

Executive Summary

Key Dataset Facts

Dataset Name: **PSEO (Post-Secondary Employment Outcomes)**

Publisher: U.S. Census Bureau

Website: https://lehd.ces.census.gov/data/pseo_experimental.html

Unit of Analysis: Credential

Purpose of Dataset: To publish data on employment and earnings outcomes associated with specific degrees and fields of study in participating state systems of higher education.

Quality Metrics

Metric	Rating	Summary Explanation
Non-response	Good	There are 234,951 records for graduate earnings in 17 states. This appears to represent a significant portion of the credential-field of study-institution-year groupings we would expect to see in the 17 participating states, keeping in mind that some private institutions are excluded.
Coverage	Fair	Coverage is modest for the critical variables of interest. We have 46% coverage for graduate earnings and 64% coverage for the occupation in which one is employed for the first year after degree completion.
Granularity	Good	Sufficiently granular at the institution level in terms of degree field, though some are truncated at the 2-digit CIP level.
Consistency	N/A	We have not been able to find datasets that would lend themselves to an “apples to apples” comparison with PSEO.
Timeliness	Good	While we have not been able to find an official update schedule, the most recent update was in October 2021.
Integrity	Excellent	We did not identify any risks to data integrity.
Accessibility	Excellent	Anyone can download the dataset from the Census Bureau free of charge.
Interoperability	Good	One can probably link to IPEDS on the basis of the institution name and field of study. Since the data is aggregated at the program-institution-year level, there is no option to link individual-level data.
Suitability for Longitudinal Research	Good	The dataset has been updated at least annually since 2018, and historical files can be downloaded from the Census website. Currently, very few institutions have associated data on earnings 5 and 10 years after graduation, but this is likely to grow with time as the dataset ages.
Overall Recommendation	Good	This is a high-quality, innovative dataset that is unique for its ability to map “flows” between fields of study and occupations. While limited to participating institutions, the quality of earnings data is rich where available.

Relevance to Use Cases

Use Case	Rating	Summary Explanation
Analyze the Overall Prevalence of NDCs	Fair	While one could obtain enrollment data on specific institutions from this dataset, the data does not tell us about non-degree credentials other than certificates and we are not getting a full picture of all certificates issued even by public institutions within a state. In addition to non-participating institutions, even non-credit programs at participating institutions are missing.
Identify Which NDCs are Associated with Highest Earnings	Excellent	Bearing in mind the limits of the PSEO population size and included credential types, the dataset is great for comparing earnings between credentials and fields of study.
Identify Patterns of Inequality in NDC Attainment	Fair	While containing data on labor market outcomes, those outcomes are not broken out by race, ethnicity, sex, or other demographic variables of interest.
Enrichment of NTEWS Microdata	Fair	It may be possible to link PSEO outcomes data to NTEWS responses to the question that asks respondents to identify institutions attended by name. This might unlock interesting opportunities to examine the characteristics of individuals who underperform or outperform their peers from the same degree or certificate program.