cupa·hr™

DataOnDemand
How-To Guide

Benchmarking for Faculty and Staff Size

Adam Pritchard, Ph.D., Senior Survey Researcher
Jacqueline Bichsel, Ph.D., Director of Research
Anthony Schmidt, M.S.E.D., Data Visualization Researcher

Benchmarking for Faculty and Staff Size

DataOnDemand can be used to benchmark the number of employees in individual positions, specific functional areas, or entire institutions. Comprising the most comprehensive salary and workforce database in higher education, the data reported in CUPA-HR surveys provide the best estimate of the size of a typical institution's workforce. This guide will help you answer questions like:

- How many employees should an institution of our size or classification have for a certain position?
- What department size is typical for institutions with similar total operating expenses or enrollment?
- If we anticipate downsizing or increasing our workforce, how do I benchmark against appropriate peers for our anticipated size or total operating expenses?

Step 1: Prepare for the Analysis

To benchmark positions or groups of positions, you will make use of the *Multi-Position Report* (Administrators, Professionals, or Staff surveys) or the *2- or 4-Digit Multi-Discipline Reports* (Faculty survey) in DataOnDemand. Before beginning your analysis, you will need to gather:

- **Information on which functional areas and positions you're benchmarking.**

To match your positions or areas to CUPA-HR positions, refer to the *Survey Participation and Information Template* (SPIT) files for position numbers and descriptions. Although not every possible position is surveyed, if your institution participates in CUPA-HR surveys, your institution's position matches are already in DataOnDemand to make comparisons convenient.

- **Information on the types of institutions you'd like to benchmark against.**

To construct appropriate comparison groups, you'll need to decide which criteria are important to you. Common filters are institutional affiliation (public, private independent, private religious) and classification (doctoral, master's, baccalaureate, associate's). For benchmarking faculty and staff size, you may choose to use other selection criteria including but not limited to:
  - Student enrollment (total student FTE)
  - Total operating expenses

Example: Admissions Staff at a Private Baccalaureate Institution

Throughout this guide, we'll use an example to illustrate the process of benchmarking a functional area. Let's say you're at a private baccalaureate institution, and you want to benchmark your admissions staff against staff of similar institutions based on an enrollment of 1,500-2,000 students.

First, you will need to review the "Position Descriptions" tab of each survey's *Survey Participation and Information Template* (SPIT) file to identify the positions you need to benchmark. SPIT files can be downloaded directly from DataOnDemand by clicking *Downloads* in the top menu bar, then expanding the sub-menu:

> **⊖ Survey Participation and Information Templates (SPITs)**
> Administrators Survey Participation and Information Template
> Includes all instructions, position descriptions, upload template, and survey deadlines.

The best way to identify possible position matches is through a keyword search of the "Position Descriptions" tab or use of the position group headers in the SPIT file for each survey. The SPIT files can be used to build a list of positions in your department. After reviewing SPIT files for the professionals, staff, and administrators surveys, let's say you have identified the positions in the table below as being part of a typical admissions staff for your institution type and size.

Survey	Positions Considered and Included	Positions Considered but Excluded	Decision Explanation
Professionals	• 411100 Deputy Head, Student Admissions • 411110 Student Admissions Counselor • 418100 Associate Registrar • 418110 Assistant Registrar	• 411105 Head, Student Admissions for College/School • 411115 Graduate Program Admissions Coordinator • 411120 Head, Campus Graduate Admissions • 411130 Head, Medical School Admissions	Based on position descriptions in the SPIT file, the included positions are the positions most likely to be found at comparable peer institutions. Admissions staff positions for graduate programs or programs uncommon at baccalaureate institutions are excluded.
Staff	• 543000 Student Services Coordinator	• None	Based on the position description in the SPIT file, this position is where coordinators for admissions functions are reported.
Administrators	• 171000 Chief Student Admissions Officer	• 115000 Chief Enrollment Management Officer	Based on position descriptions in the SPIT file, the scope of this role best fits the type of administrative role expected for peer institutions.

Now that you have identified the positions you wish to benchmark, you can proceed to DataOnDemand to begin setting up your comparison group and reports.

Step 2: Create a Comparison Group

The easiest way to create a comparison group is to make use of the *New Group Wizard* in DataOnDemand. Once logged in to **Surveys Online**, navigate through the menu to *DataOnDemand > Comparison Groups*. Click the *New Group Wizard* button to get started.

Comparison Groups

A **Comparison Group** is a set of **Institutions** that you are interested in.

[New Group Wizard] [New Group from Scratch] [Combine Groups]

Our example institution is a private baccalaureate institution benchmarking against similar institutions based on an enrollment of 1,500-2,000 students. Use the settings below in the *New Group Wizard* to create a comparison group based on these characteristics.

Criteria	Location in Wizard	Selection	Example Screenshot
Include only baccalaureate institutions	Carnegie Groups and States/ Carnegie Groups	Baccalaureate	
Include only institutions with student FTE of 1,500 to 2,000	Participation and Survey Variables/ Survey Variables	Select Student Full-Time Equivalent (FTE), then click Add. Enter values in the boxes labeled "is between ___ and ___."	
Include only private institutions	Other Classifications/ Affiliation	Private Independent, Private Religious (hold Ctrl and click to select multiple criteria)	

After completing these selections, click the *Search* button to refresh the page and view the table of results at the bottom of the screen. For detailed information about the other filtering options available in the wizard, visit the CUPA-HR User Guide and Tutorials page:

https://www.cupahr.org/surveys/dataondemand/dod-users/

When using the *New Group Wizard*, always review the institutions identified in the search and verify that the number of institutions is large enough. In general, the more institutions in your group, the more reliable data you can generate.

Once you are satisfied with your comparison group, add a name and detailed description of your selection criteria in the boxes below the results, then save your comparison group. This group will now appear in *Your Personal Groups*.

To make minor changes like adding or removing specific institutions, you can click the name of the group you just created to open group editing options. However, once this group has been used to run a report it becomes "locked" and cannot be changed by fewer than three institutions at a time. This is a privacy protection to ensure data confidentiality. *Therefore, it's important to ensure that your comparison group contains exactly the institutions you want before you go to the next step.*

> **TIP:** The recommended minimum for most comparisons is at least 30 institutions.
>
> To increase this number, broaden your search criteria range or use fewer filters.

Step 3: Run Your Report(s)

To benchmark for specific positions or functional areas, you'll run the *Multi-Position Report* (for administrators, professionals, or staff) or *Multi-Discipline Report* (for faculty) in DataOnDemand.

Navigate through to *DataOnDemand > Survey Reports*, expand the menu for *Reports Organized by What You Want to Do,* and expand the sub-menu for the survey where the position(s) in which you're interested are found. In the sub-menu, locate *Compare salary data across a range of positions* (or *disciplines* for faculty). Click the name of the report you wish to use to begin.

When you click on your desired report, you'll arrive at a *Report Parameters* page. For *Comparison Group*, select the new group you created in Step 2. Other settings default to our recommended settings (e.g., most recent year, institutional average salaries, output format, percentiles). Detailed information for understanding and customizing report settings for all DataOnDemand reports can be found in the *[DataOnDemand User Guide](#)*.

To choose which positions to benchmark, you'll need to set the *Positions to Include* settings. In the *Positions to Include* menu, you can use the "Positions reported by focus institution in selected year" option to include all positions reported by your institution in the *CUPA-HR Professionals in Higher Education Survey*.

To select specific positions, like our example of only admissions staff positions, you'll change the drop-down menu labeled *SELECT* to "None" to clear all checked positions, then manually add checks for the positions you want to include.

Click the *Go to Report* button at the bottom of the settings page to run the report.

Returning to our example, you are interested in benchmarking admissions staff positions. You will now run the *Prof: Multi-Discipline Report*, since most positions in which you're interested are found in this survey. After setting your *Comparison Group* to the one you just created, you will use the following *Positions to Include* settings to benchmark the four professionals positions you identified:
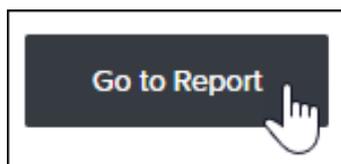
Positions to Include
SELECT

None	▼

Admissions and Enrollment Management Professionals; 411100 - 411130; 418100 -418110

- ☑ [411100] Deputy Head - Student Admissions
- ☐ [411105] Head - Student Admissions for College/School
- ☑ [411110] Student Admissions Counselor
- ☐ [411115] Graduate Program Admissions Coordinator
- ☐ [411120] Head - Campus Graduate Admissions
- ☐ [411130] Head - Medical School Admissions
- ☑ [418100] Associate Registrar
- ☑ [418110] Assistant Registrar

Save Selection

TIP: If you plan to use a manually-selected group of positions several times, click the "Save Selection" button to create a custom group of positions that will be shared among all users at your institution to save you time. Once the selection is saved, it will become a new option in the SELECT drop-down menu.

In this example, the *Comparison Group* and *Positions to Include* settings are the only changes that need to be made. This will run the report with the recommended default settings for other options. When ready to proceed, you will simply scroll to the bottom of the report settings page and click the *Go to Report* button.

Go to Report

The *Prof: Multi-Position Report* includes the following table. The "Focus salary" columns report any data your own institution has reported in this survey. In the center of the table, the columns under "Comparison Group Statistics" provide information about your comparison group institutions, including number of reporting institutions (NI) and number of position incumbents (NP) for each position row.

To understand the typical numbers of admissions staff in these positions, you would look at the median number of position incumbents (Median NP) for institutions in your comparison group for these selected positions.

Code/Title	Focus Salary			Comparison Group Statistics								Focus Median Salary as Percentage of Comp Group Median Salary
	NP	Median	Average	Median	Average	Std. Dev.	Additional Percentiles		Median NP	NP	NI	
							5	95				
Across All Positions Selected	9			50,079	51,428	11,394	37,674	65,661	10	352	39	
Admissions and Enrollment Management Professionals; 411100 - 411130; 418100 -418110												
[411100] Deputy Head - Student Admissions	3			66,115	70,046	21,658	42,967	114,228	3	76	30	
[411110] Student Admissions Counselor	4			40,295	42,951	8,362	33,153	58,796	6	217	36	
[418100] Associate Registrar				59,491	59,560	11,184	46,027	82,476	1	29	25	
[418110] Assistant Registrar	2			48,647	47,907	10,030	35,449	68,522	1	30	22	

In this example, this comparison group of private baccalaureate institutions with 1,500-2,000 students has a median of 6 student admissions counselors and a combined median of 10 total admissions staff per institution across these four positions. The table also provides salary statistics for these positions.

Next, you will assess the staff position of Student Services Coordinator (543000). To examine this position, you use the *Staff: Multi-Position Report* with the same comparison group. The results are displayed below:

Code/Title	Focus Salary			Comparison Group Statistics								Focus Median Salary as Percentage of Comp Group Median Salary
	NP	Median	Average	Median	Average	Std. Dev.	Additional Percentiles		Median NP	NP	NI	
							5	95				
Across All Positions Selected	1			36,587	38,459	5,359	32,629	49,203	5	81	15	
Office/Clerical Staff; 505000 - 545000												
[543000] Student Services Coordinator	1			36,587	38,459	5,359	32,629	49,203	5	81	15	

Notice that this report result indicated 5 coordinators per institution. In reviewing this table, you realize that this figure seems unusually high – most smaller offices on campus do not have so many coordinators. A closer review of the SPIT file position description reveals the reason:

Position Number	Title/Role	Job Description
543000	Student Services Coordinator	Applies knowledge of programs, procedures, and policies to provide administrative support and assistance in a student services function (e.g., registrar, student records, admissions, residence life, financial aid). Assists current and prospective students and parents with a variety of inquiries and topics.

The position title Student Services Coordinator (543000) covers a range of coordinator positions for many different types of offices (e.g., registrar, student records, admissions, residence life, financial aid) and is not limited to only admissions. You might conclude from this that one coordinator is a more appropriate and logical headcount for this role. This brings up an important point: Although DataOnDemand provides you with valuable data, you have an important role to play in interpreting the data and presenting the data to your leadership.

Similarly, institutions are expected to have only one Chief Student Admissions Officer (171000) – which is true for most administrative positions – so comparing this headcount is also unnecessary, although DataOnDemand can still provide salary benchmarking for administrators.

Through these *Multi-Position Reports*, DataOnDemand has enabled our example institution to fully benchmark its admissions office for headcount and salaries. You would conclude that it's

typical for an institution of this size to have 12 employees in its admissions office: 10 professionals, 1 administrator, and 1 staff.

Limitations and Considerations

When using the *Multi-Position Reports* or *Multi-Discipline Reports*, keep in mind the following:

- CUPA-HR may not collect data on all positions you consider to be part of a functional area or department, so read all position descriptions carefully when deciding which positions to benchmark.
- CUPA-HR collects salary data for full-time-equivalent positions only, so these data are headcounts. You will not get data on which of these employees are full-time or part-time.
- The Median NP statistic appears on the *Prof: Multi-Position Report* and the *Staff: Multi-Position Report*, along with faculty *2- or 4-Digit Multi-Discipline Reports.* This statistic is not reported for the *Admin: Multi-Position Report* since most administrative positions are single incumbent.
- Some position titles such as Student Services Coordinator (543000) or Administrative Assistant (514000), are not classified within a single functional area, so headcounts for such a position may include all individuals with that title institution wide. Read all position descriptions carefully to ensure accuracy.

> **TIP:** It is always good practice to review the administrators, professionals, and staff SPIT files to ensure that all positions in a functional area are included in your analysis.

- To combine results from more than one DataOnDemand report into a single document, consider using the .csv (Excel) output setting to receive data as a spreadsheet.

For more details on the statistics generated in each DataOnDemand report, or for detailed information about the variety of report settings options available, visit the CUPA-HR User Guide and Tutorials page:

https://www.cupahr.org/surveys/dataondemand/dod-users/

Benchmarking Staff Size for the Entire Institution

To benchmark faculty and staff sizes across the entire institution based on total FTE (including full- and part-time employees) rather than position-level headcounts, the comparison group created in Step 2 above can also be used with the *Institutional Basics Report*.

Access this report by navigating through the menu to *DataOnDemand > Survey Reports*. Expand the menu for *Reports Organized by What You Want to Do*, expand the sub-menu for *Institutional Benchmarking*, and click on the *Institutional Basics Report.*

⊖ **Institutional Benchmarking**
    HR Benchmarking Report
    Institutional Basics
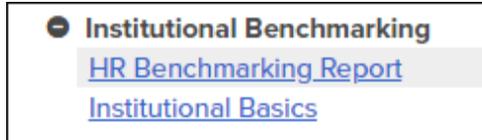
The *Institutional Basics Report* has four settings: comparison group, year, output format, and percentiles. Choose your comparison group and consider whether you want to see percentile ranges for headcounts. Other settings default to the most recent data year available and display your report in HTML. Click *Go to Report* to generate your results.

Using the comparison group from our example, the *Institutional Basics Report* output for private baccalaureate institutions with an enrollment range of 1,500-2,000 students is displayed below using selections for several additional percentiles:

	Focus Value	Comparison Group Statistics			Additional Percentiles					
		Median	Average	NI	5	20	40	60	80	95
Total Operating Expenses		75,324,577	90,308,517	41	44,542,839	57,243,046	70,743,000	82,339,892	118,759,643	169,000,000
Undergrad FTE		1,705.00	1,690.00	41	1,366.30	1,528.30	1,664.00	1,738.30	1,837.00	1,956.00
Graduate FTE		0.00	57.42	41	0.00	0.00	0.00	12.00	84.70	291.00
Student FTE		1,738.30	1,747.42	41	1,545.70	1,643.70	1,704.00	1,771.00	1,839.00	1,963.00
Faculty FTE		165.30	173.99	41	127.00	141.00	160.30	177.30	209.70	250.00
Staff FTE		299.70	361.78	41	190.70	245.00	275.40	332.00	523.00	656.60
HR staff size		4.00	5.73	41	2.00	3.00	4.00	5.00	7.00	10.50

The median staff FTE in this example is 299.70 and the median faculty FTE is 165.30. Additional data in this table, such as the median for total operating expenses and percentile ranges, can be helpful in assessing precisely how your institution compares to your peers.

Limitations and Considerations

When using the *Institutional Basics Report* to benchmark overall staff size, consider the following:

- These data can vary a great deal depending on the institutional characteristics used to create your comparison group.
- Using the *Additional Percentiles* setting can help you see the range of differences between institutions, so you can better determine the appropriateness of your comparison group or see exactly where your institution stands.

> **TIP:** One of the most important considerations in using the *Institutional Basics Report* to benchmark overall staff size is a carefully designed comparison group. Always be prepared to explain the criteria and reasoning used to create your comparison group to your leadership.

DO MORE WITH CUPA-HR

- DataOnDemand
- Survey Participation
- Annual Reports
- Research Briefs
- Research Skills Labs
- Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Assessment
- *And more!*

www.cupahr.org/surveys