

Executive Summary

2000/01 Baccalaureate and Beyond Longitudinal Study

Introduction

The 2000/01 Baccalaureate and Beyond Longitudinal Study (B&B:2000/01), conducted by Research Triangle Institute (RTI) and sponsored by the U.S. Department of Education's National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), follows a cohort of students who were identified as recipients of a bachelor's degree during the 1999–2000 academic year. This cohort of students was first interviewed in the 1999–2000 cycle of the National Postsecondary Student Aid Study (NPSAS:2000), the base-year study for B&B:2000/01. B&B:2000/01, the first and only planned follow-up survey of this cohort, was conducted in 2001. The survey focused on time to degree completion, participation in post-baccalaureate education and employment, and the activities of newly qualified teachers.

Sample Design

The respondent universe for the B&B:2000/01 follow-up survey consisted of all students who attended postsecondary educational institutions between July 1, 1999, and June 30, 2000, in the United States and Puerto Rico, and who received or expected to receive bachelor's degrees during this time frame. Approximately 11,700 confirmed and potentially eligible bachelor's degree recipients were selected for participation in B&B:2000/01. Of these, about 70 were determined during the follow-up survey to be ineligible. From the remaining nearly 11,630 eligible sample members, about 10,030 were located and interviewed in the follow-up survey.

Instrumentation

The B&B:2000/01 follow-up interview focused primarily on the activities of respondents since receiving their bachelor's degree. The first section of the survey collected information on nonrespondents to the base-year survey (NPSAS:2000) and included

items to verify eligibility. The second section dealt with undergraduate enrollment history and loan burden. The third section gathered background and demographic information about respondents and their families. The fourth section focused on post-baccalaureate enrollment, including graduate and doctoral/first-professional programs, as well as technical and vocational programs. The fifth section collected extensive information on postbaccalaureate employment. The next section gathered data on professional licensure, certification, and job-related training. The final section specifically pertained to teaching experiences for newly qualified teachers.

Data Collection Design and Outcomes

Training

Training programs on successfully locating and interviewing sample members were developed for telephone staff. Topics covered included administrative procedures required for case management; quality control of interactions with sample members, parents, and other contacts; the purpose of B&B:2000/01 and the uses of the data to be collected; and the organization and operation of the computer-assisted telephone interview (CATI) program to be used in data collection. Tracing staff received additional training specific to the locating needs of the study (see discussion below).

Interviewing

Using CATI, with telephone locating, interviewing began in July 2001. The overall unweighted response rate was 86 percent, after eliminating ineligibles from the original sample of about 11,700. The weighted overall response rate was 75 percent. Of those eligible sample members who were successfully located, the unweighted response rate was 94 percent. On average, it took about 19 minutes to complete the interview.

Sample members for whom no locating information was available were sent directly to the tracing unit for specialized tracing. The tracing unit was also used for intensive tracing, once all contact information was exhausted during attempts to conduct the telephone interview. About 630 cases in total were sent to the unit for intensive tracing; of these, nearly 400 sample members completed the interview, resulting in a 64 percent unweighted response rate for intensive tracing cases.

Refusal Conversion

The ability of interviewers to gain the cooperation of sample members, and thus avoid refusals, is important to successful interviewing. RTI staffs its Telephone Survey Division with refusal conversion specialists who have received specialized training and are experienced in attempting to convert (interview) sample members who refuse to complete interviews. In B&B:2000/01, approximately 1,520 sample members refused at least once to participate in the interview. Of those, 70 percent were successfully converted and interviewed.

Indeterminate Responses

Efforts were made to encourage responses to all interview questions and to limit indeterminates, defined as a “don’t know” response or a refusal to answer a question. As a result of these efforts, item nonresponse throughout the interview was low, with only 6 of 556 items having indeterminate response rates above 10 percent.

Online Coding

The B&B instrument allowed computer-assisted online coding of literal responses for postsecondary institution, major field of study, occupation, and industry. These online coding systems were designed to improve data quality by capitalizing on the ability of respondents to clarify information at the time the coding was performed. Of those responses requiring online coding, the highest rates of uncodable responses were for elementary/secondary school and for postsecondary institutional coding (about 14 and 5 percent, respectively), most likely because the coding system included only U.S. institutions and some respondents attended foreign institutions. Major field of study, occupation, and industry codes all had less than 2 percent uncodable responses.

Analysis Weights

Analysis weights were developed for the approximately 10,030 final respondents to the B&B:2000/01 interview. This was done by first testing for potential nonresponse bias; then adjusting for the effects of bias, and finally, poststratifying to known population totals. The quality of final weights was evaluated by a variety of methods. Overall institutional response rates were computed, as were illustrative design effects. An item nonresponse analysis was performed for selected variables. Variance estimations were calculated by either the Taylor series or balanced repeated replications (BRR) method.

Data Files

The B&B:2000/01 restricted data file, documented by the electronic codebook (ECB), contains derived variable and interview data for the base year and B&B follow-up studies. Data collected from institutional records, government databases, and admission test vendors are also contained on the restricted file. The restricted file is available to researchers who have applied for, and received, authorization from NCES to access restricted research files. A separate public-use Data Analysis System (DAS), containing the derived variables and associated documentation, enables users to create summary tables with design-correct standard errors. The DAS is available online at <http://nces.ed.gov/das>.

Products

The major products of B&B:2000/01 include the restricted research files with associated ECB, a public-use DAS, and this methodology report. In addition, a descriptive report provides an overview of data topics, such as time to degree, labor market experiences, entry to graduate school, and household demographics. A second descriptive report summarizes the experiences of newly qualified teachers.

Foreword

This report describes and evaluates the methods and procedures used for the full-scale 2000/01 Baccalaureate and Beyond Longitudinal Study (B&B:2000/01). B&B:2000/01 included important changes from the previous B&B survey (conducted in 1994 with a follow-up in 1997) in sample design and collection of data. We hope that the information provided in this report will be useful to interested readers. This study was based on a nationally representative sample of institutions and students and may therefore be used to produce national estimates. Additional information about B&B:2000/01 and the B&B series is available on the web at <http://nces.ed.gov/surveys/b&b>.

C. Dennis Carroll
Associate Commissioner
Postsecondary Studies Division

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