

University of Texas at Dallas
Education Research Center (UTD-ERC)
Protocol for Submitting Research Proposals to Access 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 research proposals that seek to use ERC data. The procedure for gaining access to the UTD-ERC data is outlined below¹.

Preliminary Step (*optional but recommended*). 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. Whether you intend to use any supplemental data and if so, proof of IRB approval
6. Potential contribution to theory and practice
7. Potential to benefit education in the state of Texas
8. Estimated time frame (e.g., proposed start and end dates)
9. Researcher qualifications
10. Estimated cost and plan for procuring funds or funding source
11. Dissemination strategy
12. 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.

Step 1. Submit a full proposal along with bibliography, CVs, abstract (less than 120 words), executive summary, and “Abide By Statement²”. The full proposal should be

¹ For questions related to the fee for accessing UTD-ERC data, please contact Nidhi Mehrotra.

² For a copy, go to http://www.utdallas.edu/research/tsp-erc/pdf/abide_by_statement.pdf.

approximately 10 single-spaced pages (not including the bibliography, CVs, abstract and executive summary) and provide additional information on the 12 points listed under the Preliminary Step. 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
9. Recommendation from your Faculty Advisor, in case you are a student

In addition to the full proposal, researchers are strongly encouraged to include a Reader's Guide (1-2 pages) that addresses the following questions:

1. *What are the RESEARCH QUESTIONS being addressed in this proposal?*
2. *Which DATA ELEMENTS from the ERC database will be used to conduct this research (please be as specific as possible)?*
3. *What research/statistical METHODS/MODELS will be used to conduct this research (please be as specific as possible)?*
4. *What is the expected OUTPUT (e.g., frequency tables, cross-tabulations, coefficient matrices, regression tables, etc.) of this research?*
5. *What QUALIFICATIONS do the researchers possess in order to undertake this research?*
6. *How is this research expected to BENEFIT education in the state of Texas?*
7. *What FINANCIAL RESOURCES/ASSURANCES do the researchers have to carry this research to completion?*

Step 2. Full proposals will be reviewed by UTD-ERC appointed reviewers. Successful proposals will be forwarded to the Joint Advisory Board (JAB) for review. **The**

researchers are strongly recommended to attend the JAB meeting in order to present their proposal and respond to questions related to their proposal.

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

Step 3. 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 documents. Our standard annual fees for accessing data are as follows –

<u>Affiliation</u>	<u>ERC Authorized Researchers³</u>	<u>Student</u>
Within University System ⁴	\$10,000.00	\$500.00
Other	\$15,000.00	\$5,000.00

Based on specific financial circumstances, the access fee can be negotiated/waived. For more information regarding this, please contact Nidhi Mehrotra (nidhi.mehrotra@utdallas.edu).

IMPORTANT INFORMATION REGARDING DATA ACCESS:

- If approved, the researcher shall have access to confidential student information for the limited purpose of conducting the approved 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).

³ The annual charge for ERC Authorized Researchers includes up to two researchers working on an approved project. For approved projects that have special requirements, annual fees can be negotiated.

⁴ Defined as an institution that is part of the specific Texas university system of which the ERC Operating Partner is a member.

- 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.***