

University of Northern Colorado

Unit Record Data Sharing Guidelines

Effective July 1, 2021; Updated Dec 9, 2022
(Adapted from Colorado State University)

PURPOSE

Business Intelligence and Data Engineering (BIDE) and the Office of Institutional Research and Effectiveness (OIRE) have access to a wide variety of data elements from multiple systems of record. The data are considered an institutional asset of the University of Northern Colorado and as such are provided to faculty/staff with a legitimate operational need in accordance with the Code of Ethics and Professional Practice of the Association for Institutional Research, the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and the University of Northern Colorado Data Governance Policy. All access to student unit data is contingent upon approval from the Data Steward for student information.

Recipients of unit data files are expected to follow all institutional policies, protocols and to work in good faith regarding data security. These guidelines have been developed to protect individuals, their data, and the institution, as well as to insure that all human subject research at UNC has been approved by the UNC Institutional Review Board.

DEFINITIONS

Research - as defined by 45 CFR §46.102 “Research means a systematic investigation, including research development, testing and evaluation, designed to develop or contribute to generalizable knowledge”.

Assessment – as defined by Marchese, 1987, “Assessment is the systematic collection, review, and use of information about educational programs undertaken for the purpose of improving student learning and development”.

Quality Improvement – systematic methods used to gain learning and knowledge for the continual improvement of a product, service, or process.

UNIT DATA FOR OPERATIONAL NEEDS

Unit Data for operational needs is role-specific and based on access to the information needed to complete the functions of the job. Examples of legitimate operational needs for student unit data/information:

- Data integrity checks, where student unit data are found to be in error and need to be corrected.
- Contact information of advisees for assigned advisors.
- Data on students who need additional attributes or information placed on their records for processing purposes.

UNIT DATA FOR INDIVIDUAL RESEARCH AND ASSESSMENT

Student unit data will generally not be extracted for the purpose of individual research and/or assessment and is subject to capacity constraints within BIDE/OIRE. Most data are available in aggregate form and may be provided at the unit record level to faculty/staff in specific circumstances. Recovery of cost necessary to produce the file may apply. To request a unit record data file or report, please submit a request through the Technical Support Center. Such requests will be reviewed by a committee consisting of representatives from BIDE, OIRE, Academic Affairs, the Data Steward for student information, and faculty on a case-by-case basis. To be approved, the following must be demonstrated:

- Unit record data will only be provided for research and assessment projects that demonstrate direct impact for the success and improvement of the UNC community.
- Unit record data will not be released to a student and will not, with very rare exceptions, be provided for student research projects (thesis, dissertation etc.).
- Email addresses and other directory information will not be released for use in recruiting human subjects for non-survey research/assessment protocols except in very rare circumstances. In such instances, approval must be obtained from the Office of Integrated Marketing & Communications to manage the volume of emails sent to students. Emails for purposes of survey administration will be managed by the OIRE Research Associate.
- Proof of IRB approval, along with the protocol is required before any data will be provided by BIDE or OIRE for use in research/assessment. For projects requiring IRB approval, only data that have been outlined in the approved protocol will be provided. This is contingent upon Data Steward approval as well as BIDE/OIRE staff capacity.
- All requests that include provision of unit data must include information on data security such as encryption of the file and data destruction upon completion of the research/assessment project.