div>
Include only institutions designated as Research 1	<i>Research Activity Designation</i>	Research 1	<div style="border: 1px solid #ccc; padding: 5px;"> <p>Research Activity Designation</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Research 1: Very High Spending and Doctorate Production</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Research 2: High Spending and Doctorate Production</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Research Colleges and Universities</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> No research designation</p> </div>
Include only institutions that are large or very large	<i>Size Variables > Student Size (Headcount) Carnegie Designation</i>	Large or Very Large	<div style="border: 1px solid #ccc; padding: 5px;"> <p>Size Variables</p> <p>Student Size (Headcount) Carnegie Designation</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Very Small</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Small</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Medium</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Large</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Very Large</p> </div>



Step 4: Check Your Selection Criteria and Group Size

After completing these selections, double check that you selected all of the criteria you decided upon in Step 1. Then click the *Search* button to refresh the page and view the table of results at the bottom of the screen.

Review the institutions identified in the search and verify that the number of institutions is large enough. In general, the more institutions in your group, the more reliable data you can generate.

If there are too few institutions in your group, broaden your criteria until you achieve a group of an adequate size.



Step 5: Name and Save Your Comparison Group

Once you are satisfied with your comparison group, add a name and detailed description of your selection criteria in the boxes below the results. Remember: Once you've created your comparison group, there is no record of the criteria that went into creating the group except for in the "selection criteria description" box. Do your colleagues and future self a favor and be extremely detailed in the selection criteria description box:

Name

Large/Very Large Public Research 1

Selection Criteria Description

Institutions include the following characteristics:
Control: Public
Research Activity Designation: Research 1
Carnegie Size (Student Headcount): Large or Very Large

Finally, save your comparison group. This group will now appear in *Your Personal Groups*.

Before you use as comparison group to run a DataOnDemand report, you can make as many changes as you'd like (including removing just 1 institution at a time) so long as the edited comparison group still differs by 3 institutions from all other saved groups.

To edit the group, go to DataOnDemand -> Comparison Groups and click on the comparison group's name under **My Personal Comparison Groups**. After you use the group to run a report, you can still make changes, but they must result in a group that differs by at least 3 institutions from the original comparison group.

This is a privacy protection to ensure data confidentiality. Therefore, it is important to ensure that your comparison group contains exactly the institutions you want before you use the group to run a report.



Step 6: Run and Intrepret Your Report(s)

To use your comparison group, go to *DataOnDemand* > *Survey Reports* and select the report you wish to run. Once you click on the name of the report, select the name of your comparison group from the comparison group drop down menu:

Report Parameters

Your Institution

Demonstration University (Associate's Colleges: High Transfer-High Traditional) ([change](#))

Comparison Group

Large/Very Large Public Research 1

Enter additional report parameters and select "Go to Report" at the bottom of the screen. You'll then be ready to use and interpret your report results.



Limitations and Considerations

When using the *New Group Wizard*, keep in mind the following:

- Double check your comparison group closely before you save and run a report. Once you use your comparison group, you can only change the group by editing it by 3 or more institutions.
- Just because an institution is added to you comparison group does not mean that institution provided data in a particular year or provided data on a particular position. The smaller your peer list is, the more likely you may have insufficient data to see results.

Appendix: New Group Wizard Selection Options

2025 Carnegie Classifications

Criteria Name: Highest Degree Awarded

Criteria Description: The 2025 Carnegie Classification includes the dimension of highest degree awarded by an institution.

Selection Options:

- Associate
- Bachelor's
- Master's
- Doctorate

Criteria Name: Award Level Focus

Criteria Description: The 2025 Carnegie Classification includes the dimension of award level focus, which describes the focus and mix of award levels at an institution.

Selection Options:

- Associate
- Associate/Baccalaureate
- Baccalaureate
- Undergraduate/Graduate-Master's
- Undergraduate/Graduate-Doctorate
- Graduate-focused

Criteria Name: Classification

Criteria Description: An institution's [Carnegie Classification](#) is determined by award level focus, academic program mix, and size. In the 2025 Institutional Classification, institutions are organized into 31 groups based on these three dimensions.

Selection Options:

- Associate Colleges
 - [Mixed Associate Large](#)
 - [Mixed Associate Medium](#)

- [Mixed Associate Small](#)
 - [Professions-focused Associate Large/Medium](#)
 - [Professions-focused Associate Small](#)
- Associate/Baccalaureate
 - [Mixed Associate/Baccalaureate](#)
 - [Professions-focused Associate/Baccalaureate](#)
- Baccalaureate
 - [Mixed Baccalaureate](#)
 - [Professions-focused Baccalaureate Medium](#)
 - [Professions-focused Baccalaureate Small](#)
- Undergraduate/Graduate-Master's
 - [Mixed Undergraduate/Graduate-Master's Large/Medium](#)
 - [Mixed Undergraduate/Graduate-Master's Small](#)
 - [Professions-focused Undergraduate/Graduate-Master's Large/Medium](#)
 - [Professions-focused Undergraduate/Graduate-Master's Small](#)
- Undergraduate/Graduate-Doctorate
 - [Mixed Undergraduate/Graduate-Doctorate Large](#)
 - [Mixed Undergraduate/Graduate-Doctorate Medium](#)
 - [Mixed Undergraduate/Graduate-Doctorate Small](#)
 - [Professions-focused Undergraduate/Graduate-Doctorate Large](#)
 - [Professions-focused Undergraduate/Graduate-Doctorate Medium](#)
 - [Professions-focused Undergraduate/Graduate-Doctorate Small](#)
- Special Focus Institutions
 - [Special Focus: Applied and Career Studies](#)
 - [Special Focus: Arts and Sciences](#)
 - [Special Focus: Arts, Music, and Design](#)
 - [Special Focus: Business](#)
 - [Special Focus: Graduate Studies](#)
 - [Special Focus: Law](#)
 - [Special Focus: Medical Schools and Centers](#)
 - [Special Focus: Nursing](#)
 - [Special Focus: Other Health Professions](#)
 - [Special Focus: Technology, Engineering, and Sciences](#)
 - [Special Focus: Theological Studies](#)

Criteria Name: Control

Criteria Description: Institution control indicates whether an institution is controlled and primarily funded by the government (i.e., public) or not (i.e., private).

Selection Options:

- Public
- Private not-for-profit

- Private for-profit

Criteria Name: Research Activity Designation

Criteria Description: The 2025 Carnegie Classification includes research activity designations set by a threshold.

Selection Options:

- Research 1: Very High Spending and Doctorate Production
- Research 2: High Spending and Doctorate Production
- Research Colleges and Universities
- No research designation

Total Expenses

Criteria Name: Total Expenses

Criteria Description: Select institutions within an indicated range of all total expenses

Selection Options: Text entry for the start and end points of the range

Size Variables

Criteria Name: Student Size (Headcount) Carnegie Designation

Criteria Description: The dimension of size is measured by an institution's total 12-month headcount, including full- and part-time students and undergraduate and graduate students.

Selection Options:

- Very Small
- Small
- Medium
- Large
- Very Large

Criteria Name: Student FTE

Criteria Description: Select institutions within an indicated range of all student FTE

Selection Options: Text entry for the start and end points of the range

Criteria Name: Faculty FTE

Criteria Description: Select institutions within an indicated range of faculty FTE

Selection Options: Text entry for the start and end points of the range

Criteria Name: Staff FTE

Criteria Description: Select institutions within an indicated range of staff FTE

Selection Options: Text entry for the start and end points of the range

Location Variables

Criteria Name: US Census Division

Criteria Description: Select the [Census Division](#) in which the institution is located.

Selection Options:

- East North Central
- East South Central
- Middle Atlantic
- Mountain
- New England
- Pacific
- South Atlantic
- West North Central
- West South Central

Criteria Name: State/Province

Criteria Description: Select the state, province, or territory in which the institution is located.

Selection Options:

- Alabama
- Alaska
- American Samoa
- Arizona

- Arkansas
- California
- Colorado
- Connecticut
- Delaware
- District of Columbia
- Federated States of Micronesia
- Florida
- Georgia
- Guam
- Hawaii
- Idaho
- Illinois
- Indiana
- Iowa
- Kansas
- Kentucky
- Louisiana
- Maine
- Marshall Islands
- Maryland
- Massachusetts
- Michigan
- Minnesota
- Mississippi
- Missouri
- Montana
- Nebraska
- Nevada
- New Hampshire
- New Jersey
- New Mexico
- New York
- North Carolina
- North Dakota
- Northern Mariana Islands
- Ohio
- Oklahoma
- Oregon

- Palau
- Pennsylvania
- Puerto Rico
- Rhode Island
- South Carolina
- South Dakota
- Tennessee
- Texas
- Utah
- Vermont
- Virgin Islands
- Virginia
- Washington
- West Virginia
- Wisconsin
- Wyoming
- Alberta (Canada)
- British Columbia (Canada)
- Manitoba (Canada)
- Ontario (Canada)

Criteria Name: Metropolitan Statistical Area

Criteria Description: Select the [Metropolitan Statistical Area](#) in which the institution is located. Constraining to MSA tends to result in insufficient results unless selecting a large urban area.

Example Selection Options (see New Group Wizard for full set):

- AK-Anchorage
- AL-Birmingham
- CA-Chico
- FL-Orlando-Kissimmee-Sanford
- GA-Augusta-Richmond County, GA-SC
- IL-Peoria

Criteria Name: Setting (Carnegie Designation)

Criteria Description: This measure describes residential characteristics of an institution and refers to the proportion of degree-seeking undergraduates who

attend full-time and the proportion living in institutionally-owned, -operated, or -affiliated housing.

Selection Options:

- Highly residential
- Primarily residential
- Residential
- Primarily non-residential
- Primarily online
- Online and on-campus learning
- Mostly full-time, not residential
- Mostly part-time, not residential
- Graduate-focused

Other Institutional Characteristics

Criteria Name: Collective Bargaining

Criteria Description: Select institutions that have collective bargaining (i.e., a union) for faculty, staff, and graduate students.

Selection Options:

- For full-time faculty
- For adjunct or part-time faculty
- For staff
- For graduate students

Criteria Name: Special Affiliations

Criteria Description: Select institutions that have a unique focus or affiliation.

Selection Options:

- Has a medical school or center
- Land-grant institution
- Women's college or university

Criteria Name: Populations Served

Criteria Description: Select institutions that serve specific student populations.

Selection Options:

- Hispanic Serving Institution
- Asian American and Native American Pacific Islander-Serving Institution
- Historically Black College or University
- Predominantly Black Institution
- Native American-Serving Non-Tribal Institution
- Tribal College or University
- Alaska Native or Native Hawaiian-Serving Institution

Criteria Name: Entity Type

Criteria Description: Select the type of entities that the search returns. The Wizard defaults to select system and single unit institutions, but you can select to include just one of these types of entities.

Selection Options:

- Single Unit Institution
- Institution Within a System

Survey Participation

Criteria Name: Survey Participation

Criteria Description: Filter institutions by whether they have participated in one or more of our surveys in a selected year. Be careful: Using a group year to year that constrains participation history will likely result in your future reports not containing all possible data.

Survey Selection Options:

- Benefits, Employee Experience, and Structure Survey
- Administrators Survey
- Professionals Survey
- Staff Survey
- Faculty Survey

Year Selection Options:

- Most recent survey cycle back through 2011-12.