Distance Learning Licensed Data Set—2019
Database Overview

INTRODUCTION:

Peterson's Distance Learning Database is one of the most comprehensive and complete databases in the field. Within this data set you will find information on programs and courses delivered at a distance via a wide spectrum of media by over 900 institutions. The data set includes information on available program and course subjects, equipment requirements, course delivery methods, required entrance exams, and expenses, as well as the availability of financial aid and other student resources and services. Distance learning unit head and student application contact information is also part of this data set.

This Overview is designed to give you a broad sense of the database. A Data Dictionary, comprised of detailed descriptions of the tables and fields in the database, is available in a separate document.

UNIVERSE:

The Distance Learning Data Set for 2019 includes 1,176 institutions and units in the United States (including U.S. Territories) and Canada offering 11,904 degree/award programs, as well as subject area classifications for 4,173 non-degree-related distance learning courses offered by schools that don't offer distance learning degree/award programs. The degree/award programs, from the associate's to the graduate and professional levels, cover 1,012 program subject areas; the course classifications, at the non-credit, undergraduate, and graduate levels, cover 293 course subject areas.

To be included, an institution must have full accreditation or candidate-for-accreditation (preaccreditation) status granted by an institutional or specialized accrediting body that is recognized by the U.S. Department of Education or Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA). Recognized accrediting bodies include the six regional associations of schools and colleges (Middle States, New England, North Central, Northwest, Southern, and Western), the Accrediting Bureau of Health Education Schools (ABHES), the Accrediting Commission of Career Schools and Colleges (ACCSC), the Accrediting Council for Independent Colleges and Schools (ACICS), the Association for Biblical Higher Education (ABHE), the Association of Advanced Rabbinical and Talmudic Schools (AARTS), the Association of Theological Schools in the United States and Canada (ATS), the Council on Occupational Education (COE), and the Distance Education Accrediting Commission (DEAC). Program registration by the New York State Board of Regents is considered to be the equivalent of institutional accreditation. Canadian institutions must be chartered and authorized to grant degrees by a provincial government, affiliated with a chartered institution, or accredited by a recognized U.S. accrediting body. Institutions from outside the U.S., its territories, and Canada that are accredited by recognized U.S. accrediting bodies are also included. Specialized accrediting bodies exist in over forty different fields, each of which is authorized to accredit specific programs in its particular field. This can serve as the equivalent of institutional accreditation for specialized institutions offering programs in only a single field (e.g., schools of art, optometry, music, theology, etc.).

Each year, Peterson's conducts a thorough review of institutions offering distance learning programs. Since 1996, when the first survey was launched, the Distance Learning Database has grown by over 9800 programs.

TIME FRAME:

The database contains information from the most current academic year. The database is updated annually, in conjunction with the release of updated guides and electronic products. Data collection for 2019 began in October and continued through December. Annual files are archived beginning with the 2000-01 academic year.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND DATA VERIFICATION:

Each spring, *Peterson's Distance Learning Programs Survey* is made available to the appropriate personnel at all institutions in the United States and U.S. territories and Canada eligible for inclusion in Peterson's Undergraduate Database that indicated the availability of distance learning programs. Accredited institutions and consortia outside that group that expressed an interest in being represented in the database, and that offer comparable programs, are also included.

For schools that have previously been included, prior year figures are available for review. Officials from the schools submit responses by confirming that preexisting information is correct or providing new or updated information.

GEOGRAPHIC COVERAGE:

As noted above, the Distance Learning Database includes approved/accredited institutions in the United States and U.S. territories and Canada.

DATABASE VERSATILITY AND EXTENT OF USE:

Information from Peterson's Distance Learning Database is published in *Gale's College Blue Book* and is also featured on Peterson's Education Supersite (OnlineSchools Channel) at
http://www.petersons.com/online-schools.aspx