

How to Search in the Data Catalog



Overview

This guide explains how to search for information in The Data Catalog at Boston University. You'll learn how to:

- Access The Data Catalog and ensure you are connected to the VPN
- Use the two main types of searches: Unison Search and Simple Search
- Navigate search results and detailed object pages
- Understand glossary terms, data sets and relationships
- Return to the search page or home as needed

Whether you are new to The Data Catalog or just need a refresher, this guide will help you search more effectively and understand the structure of BU's metadata.

 *Note: BU refers to this resource as the "Data Catalog," but it is built on software from Informatica called **Axon**. External help documentation may reference the name "Axon."*

1. Accessing the Data Catalog

To access the Data Catalog, you must be connected to BU's 2-Factor Authentication (2FA) VPN. If the Data Catalog link times out, verify that you are connected to the VPN with 2FA.

Visit: bu.edu/data-catalog

-  **No login is required** to search and view content
-  **Log in with BU credentials** for enhanced features like saving searches and participating in workflows

2. Performing a Search

 Tip: Review of the [How to Navigate the Data Catalog](#) for step-by-step guide using the Data Catalog.

There are two main search methods

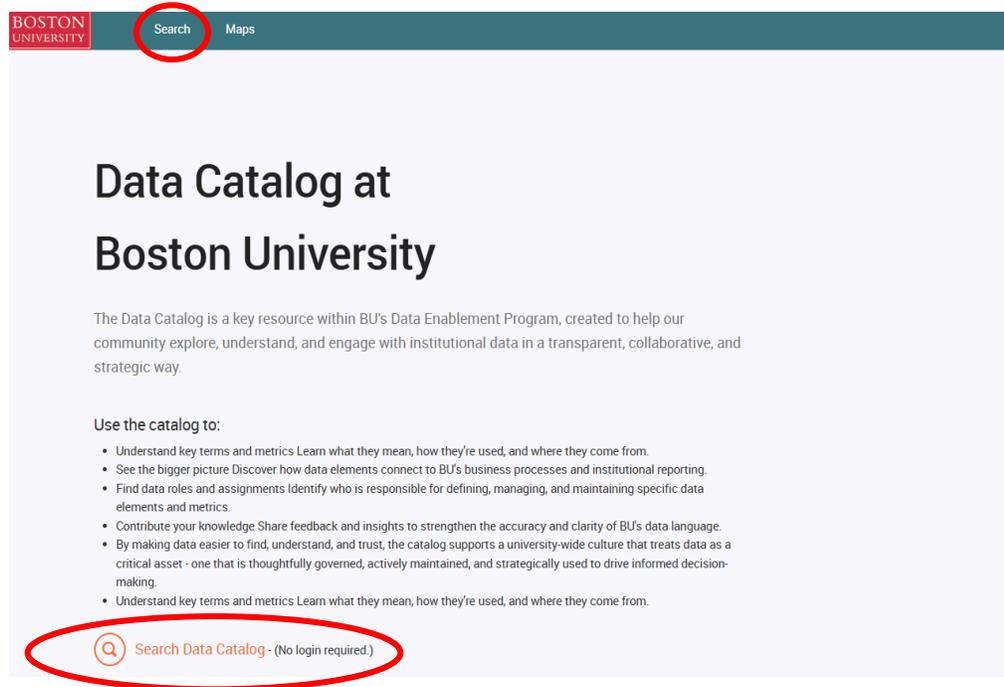
Search Type	Location	Description
Complex (Unison) Search	Top ribbon or homepage	Powerful, multi-faceted search for exploring data and its dependencies across the Data Catalog
Smart Search	Top-right magnifying glass	Searches within a single inventory

 Tip: We recommend using **Complex Search** for most activities as it is more robust and produces more refined results.

How to Perform a Complex Search

On the Data Catalog landing page, you can initiate a search using one of two options:

1. Click the 'Search' button on the top ribbon
2. Click the magnifying  glass labeled 'Search the Data Catalog'



BOSTON UNIVERSITY Search Maps

Data Catalog at Boston University

The Data Catalog is a key resource within BU's Data Enablement Program, created to help our community explore, understand, and engage with institutional data in a transparent, collaborative, and strategic way.

Use the catalog to:

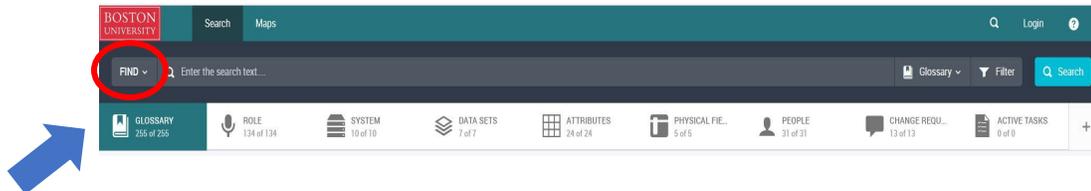
- Understand key terms and metrics Learn what they mean, how they're used, and where they come from.
- See the bigger picture Discover how data elements connect to BU's business processes and institutional reporting.
- Find data roles and assignments Identify who is responsible for defining, managing, and maintaining specific data elements and metrics.
- Contribute your knowledge Share feedback and insights to strengthen the accuracy and clarity of BU's data language.
- By making data easier to find, understand, and trust, the catalog supports a university-wide culture that treats data as a critical asset - one that is thoughtfully governed, actively maintained, and strategically used to drive informed decision-making.
- Understand key terms and metrics Learn what they mean, how they're used, and where they come from.

 Search Data Catalog - (No login required.)

Once you have initiated a search, you will be directed to the Data Catalog where you can continue your search.

Search Features in the Data Catalog

- The main search bar is labeled 'FIND'
- A highlighted tab (e.g., **Glossary**, **Role**, **System**, etc.) shows which category you are searching within
- You can change the category by clicking on a different tab



The following categories help organize the Data Catalog's content:

- **Glossary**: Definitions of Business Terms
- **Roles**: Assigned roles like 'Data Trustee' or 'Data Steward'
- **Systems, Datasets, Attributes**: Logical data assets documented in the catalog

Complex Search Features

When you begin typing in the search bar:

- The Data Catalog will suggest related terms
- It uses **fuzzy search**, so entering 'Under...' will return results like 'Common Application', since it relates to undergraduate data

You can either:

- Continue typing and press **Enter**, or
- Choose from the list of suggested terms

Viewing search Results

When you search for a term like "**Undergraduate**":

- The Data Catalog shows a list of entries with brief details
- Click on an entry (e.g., *Undergraduate Application Class*) to see more information

You will land on a detailed page with the following tabs:

Tab	Description
Summary	Term definition, aliases, and strategic source
Relationships	Links to other objects (may span inventories)
Data Quality	<i>Not Currently Utilized</i>
Stakeholders	Owners and related roles
Impact	A summary of how a data asset influences business processes, reports, or other assets
Data	Related data sets, systems, and data attributes
Enterprise Catalog	Physical data and lineage (if available)
History	Change logs
Change	Change requests

Example: Undergraduate Application Class'

From the **Glossary**:

- The term '*Undergraduate Application Class*' may link to:
 - Attribute: APPLIC_CLASS_ENTRY_CD
 - Data Set: EN_PERSON_APPLICATION
 - System: ADW Stage

These relationships show how business terms connect to data assets.

How to Perform a Quick Search

If you want to perform a quick search without navigating to the full search landing page:

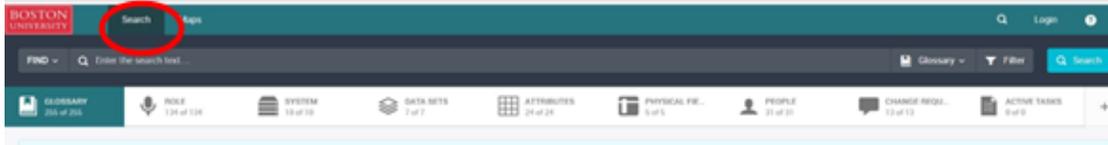
1. Locate the **magnifying glass icon**  in the top-right corner of the screen
2. Click the icon to activate the **Quick Search** box
3. Start typing your search term. The Data Catalog will display suggested results as you type
4. Press **Enter** to view results in a compact format, or click on a suggested item to jump directly to its detail page

This type of search is best for users who know exactly what they are looking for and want to get there quickly without switching screens.

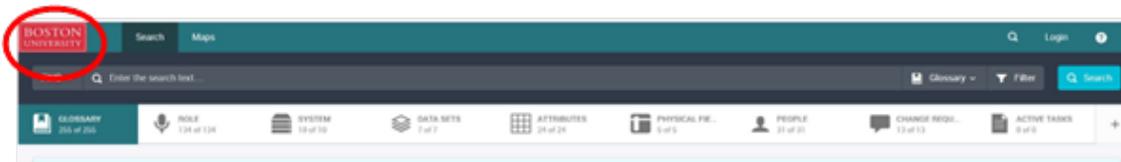
 *Tip: Quick Search looks within the active inventory (e.g., Glossary) by default.*

Tips for Navigation

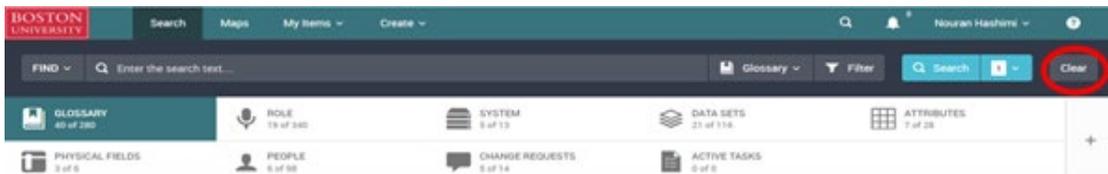
- **To return to the Search page:** Click the **Search** button again instead of using your browser's back button



- **To return to the home page:** Click the **BU icon** in the top left corner



- **To start a new search:** When you are searching in the Data Catalog, the software is designed to track your inputs and save them until you clear them. So, if you want to start a new search, click **Clear** (*this appears only when you have active search criteria*)



- The number next to 'Search' shows how many filters are currently applied. This number corresponds to the number of conditions you specified in your search



💡 Additional Information

Visit the [Data Catalog](#) for additional training materials.