

How-to Guide for Selecting WOU Peers

This brief guide helps WOU faculty, staff, and administrators select peer institutions/programs for Program Review. Using the National Center for Education Statistics' (NCES) website, you can generate a list of institutions that match your desired search parameters and WOU's institutional characteristics.

The following criteria will help you find institutions with characteristics similar to WOU that offer a specific major or program:

- I. Specific major(s)/program(s)
- II. public 4-year bachelor's degree granting institution
- III. enrollment totals between 1,000-10,000 students (WOU has 4,029 enrolled students (Fall 2021)
- IV. and an institutional acceptance rate between 70%-90% (WOU is 84% as of 2021)

Step 1: Set search criteria for Major/Program

1. Navigate to the [NCES College Navigator](#) website.
2. Once landed on the home page, use the navigation tools on the left side of the page (marked with red box) to begin your search:

The screenshot shows the NCES College Navigator website. The search filters on the left are highlighted with a red box. Two red arrows point to the 'States' dropdown menu and the 'Browse for Programs' button. The main content area features a 'Find the right college for you' banner and various resource links.

3. To begin generating institutions that match WOU, we must first set our parameters:
Remember, we want the College Navigator to find institutions *for us* so we do not need to search by school name and can leave that box empty.

- I. Leave the “State” box as “No Preference”.
- II. “ZIP Code” and “Miles from” should also be left blank.

4. To only find institutions that offer a particular major/program, click the “Browse for Programs” (marked by red arrow and circle) button and a selector box will appear:

The screenshot shows the NCES College Navigator website. The 'Browse for Programs' button is circled in red, and a red arrow points to it. The search filters on the left are visible, and the main content area features a 'Find the right college for you' banner and various resource links.

5. The pop-out selector box allows you to either search your major/program by keyword(s) (black circle) or browse all programs in the database by using a series of expanding and collapsing categories (red box) to find your desired major/program. As an example for this guide, we will select the American Sign Language (ASL) program ONLY:

The screenshot displays the COLLEGE Navigator website interface. On the left, there are search filters for 'Name of School', 'States' (Alabama, Alaska), 'ZIP Code', 'Miles from', 'Programs/Majors' (0 items selected), 'Level of Award' (Certificate, Bachelor's, Associate's, Advanced), and 'Institution Type' (Public, Private non-profit, Private for-profit, 4-year, 2-year, < 2-year). A 'Show Results' button is at the bottom of the filters. On the right, a 'PROGRAMS/MAJORS SELECTOR' pop-out box is open. It contains 'Your Selections' options, a 'How to Use the Programs/Majors Selector' guide, and a list of categories with expand/collapse icons. A red box highlights the list of categories, and a black circle highlights the search input field. A gold 'X' button is visible in the top right corner of the pop-out box.

Note: Use the “+” icon to the left of each category to expand the selection.

6. After selecting your major/program, click the gold “X”/close button at the top right corner of the pop-out box to save your selection.

Step 2: Set institutional characteristics to match WOU's

1. Starting at the "Level of Award" section, check the "Bachelor's" box (and/or "Advanced" box if searching for Master's level programs).
2. Under "Institution Type" and check the "Public" and "4-year" boxes. Your selections should look like this:

COLLEGE Navigator English [Español](#) [About](#)

Name of School
Type name of school here

States (use map for more than 1 state)
No Preference
Alabama
Alaska [Use Map](#)

ZIP Code Miles from

Programs/Majors
1 Items Selected [Browse for Programs](#)

Level of Award [?](#)

Certificate Associate's
 Bachelor's Advanced

Institution Type [?](#)

Public 4-year
 Private non-profit 2-year
 Private for-profit < 2-year

[MORE SEARCH OPTIONS](#)

[Show Results](#)

[Guide Me](#) | [Clear Search](#)

Find the right college for you

[Guide Me](#)

- » Refine your search with *More Search Options* to select additional search criteria.
- » Build a list of schools using *My Favorites* for side-by-side comparisons.
- » Pinpoint school locations with an *interactive map*.
- » Export search results into a *spreadsheet*.
- » Save your session including search options and favorites.
- » Add [College Navigator](#) to your browser search bar.

College Affordability and Transparency Center
Browse lists of institutions with the highest and lowest tuition & fees and net price. [» GO](#)

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Preparing for your Education
Find out what you need to do to prepare for education beyond high school. [» GO](#)

Financial Aid
Apply for Federal Student Aid on FAFSA. [» GO](#)

Postsecondary Education Outcome Measures: ED, DOD, and VA
ED, DOD, and VA have identified a set of potential education outcome measures for Veterans and service members. [» GO](#)

Careers
Deciding on a career? Consult the *bls.gov* Occupational Outlook Handbook. [» GO](#)

3. Below the “Institution Type” section, click on the “(+) MORE SEARCH OPTIONS” button to expand the search criteria (green box). Select the following using the drop down menus to select the desired range:
 - I. Undergraduate Student Enrollment: 1,000 to 10,000 (red circle)
 - II. % of Applicants Admitted: 70% to 90% (black circle)
 - III. Leave all other options as blank/default text.

The screenshot shows the IES NCES National Center for Education Statistics search interface. The 'MORE SEARCH OPTIONS' section is highlighted with a green box. Within this section, the following options are selected:

- Undergraduate Student Enrollment:** 1,000 to 10,000 (circled in red)
- % of Applicants Admitted:** 70% to 90% (circled in black)

A green arrow points to the 'Show Results' button at the bottom of the search options section.

4. Simply click the “→ Show Results” button at the bottom of the search option section(s) to view which institutions match your preferences.

Step 3: Viewing and Selecting Results

1. The search for ASL programs at public 4-year, bachelor degree granting institutions with 1,000-10,000 enrolled students who accept 70%-90% of applicants yielded only 2 results (red box). This is not a sufficient number of results.

The screenshot shows the COLLEGE Navigator search results page. The search criteria are: Name of School (empty), States (Alabama, Alaska), ZIP Code (empty), Miles from (empty), Programs/Majors (1 Items Selected), Level of Award (Bachelor's), Institution Type (Public, 4-year). The results list shows 2 results: Framingham State University (Framingham, Massachusetts) and Lamar University (Beaumont, Texas). A red box highlights these two results. The page also includes a 'MY FAVORITES (0)' button and a 'Showing All Results' link.

2. If your search only yields a few results, adjust your search criteria to make the search less stringent. For example, you could remove the additional search parameters of enrollment and acceptance rate. When you do so, the results now return a list of 8 institutions from which to choose (red box):

The screenshot shows the COLLEGE Navigator search results page with adjusted search criteria. The search criteria are: Name of School (empty), States (Alabama, Alaska), ZIP Code (empty), Miles from (empty), Programs/Majors (1 Items Selected), Level of Award (Bachelor's), Institution Type (Public, 4-year). The results list shows 8 results: Eastern Michigan University (Ypsilanti, Michigan), Framingham State University (Framingham, Massachusetts), Kent State University at Kent (Kent, Ohio), Lamar University (Beaumont, Texas), Oklahoma State University-Main Campus (Stillwater, Oklahoma), University of Connecticut (Storrs, Connecticut), University of Houston (Houston, Texas), and Utah Valley University (Orem, Utah). A red box highlights these eight results. The page also includes a 'MY FAVORITES (0)' button and a 'Showing All Results' link.

- Once you have a desired number of results, you can export the data into an excel file by clicking the “Export Results” button at the top right of the page (red circle) and choosing “excel” and then, again, clicking on “Export” (green circle) and your data will be downloaded as an excel spreadsheet:

The screenshot shows the COLLEGE Navigator search results page. On the left is a search filter sidebar with sections for 'Name of School', 'States', 'ZIP Code', 'Programs/Majors', 'Level of Award', 'Institution Type', and 'MORE SEARCH OPTIONS'. The main area displays a list of 8 search results, each with an information icon, the school name, location, and an 'Add to Favorites' button. At the top right, there are buttons for 'Print', 'Export Results', and 'Save'. A red circle highlights the 'Export Results' button. A modal dialog box titled 'Choose a spreadsheet format' is open, showing 'Excel' selected with a radio button, and 'Export' and 'Cancel' buttons. A green circle highlights the 'Export' button. Below the results list, it says 'Showing All Results'.

[View the downloaded excel data spreadsheet for the ASL program search.](#)

- Navigate to your browser’s downloads to access your recently exported spreadsheet. *Note:* the downloaded file name will begin with “CollegeNavigator_Search_...”
- Your mission for selecting peer institutions is now complete.