

Guidelines for Institutional Survey Submission Process

May 2024



OFFICE OF DECISION SUPPORT
AND DATA INTEGRITY

The University regularly receives survey submission requests for data and information from various external bodies, including but not limited to federal and state government, ranking agencies, admissions guidebook publishers, non-profit and professional organizations, accrediting bodies, credit rating agencies, and other regulatory entities.

The most significant ones are the set of interrelated surveys from the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) conducted by the U.S. Department of Education's National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), where we report data on student enrollments, program completions/degrees awarded, graduation rates, admissions and financial aid, faculty and staff, finances, and library. The completion of all IPEDS surveys is mandatory for institutions that participate in any federal student financial aid program (such as Pell grants and federal student loans) authorized by Title IV of the Higher Education Act of 1965. Other notable surveys include Common Data Set, U.S. News and World Report (USNWR) Best Colleges Main Survey, U.S. News and World Report (USNWR) Financial Aid, U.S. News and World Report (USNWR) discipline-specific Graduate/Professional Rankings, Enrollment Planning Network, American Association of University Professors (AAUP) Faculty Compensation Survey, NCAA, Moody's, Standard and Poor's, Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB), American Association of Colleges of Nursing (AACN), American Society for Engineering Education (ASEE), Accreditation Board for Engineering and Technology (ABET), American Bar Association (ABA), NSF Higher Education Research and Development (HERD) Survey, NSF-NIH Survey of Graduate Students and Post Doctorates in Science and Engineering (GSS). Starting in Fall 2024, we have a new federal reporting on Financial Value Transparency and Gainful Employment (FVT-GE).

The Office of Decision Support and Data Integrity (ODSDI) is charged with coordinating efforts for organizing the data collection, documentation, verification, and processes related to externally reported data to ensure the accuracy, consistency, and accountability of the University's data, support our [data stewards](#) and enhance the University's external data reporting business practices and processes. Therefore, ODSDI **requires** the following guidelines and associated procedures be strictly followed by all business/administrative units and colleges that report data to any external agencies. In addition to these guidelines, ODSDI also recommends every reporting unit review and adhere to the three [data governance policies](#) crafted by the Data Governance Board, and recently approved by the President's Cabinet.

The purpose of these guidelines below is to ensure data that appear in official publications or are provided to any outside entity are accurate and compiled using consistent definitions and data sources.

Guidelines:

- Identifying a point/lead person who will have an overview of all the external surveys the college is responding to will also be the liaison with ODSDI.
- The point person in each area is responsible for:
 - Coordination of generating, reporting, and entering the information in the survey.
 - Developing process documentation for each survey submitted with details on data sources, data extracts used, snapshots of queries/parameters utilized, formula/logic used for any calculations and variable/data definitions, and any methodological exclusions considered in responding to any question on the survey. ODSDI **requires** using the newly developed enhanced survey documentation/verification template to ensure consistency and better guidance across the different reporting units.

- Identifying staff members for data being collected from different areas of the University, documenting those interactions, and collecting/storing all information including but not limited to data queries and extracts, static reports, and other documents used, to ensure that the data reported can be replicated, if needed, at a future point in time.
- ODSDI **requires** all business areas and colleges reporting data institute the practice of preparing data snapshots of key metrics every semester to assist with external survey reporting and allow for trend analysis for various decision-making purposes. Snapshots are data extracts for students, faculty, staff, and alums containing unit-record level information on various metrics, that includes but are not limited to demographic, academic, financial aid, rank, department/college, compensation, alumni contributions, and other relevant information. This best practice has been in place for student enrollment for over two decades, where a static snapshot of student-related data is captured on a pre-determined date, typically one week after the add/drop period, every semester. This data snapshot is typically referred to as Census/freeze data. In the case of student enrollment data, the Census file is used for all possible external and internal reporting purposes, unless otherwise determined. While the information in Banner is live and keeps changing as new data are entered, Census data stored will not change allowing for historical comparisons and seamless verifications. Every business area should determine an appropriate time and process for these snapshots to be stored every semester. The snapshot process for all student and faculty data has been set up in the Data Insights platform as well, starting AY 2022-23.
- ODSDI highly recommends initiating a peer review process with each college/department setting up a small committee to review the data that gets reported to external surveys – the committee should include those who are primarily responsible for collecting and reporting data, individuals who are subject matter experts, i.e, they are not necessarily pooling the data but can gauge the accuracy of the information from experience. Please also include at least one member from the ODSDI in this committee.
- The point person submitting the survey will collaborate with ODSDI to build the central data/information repositories as it relates to external survey submissions to ensure that there is one location where all the relevant information is housed/archived by ODSDI. This includes the process documentation, all relevant data snapshots/queries, survey templates (*where available*), any other relevant documents, including emails, reports, etc. stating any relevant information reported, methodological documentation, completed verification template, and the final survey submission document.
- ODSDI has started leveraging the Census/freeze data in the Data Insights platform housing student, course, and faculty data to validate pertinent questions in the survey specifically focusing on the most relevant information, such as ranking-specific metrics for the USNWR but will be limited at this time to appropriately verify data that is not currently mapped in the platform. As we continue to enhance the data verification process, we will continue to partner with the relevant business area data stewards to determine the feasible path forward.
- To allow enough time for data verification and ensure timely submission of surveys, please share the completed survey with ODSDI 5-7 business days prior to the submission deadline. Please communicate with Sarah Lodise to coordinate.
- Sign-off by the appropriate departmental/college leadership is **required** prior to all survey submissions. Department/College leadership must ensure that the reporting guidelines laid out in this document are followed accordingly.
- In the unlikely event that misreporting of data is discovered, you are **required** to notify your leadership and apprise ODSDI to coordinate appropriate steps to rectify the information.
- All communications related to data submissions to external agencies will remain unchanged at this time, except for U.S. News and World Report surveys. Moving forward, **all communications with USNWR must be coordinated with ODSDI.**