

University of Texas at Dallas
Education Research Center (UTD-ERC)

Protocol for Research Proposals to Use UTD-ERC Data

UTD-ERC is an officially designated education research center authorized to maintain a repository of statewide data on P-16 public education institutions in the state of Texas. The Joint Advisory Board (JAB), appointed by the Texas Education Agency (TEA) and the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB), has the final authority to approve or decline all proposed research projects. The procedure for gaining access to the UTD-ERC data is outlined below.

Step 1. Submit a brief letter of inquiry (2-3 single-spaced pages) that includes the following information:

1. Research objectives
2. Area(s) of focus and variables of interest
3. Research plan, Research hypotheses, Research strategy, Research methodology
4. Why you need access to the UTD-ERC data
5. Potential contribution to theory and practice
6. Potential to benefit education in the state of Texas
7. Estimated time frame (e.g., proposed start and end dates)
8. Researcher qualifications
9. Estimated cost and plan for procuring funds or funding source
10. Dissemination strategy
11. Collaborating partners, if applicable

Letters of inquiry will be reviewed by UTD-ERC staff to establish whether the proposed research projects are feasible given the existing data, and whether the projects are compliant with state and federal regulations governing use of student data. UTD-ERC will notify you of the outcome of this review in approximately four weeks.

Step 2. Based on a successful outcome in Step 1, you will be invited to submit a full proposal. This should be approximately 10 single-spaced pages (not including the bibliography and CVs) and provide additional information on the eight points listed under

Step 1. If you have already prepared a proposal for submission elsewhere (IES, NSF, etc.), you can submit that proposal (even if it is longer than 10 pages) with an addendum that covers missing information, if any. A qualified panel of reviewers, appointed by UTD-ERC, will review the proposal based on the following criteria:

1. Potential contribution to theory and practice
2. Need to use UTD-ERC data
3. Potential to benefit education in the state of Texas
4. Strength and appropriateness of methodology
5. Researcher qualifications
6. Broader impact of the proposed activity
7. Dissemination strategy
8. Access to adequate resources

Step 3. Successful proposals will be ranked by the UTD-ERC appointed review panel. Subsequent to the approval of the Institutional Review Board, proposals will be forwarded to the Joint Advisory Board (JAB) for review.

If supplemental data collections are required from Independent School Districts, then the data collection instruments must be submitted to the TEA Data and Information Review Committee (DIRC) for approval.

Step 4. For proposals approved by the JAB, UTD-ERC will make the ERC data available to the qualified researchers upon their signing and submitting confidentiality agreements and other relevant contracts.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION REGARDING DATA ACCESS:

If approved, the researcher shall have access to confidential student information for the limited purpose of conducting the proposed research project. *For the time being, UTD-ERC data can only be accessed in the following ways- (i) on site at the UTD-ERC premises in Richardson, Texas, and (ii) at a public institute of higher education in Texas upon execution of necessary contracts.* Data may be accessed by the researcher or his/her research assistants, provided that each person accessing the data has signed the confidentiality agreement. Any unauthorized disclosure of confidential student information is illegal as provided in the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA). The researcher may never remove any student-level data or protected data of any kind from the servers of the UTD-ERC. The

researcher agrees to protect any personal characteristics of a student that could make the student's identity traceable, including membership in a group such as ethnicity or program area. To protect student identity, the researcher will not release or remove from the UTD-ERC tables, summary statistics, or aggregated data based on cell counts of less than five. Further, the researcher will not release the findings when all students pass or all students fail. Revealing that 100% of the students passed or 0% passed is considered to be a violation of FERPA and of the privacy of all students, because the result for every student tested is known. Finally, prior to release or publication, the researcher shall submit all proposed research products (papers, PowerPoint presentations, etc.) to the designated UTD-ERC staff person for FERPA compliance review. Unless waived jointly by TEA and THECB, all research products must contain the following disclaimer: The conclusions of this research do not necessarily reflect the opinions or official position of the Texas Education Agency, the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, or the State of Texas.