

FINDING STATISTICS USING STATCAN'S DATA PORTAL

FINDING STATISTICS

In this video we'll look at how to find online statistics from Statistics Canada.

StatCan puts nearly all the statistics resources from its surveys into one spot: the Data Portal. This is a free site available to anyone.

To see how the Data Portal works, let's search for statistics on university student debt. I'll start on the Statistics Canada site, and choose Subjects from the top menu. When I do this I see a list of subjects. I'll choose Education, Training and Learning.

Now I see a list of main topics in Education on the left. I'll choose Postsecondary Education, since I'm interested in university students.

I get more than 700 results. Ways to narrow my results appear on the left side. For example, I can choose to see only data tables, or community profiles; I can limit by a geographic region, or choose data from a specific survey.

Make sure you look closely at the table descriptions and think carefully about which table would meet your needs best.

You will sometimes see what look like duplicate tables. These aren't really duplicates, and you'll see that the table numbers are different. They might have different data, or be from different surveys.

Unfortunately, in my case none of the tables seem to be on university student debt. If this happens don't give up: you can also find statistics by doing a search. I'll go to the top of the page and type student debt in the search box.

I'm lucky. The first result that comes up is about postsecondary debt at graduation. I'll click on it to see the data. If I look at the table I see that it is listing student debt in all of Canada, for all levels and fields of study, and for all genders.

ADDING OR REMOVING DATA FROM TABLES

The table you find may not look perfect. Often, though, there is a lot more data in the table than first appears, and it can be customized to meet your needs better. To change or see more of a table's data, use the Add/Remove Data button. You can also try using the dropdown menus in the Customize Table area, but there are more options if you use Add/Remove Data.

When you do, you'll see tabs that let you customize the data in the Table. Click on the tab for the data you want to customize. For example I want Ontario rather than all of Canada. I will click on the

Province of Study tab to change this. Then, click on the plus sign next to Canada to expand the options. Uncheck Canada and check Ontario.

Next I'll click on the Level of Study tab, and click on the plus sign next to All Levels of Study. I'll uncheck All Levels and instead check Bachelor's, to get students graduating with a Bachelor's degree.

Finally I'll click on the Reference Period tab. Here I can choose both 2015 and 2020 so I can compare those two dates.

Once I finish choosing the customization options I want, I need to click Apply.

I get a revised table that shows Ontario students graduating with a Bachelor's degree, and comparing 2015 with 2020.

CUSTOMIZING TABLE LAYOUT

I can also customize how this table displays. Click the Add/Remove Data button again. Then, select the Customize Layout tab. Here you can change whether things appear as rows or columns. I am going to change the Reference period, or year, so it displays as a row instead of a column, by clicking the radio button next to Row. Then I'll click Apply.

Now this table is easier to read. It lists both 2015 with 2020 in each row for easy comparison.

DOWNLOADS, FOOTNOTES, MORE INFORMATION, AND CITING

Once you have your table the way you need it, you can download your data by clicking the Download Options button. Normally you'd pick the first download option in the list, which downloads the table the way you just made it display.

There are a few other things to note before you're done.

In this table, the figures have an A or B next to them. You'll need to look at the footnotes below the table to see what this means. A usually means "data quality: excellent" and B means "data quality: very good". You might sometimes see E, which means "use with caution" and might mean there was only a small sample size. If you have questions about the footnotes or terminology, you can sometimes find out more by looking at the link under Source in the Related Information area, which specifies where the data came from.

Finally, you'll need to cite your data. The citation information is below the table in the How To Cite area.

QUESTIONS AND FEEDBACK

That's how to find statistics through the Data Portal and manipulate tables to give you the data the way you need it.

If you have any questions, ask us at library.wlu.ca/help/askus.