



Common Data Set

Colleges and universities compile responses to a standard list of questions each year. The Common Data Set is a tool that can be used to help students and families find a strong academic and personal fit. It is an organization that compiles a standard set of questions for individual colleges such as:

- Average financial aid award.
- Breakdown of loans versus grants in average financial aid package.
- Percentage of financial need met.
- Amount of merit money for students who do not qualify for need-based aid.
- Number of students who receive merit aid.
- Academic profile of freshman class — including breakdown of GPA and SAT/ACT scores.
- Criteria for admission: what is considered as most important.
- Undergraduate class sizes.
- Faculty/student ratio.
- Graduation rate.
- Cost of institution.

The college process has become confusing and complicated. This information can help students and families compare college choices and also determine their potential for admission; it may help with Wait List options as well. The data can help determine eligibility for merit aid awards and provide important factors affecting student life on campus.

This information is used by college ranking organizations such as U.S. News & World Report and most colleges release this as public information. The best way to find this is to search for Common Set Data linked to a particular school.

This is a great tool to use to obtain assistance with the college search process! More information: commondataset.org