



The University of Texas at Austin Education Research Center

POLICIES & PROCEDURES

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The University of Texas at Austin Education Research Center Policies and Procedures

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The University of Texas at Austin Education Research Center

Policies and Procedures

Overview

In 2006, the 79th Texas Legislature (3rd called session) identified the need for connecting educational information sources into a longitudinal data warehouse for the use of policy and practice. Legislators authorized the creation of three Education Research Centers (ERCs) to house Texas data and facilitate research that benefits all levels of education in Texas. The ERCs were to provide access to high quality, student-level data from the Texas Education Agency (TEA), the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB), the Texas Workforce Commission (TWC), and other sources of educational information for the state of Texas. The ERC data resources would span from the Pre-K level through higher education (P-16) and into the Texas workforce; it would host longitudinal information dating back from 1990 to current day. Researchers would be able to use this rich warehouse of data to follow individual Texas students from their first day in school to their last day on the job.

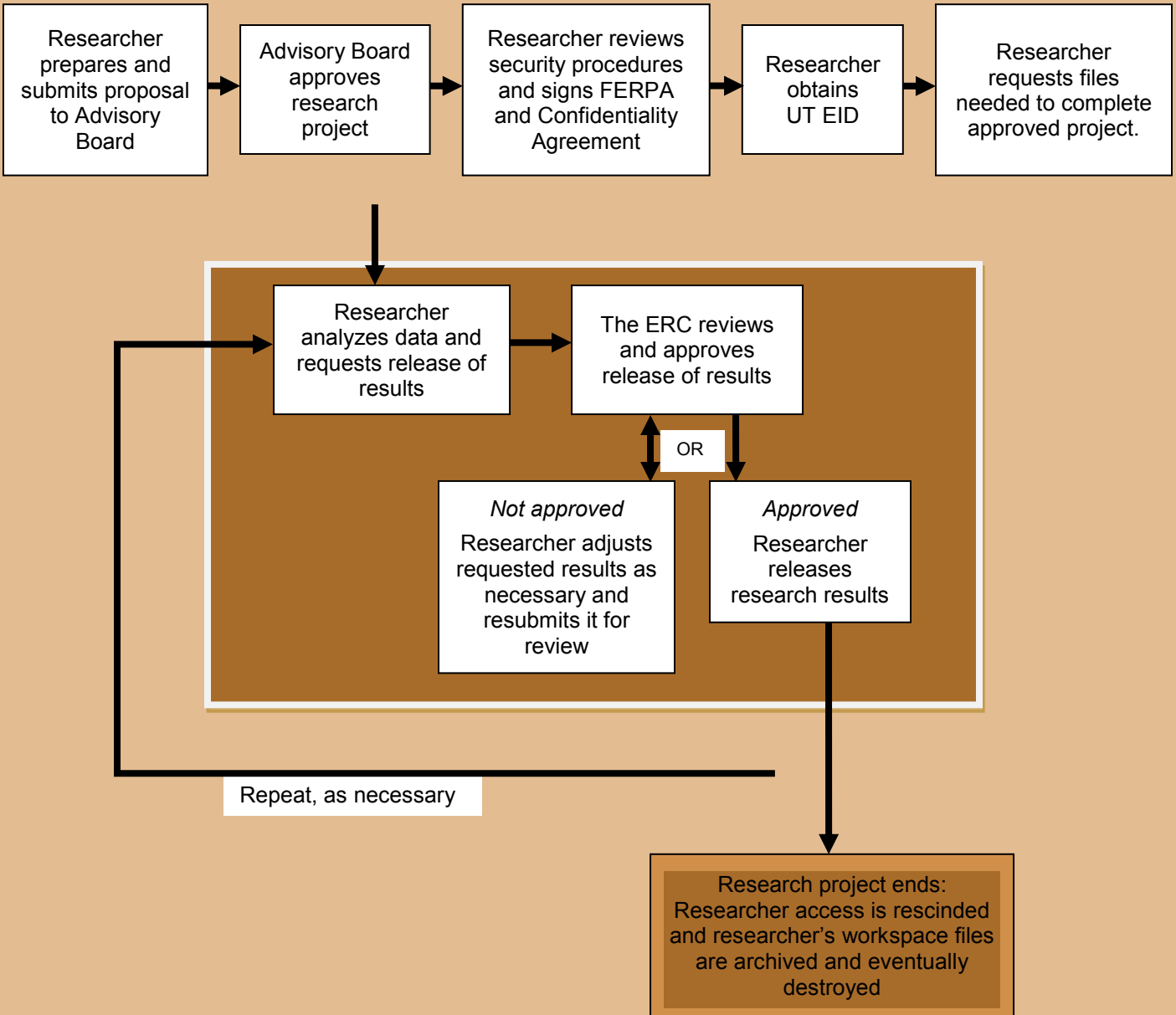
The Texas Education Research Center (Texas ERC) is a research center and data clearinghouse providing access to longitudinal, student-level data for scientific inquiry and policymaking purposes. Since its inception in 2006, the Texas ERC's goal has been to bridge the gap between theory and policy by providing a cooperative research environment for study by both scholars and policy makers. As part of its mission, the ERC works with researchers, practitioners, state and federal agencies, and other policymakers to help inform upon critical issues relating to education today.

Research Projects

The Education Research Centers are governed by the Advisory Board, which is chaired by the Commissioner of Higher Education from the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB). Representatives from the Texas Education Agency and the Texas Workforce Commission, the Chairs of the ERCs, and additional appointed experts also serve on the Advisory Board. The Advisory Board makes policy decisions regarding the operation of the ERCs and reviews all applications for the use of ERC resources for research.

Researchers wishing to utilize data from the ERCs must develop and submit a proposal to the specific ERC where the research will be conducted. The ERC will then review the proposal to ensure it meets a minimum standard of rigor and provides benefit to the state. A full description of the proposal requirements is included in Addendum A. Once the ERC approves the proposal, it is forwarded to the Advisory Board for consideration. If the Advisory Board accepts the proposal, researchers are granted access to the Texas ERC. Research is conducted for a designated period of time during which interim and final data products and research results are reviewed and released. When a research project terminates, researcher access to the Texas ERC data is rescinded. All pertinent data in the project's workspace is retained for five years and then destroyed.

Research Project Workflow



Terms and Conditions for Using the Texas ERC

The University of Texas at Austin Education Research Center houses data files that contain personal information about individuals. This information is protected by the Federal law known as the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA) (see p. 6 for full description). To protect the confidentiality of this information, the following guidelines are in place and required of everyone who accesses the data within the Texas ERC:

Training and Confidentiality Agreement

- FERPA training is required of all persons with access to confidential Texas ERC data. The University of Texas makes training resources and options available for both people directly associated with the University and those outside the university community. You must submit proof of training prior to being granted access to the Texas ERC.
- A Confidentiality Agreement must be signed before access is granted to the Texas ERC and renewed on an annual basis (Addendum B). Your signature on the Confidentiality Agreement acknowledges your receipt and acceptance of the terms and conditions for the following:
 - Policies and Procedures of the Texas Education Research Centers
 - The University of Texas at Austin Education Research Center Policies and Procedures
 - Your signature also confirms that you understand and agree to comply with the terms of the center policy and procedures. The Confidentiality Agreement may be found at the Texas ERC website: <http://www.utaustinerc.org>. Please direct any questions concerning data security to the Director of the Texas ERC.

Data Usage

- Texas ERC data may be used only for research projects that have been specifically approved by the Advisory Board and for investigative and analysis tasks upon directive given by a Commissioner of THECB, TEA, or TWC.
- Research results must be reported in a manner that does not enable readers to learn or surmise the identity of individual persons. For example, groups for which statistical summaries are generated must include at least five persons (see masking rules p. 10).
- Permission to use Texas ERC data is granted for a fixed amount of time and may be renewed as needed at the discretion of the Advisory Board. Permission may be revoked at any time. Immediate termination of access will result in cases where there is significant risk of unauthorized disclosure of confidential information or violation of security guidelines.
- No Texas ERC data files, individual records, or results may be removed from the Texas ERC in any form, including printed copies, without approval from the Director of the Texas ERC.
- All research products (papers, PowerPoint presentations, proposals, etc.) that use Texas ERC data must be compliant with FERPA requirements. It is mandatory that all such data-products be submitted to the Texas ERC for review and confirmation of compliance prior to removal from the Texas ERC. Failure to do so can result in immediate termination of researcher and research project access. Please see Protocol for Pre-release of Research Products Using Texas ERC Data for an explanation of the data review and approval process. Additionally, small cell reporting issues and the suggested strategies for addressing can be found in The Texas Education Research Centers' Guidelines for Reviewing Research Products.
- All research products that are released must contain the following disclaimer:
The conclusions of this research do not necessarily reflect the opinion or official position of the Texas Education Research Center, the Texas Education Agency, the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, the Texas Workforce Commission, or the State of Texas.

Research Project Approval Period and Extensions

Basic Research Request without Secured Funding

- Initial Approval - 2 years
- Extension Request - up to 2 years
- Extension with Funding Secured – up to 3 years

Funded Research Request

- With Proof of Funding: maximum length of initial Advisory Board approval is five years.
- By Request: the project may be approved prior to funding, and begin upon the Advisory Board being notified of the receipt of funding.

Special Extensions after Project Completion (if there is Rework and Resubmit in progress)

Special Extensions: may be granted for up to two Years. This extension in combination with prior research cannot exceed five years.

Research Project Information

- Researchers must provide the Texas ERC with regular updates regarding progress, changes, and extensions to research hypotheses and personnel changes for their research projects. Any changes to or extension of research that can be reasonably interpreted as a new research project requires approval from the Advisory Board and execution of a new Confidentiality Agreement. All researchers working on a project must complete FERPA training and sign individual Confidentiality Agreements.
- The Texas ERC may periodically ask for information related to your research project. It is important that you respond to these requests in a timely manner.

Researcher Access to the Texas ERC

- Researcher access to Texas ERC confidential data and statistical tools may take place only through approved Texas ERC research workstations that are installed at secure locations.
- Access to research workstations and the networked Texas ERC secure system environment is managed through a University of Texas at Austin Electronic Identity (UT EID), which provides individuals with a user account and password that meet the statutory strength requirements for public agencies in Texas. Researchers who are employees or students of The University of Texas at Austin are expected to use their current UT EIDs. Researchers from other campuses may apply for a guest UT EID.
- Entry to the Texas ERC must always be gained through a researcher's own account. Under no circumstance may a researcher log into the Texas ERC under another researcher's account or allow another researcher to log in through their account.
- The Texas ERC currently maintains workstations in two locations: in the Sanchez Building (SZB) located on the University of Texas at Austin campus, and at the Ray Marshall Center (RMC) offices located at 3001 Lake Austin Blvd., Austin, Texas 78703. Note: different building and door security procedures exist for the two workstation sites, and use of these workstations must be coordinated with the Texas ERC.
- An approved research project will be provided with a working folder in the secure server that is shared by all researchers working on an approved project.
- No portable memory devices (e.g. thumb drives), jump drives, or any like devices are permitted at the research workstation installation locations. The presence of such portable memory devices at Texas ERC workstations may result in the immediate revocation of a researcher's approval to use ERC data resources.
- All workstation clients are disconnected from the internet to ensure that the security of the data is maintained.
- Researchers are allowed to bring their own laptop computers to the workstation locations and connect to the internet. No data may be transferred to a computer connected to the network.
- The creation of separate internet networks, such as through mobile tethering or hotspot, is forbidden by both the Texas ERC and the University of Texas at Austin.
- The door to a location that houses a research workstation must remain closed while a researcher accesses the Texas ERC data to ensure the confidentiality of the data is maintained.
- Texas ERC personnel will provide you with information and access to the workstation schedules such as through access to a Google calendar procedure.
-

Security Issues

- Secure physical and electronic access to the Texas ERC and its data is of paramount importance to protecting the privacy of individuals and ensuring the continued trusted operation of the Texas ERC. Researchers are required to adhere to the center's security guidelines and procedures and notify the Texas ERC of any observed or suspected security violations. Please see *Procedure for Recognizing and Responding to Security Violations* for more information about reporting violations.
- Please see Addendum A for further information about requirements for researchers.

If you have any questions, concerns, or issues with any Texas ERC rule or procedure, please contact the Director or Primary Investigators. Additional information and all forms can be found at www.UTAustinERC.org.

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Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)

Overview

- **What is FERPA?** The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (20 U.S.C. § 1232g; 34 CFR Part 99) is a federal law that pertains to the release of and access to educational records. The law, also known as the Buckley Amendment, applies to all schools that receive funds under applicable programs of the United States Department of Education.
- **To which information does FERPA apply?** FERPA applies to personally identifiable information in educational records. This includes items such as a student's name, names of family members, addresses, personal identifiers such as social security numbers, and personal characteristics or other information that could reveal a student's identity.
- **What are educational records?** Educational records are all records that contain information directly related to a student and that are maintained by an educational agency or institution or party acting on the behalf of an educational agency or institution. A record is any information recorded in any way, including handwriting, print, tape, film, microfilm, microfiche, electronic data storage, and digital images.
- **Educational records do not include:**
 - Sole possession records, which are records kept in the sole possession of the maker for intended use as personal memory aids. They may not be accessible or viewed by any person other than the maker of the record, except for someone serving as a temporary substitute for the maker.
 - Medical or psychological treatment records, including those maintained by physicians, psychiatrists, and psychologist
 - Employment records, provided that employment is not contingent upon the employee's status as a student
 - Law enforcement records
- **Who has access to student educational records?** Generally, schools must have written permission from a parent or eligible student to release any information from a student's educational record. FERPA allows schools to disclose records, without consent, to the following parties or under the following conditions (34 CFR § 99.31):
 - School officials with a legitimate educational interest
 - Other schools to which a student is applying, enrolling, or transferring
 - Specified officials for audit or evaluation purposes
 - Appropriate parties in connection with financial aid for a student
 - Organizations conducting certain studies for or on behalf of the school
 - Accrediting organizations
 - In compliance with a judicial order or lawfully issued subpoena
 - Appropriate officials in cases of health and safety emergencies
 - State and local authorities within a juvenile justice system, pursuant to specific State law
- **What is legitimate educational interest?** At The University of Texas at Austin, legitimate educational interest is access to educational records by appropriate University administrators, faculty members, staff members, appropriate administrators and staff members of the Texas Exes, and contractors acting on behalf of the University, who require such access to perform their legitimate educational and business duties in the furtherance of the educational and business purposes of the student or the University.
- **What is directory information?** Schools may disclose, without consent, directory information such as a student's name, address, telephone number, date and place of birth, honors and awards, and dates of attendance. However, schools must inform parents and eligible students about directory information and allow parents and eligible students a reasonable amount of time to deny release of this information by the school.

Additional Resources

- For government information about FERPA:
<http://www.ed.gov/policy/gen/guid/fpco/ferpa/>
<http://www.ed.gov/legislation/FedRegister/finrule/2008-4/120908a.pdf>
<http://www.ed.gov/policy/gen/guid/fpco/pdf/ht12-17-08-att.pdf>
- For University information about FERPA:

<http://registrar.utexas.edu/students/records/ferpa/>
<http://www.utexas.edu/student/registrar/ferpa/ferpa.tutorial.home.htm>

- For information about FERPA compliance training at The University of Texas at Austin:
<http://www.utexas.edu/compliance/training.html>
<http://registrar.utexas.edu/staff/training/index.html>

ERC FERPA Policy Resources

- ERC policy mandates that FERPA Training be completed every two years.
 - For University of Texas students, faculty, and staff go to: <https://utdirect.utexas.edu/cts/index.WBX>
 - a screen shot showing that your FERPA Training has been completed can be submitted as proof:
 - You will be prompted to log into the UT Direct system. The module you are interested in is “CW504 FERPA.” Make sure that your screen shot is readable for the “Must be taken on or before mm/dd/yyyy” date.
 - For professional researchers and non-UT students, faculty, and staff, other options for FERPA training which will not require a UT high assurance id go to:
 1. <http://apps.missouristate.edu/human/training/ferpatraining/welcome.htm> (Requires Flash Player), or
 2. <http://ptac.ed.gov/> -- The module you are interested in is “FERPA 201: Data Sharing.” You will be prompted to register/log into the US Department of Education.
 - Once the training is completed, providing a PDF or screen shot of the certificate with name and date completed will be valid proof for 2 years.

The Texas Education Research Centers' Guidelines for Small Cell Masking Research Products

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) (20 U.S.C. § 1232g; 34 CFR Part 99) is a Federal law that protects the privacy of student education records. When records of a few individuals in groups are analyzed, it is possible that individuals can be identified, which violates an individual's right to privacy.

Confidential information generally consists of non-public information about a person or an entity that, if disclosed, could reasonably be expected to place either the person or the entity at risk of criminal or civil liability, or damage the person or entity's financial standing, employability, privacy or reputation (University of Chicago, 2010).

The Education Research Centers (ERCs) are committed to preventing the release of *Individually Identifiable Information*¹.

To ensure that all research products using or based on ERC data are compliant with the requirements of FERPA, the Joint Advisory Board for the Texas ERCs requires that all qualifying products be reviewed by designated staff members of each ERC. No qualifying research product may be publicly released until it has been granted approval by an authorized person at an ERC. A qualifying research product is any document, small or large, that displays information (text or numbers) derived from confidential ERC data. This includes, but is not limited to the following:

- Abstracts, manuscripts, and reviews for publication or submission for publication
- Research proposals
- Abstracts, manuscripts, and reviews for submission for funding
- Abstracts and papers for conferences, seminars, workshops, and meetings
- Posters for display
- Write-ups for a website
- Dissertations
- Term Papers
- Hand-outs
- PowerPoint presentations
- Chapters for books
- Any research output (drafts or working papers, print-outs of log files, tables, graphs, etc.) meant to be viewed by anyone not currently authorized to access ERC data

Below, Table 1 illustrates the small cell reporting issues and the suggested strategies for addressing these issues. The table focuses on the small cell issues reviewers need to be aware of in the numerator, denominator, and percent reporting.

¹*Individually Identifiable Information* refers specifically to data from any list, record, response form, completed survey, or aggregation about an individual(s) from which information about particular individuals or their schools/education institutions may be revealed by either direct or indirect means (National Center for Educational Statistics; 2010).

Table 1: Small Cell Reporting Issues¹

Small Cell Reporting Issue	Numer- ator	Denom- inator	%
Denominator is less than five (including 0)	Mask (*)	Mask (*)	Mask (*)
Denominator is five or more; and, percent is 100 or rounds to 100	Mask (*)	Mask (*)	>99%
Denominator is five or more; and, percent is 0 or rounds to 0	Mask (*)	Mask (*)	<1%
Denominator is five or more; and, the difference between the numerator and denominator is one or two; and percent is not 100 or 0 and does not round to 100 or 0	Mask (*)	Mask (*)	#
Denominator is five or more; and, the numerator is one or two; and percent is not 100 or 0 and does not round to 100 or 0	Mask (*)	Mask (*)	#

¹Texas Education Agency (2009).

In addition to examining cross tabulation results (results from contingency tables from the multivariate frequency distribution of statistical variables), statistical output must be also be reviewed. Because statistical packages like regression can generate the same output as a cross-tabulation, reviewers should examine fixed effect coefficients, least squares means, population marginal means or similar regression outputs that could be used to deduce small cell information.

Other forms of protecting against small cell issues include the use of disclosure limitation, perturbation, redaction, and suppression. For more information, please go to:

http://ptac.ed.gov/sites/default/files/data_deidentification_terms.pdf

References:

National Center for Educational Statistics (2010). Statistical Standards Program: Appendix A: Definition of Terms. Retrieved May 2010, from <http://nces.ed.gov/statprog/rudman/a.asp>

Texas Education Agency (2009). Explanation of Masking Rules. Retrieved from, <http://ritter.tea.state.tx.us/perfreport/account/2009/masking.html>

University of Chicago (2010). Personnel Policy Guidelines: Treatment of Confidential Information. Retrieved from <http://hr.uchicago.edu/policy/p601.html>

Protocol for Pre-release Review of Research Products Using Texas ERC Data

The process for reviewing a research product is as follows:

1. The researcher reviews The Texas Education Research Centers' Guidelines for Small Cell Masking Research Products and makes sure that any file requested to be reviewed complies with the guidelines.
2. The researcher copies the file for review to a folder named “ForFERPARReview” within their workspace in the Texas ERC secure system environment.
3. The researcher formally requests review of the research product by sending an email from their primary institutional e-mail account of record, a signed letter, or a signed fax to the Director of the Texas ERC. The letter or e-mail must clearly state that the researcher certifies the item is FERPA-compliant and contains no individually identifiable data. The message must also clearly specify the file name of the desired product to be reviewed.
4. The Director or authorized designee reviews file for review for the presence of any information controlled under the provisions of FERPA and ensures that the information appears to be consistent with the researcher's certification of compliance as claimed above. Specifically, the reviewer uses the criteria described in The Texas Education Research Centers' Guidelines for Small Cell Masking Research Products to evaluate the research product.
5. If the reviewer is satisfied that the item is compliant, the reviewer notifies the researcher of the material's approval and directs transmission of the approved item to the researcher by e-mail or another means, as appropriate.
6. If the reviewer has any cause to suspect the item does not conform to the requestor's certification of its FERPA compliance, the reviewer requests further evidence of such compliance from the researcher and/or modification to the research product. Such evidence may include log files from the programs that produced the item, the programs themselves, intermediate data sets, or cell size counts produced programmatically by the researcher in the course of generating the results in question.
7. If, upon further review, the reviewer is satisfied that the product is consistent with the researcher's certification, the item is approved and transmitted to the researcher.
8. If the reviewer cannot conclude that the item is consistent with the FERPA and the small-cell masking guidelines or the researcher can or will not provide the required justification, the reviewer refuses to approve the item for release from the Texas ERC.
9. The researcher may appeal the reviewer's decision to the Director and ultimately, one of the Co-PI's of the Texas ERC.
10. Each request for review is logged, together with all activity related to review of the item and the final decision made.
11. Under normal circumstances, research product reviews are completed in three to seven working days. If a researcher requires more immediate action, he can attempt to negotiate this directly with the Texas ERC. Please note that larger documents might need more than three to seven days for review and in such cases, the researcher should contact the Texas ERC for a more accurate estimate.

Procedure for Recognizing and Responding to Security Violations

Physical security violations at the Texas ERC may include any of the following:

1. Access to the secure environment by an unauthorized person
2. Removal of unapproved confidential material via any method (e.g. print, electronic data transfer, internal hard drive removal, transfer to portable memory devices such as USB flash memory devices, etc.)
3. Loss or theft of any card, key, or device that would permit access to the secure environment
4. Modification to or destruction of read-only Texas ERC data sets and files

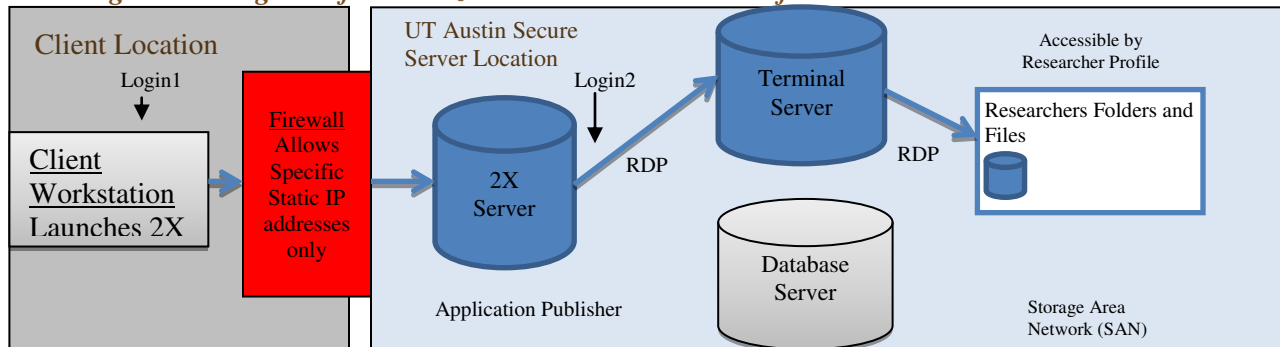
In the event that a suspected security violation in progress is detected, action should be taken to avert the violation only if it is safe to do so. If any risk is perceived, the appropriate security officials should be notified immediately. Texas ERC staff and researchers must not attempt to intervene in a potentially dangerous situation, such as a burglary of the facility.

- At The University of Texas at Austin, University Police should be the initial point of contact for notification of dangerous security violations in progress. All such events should then be reported to the Director of the Texas ERC. If the Director is not available, another responsible ERC staff member should be notified.
- If it is safe to do so, a staff member or researcher can attempt to assess and, if necessary, intervene in the suspected violation. Examples of appropriate interventions include:
 1. Politely challenging any unknown person, especially individuals who do not appear to have properly gained access to the facility or are not wearing an appropriate visitor badge.
 2. Advising or reminding researchers or staff members of security guidelines if they appear to be engaging in behaviors that may lead to a violation, such as inserting a thumb drive into a research workstation's USB outlet.
 3. Notification of all real or suspected security violations should be made by the observer to the Director of the Texas ERC as soon as possible. If it is ascertained that a significant violation of security procedures has occurred or the confidentiality of controlled data has been jeopardized, the incident will be reported by the Texas ERC to the University's Chief Information Security Officer and to the THECB

Understanding Your Access to the Texas ERC System

Description of Access and Server Environment

Figure 1: Diagram of Authorized-Researcher Access Profile with Restricted Resources



Access to the Texas ERC data and applications is accomplished only through dedicated client workstations. The client workstations are located in locked rooms at each of the consortium campuses. Please see the appropriate person listed below for access to your campus workstation.

All of the ERC's statistical applications are installed and executed on the Terminal server. All working files and result data sets are stored on the Terminal server. No data or output generated from the data can be transferred to the client workstation or out of the Texas ERC network without formal release by a Texas ERC staff member. There is no internet access for researchers from any of the workstations or servers in the ERC system.

Logging into the Texas ERC

There are currently two **ERC Client Locations**

- UT main campus (**Sanchez SZB 242L**)
- Ray Marshall Center (**RMC LAC 2.236**)

Each location has two ERC Client computers. You will be setup on both.

The **Sanchez** computers are in a room with a keypad lock on the door and accessible any time the building is open. Researchers who are set up on the Sanchez computers will need to obtain a unique 5-6 digit code for the keypad lock.

The **RMC** computers are behind a door with a keypad lock and accessible any time the building itself is open (typically M-F 6am-6pm). Researchers who are set up on the RMC computers will need to obtain a unique 5-6 digit code. Remember that for this lock you must enter your code followed by the "#."

There is a Google ERC Client calendar available for researchers to make others aware of the time they plan to use an ERC Client. For initial access to the ERC Client calendar, send your preferred email to a Texas ERC Staff member to add to the Google calendar for access.

The ERC Clients are labeled with their Static IP addresses on the monitor. To report a problem with one of the Clients, or if you would like to schedule a specific client, indicate the last digit of the IP address. For example at Sanchez, as you enter the room, the computer on the left is 108 and the right is 109. At RMC, the computer on the left is 41 and the right is 42.

Your initial access to the Texas ERC is through a logon to a local user account on the client workstation. Your user ID for this account is the same as your UT EID. See https://idmanager.its.utexas.edu/eid_self_help for information/tools for obtaining a UT EID.

Before attempting to log into a workstation for the first time you will be given a *temporary* password (ercnnnPassword where nnn is the last 3 digits of your eid). The first time you log into a workstation you will use the same temporary password for each client workstation computer. Remember you must log into each client workstation separately. You will log in using your *temporary* password and will then be prompted to change your *temporary* password. It is recommended that you change your *temporary* password to your official UT *EID* password. REMEMBER this same step will need to be performed for each different client workstation you use at each location. It is up to you to make these changes and keep in sync your workstation computer password and your official UT *EID* password.

Throughout your ERC work session, it is safe to confirm or answer affirmatively all prompts and warnings about expired certificates, identity authentication, and other security issues. When you have completed a research session, please remember to close the application you are running and log out of the client workstation. The log out must be performed before the system will log you out. Even if you remain idle for a time, you are not totally logged off. If you fail to completely log off, it may prevent another user from logging on.

Accessing Data and Statistical Applications

1. To access the Texas ERC's data and statistical applications:
2. Double-click on the 2X application icon on the client workstation's desktop
3. The first time using 2X you may need to Add Connection Settings for the ERC:

Primary Connection: erc.aces.utexas.edu
Connection Mode: Gateway SSL Mode
Port: 443
Alias: ERC
Auto Logon: *Make sure to uncheck*
Domain: AUSTIN

4. When the 2X window displays, double-click on the ERC icon on the left side of the window. At times the ERC icon will not appear initially and the 2X window will appear blank. Simply click the refresh button in the window and the ERC icon should appear.
5. You will be prompted to log into the 2X application. Use your official UT EID and password for this logon.
6. Upon a successful logon, an ERC icon will display on the right side of the window. Double-click on this icon to view the set of folders and statistical applications that are available to you.
7. Within the ERC window will be a folder titled G Drive Explorer. This drive contains all of the folders in the ERC database. When given access to the ERC, a folder will be created for you in the G drive that has the same name as your UT EID. Additional shared folders will also be created if multiple researchers are working on the same project and planning on sharing data. These folders are named after the project itself. No other folders in the G drive are accessible to researchers.
8. The folders you have been given access two will contain two sub-folders: "New Files Released" and "For FERPA Review." The former contains all of the specific data files, separated by source (TEA, THECB, etc.), that you have access to. The latter is the folder in which you will place all output which you would like to have removed from the ERC servers and sent to you electronically. All output files generated from ERC data must be reviewed and approved by an authorized ERC representative prior to their release.
9. To start an application, double-click on the appropriate icon. You will then be prompted with a series of logon windows for the Terminal server. Provide your official UT EID and password information for these logons.
10. Upon successful logon, the statistical application will start. Read-only data sets are pre-configured for each application so that you can work with the master set of ERC data files.

Timeouts and Periods of Inactivity

If you execute a long-running procedure that requires no user interaction, you will be automatically logged out of the Terminal server, however, your procedure will continue to run and be accessible when you re-logon.

Data Inventory and Data Documentation

The format and content of the data in the Texas ERC data warehouse are based on the format and content of the information that comes from the TEA, the THECB, and the TWC. You can find a detailed inventory of the files names and years available listed under the data tab on the Texas ERC website: <http://www.utaustinerc.org>. In addition, The TEA, the THECB, and the TWC agencies maintain documentation on their own web sites that describe the data provided by them.

For information about the content and general format of the TEA Public Education Information Management System (PEIMS) data, please see <http://www.tea.state.tx.us/index4.aspx?id=3012>.

For information about the content and general format of the THECB reports and FADS data, please see <http://www.txhighereddata.org/ReportingManuals.cfm>.

For information about the content and general format of TEA student assessment data (TAAS and TAKS) and State Board of Education data, please see the TEA website (<http://www.tea.state.tx.us>) under the “Testing/Accountability” link.

For information about the content of TWC wage report data, please see www.twc.state.tx.us.

For an explanation of how to use the substitute IDs to map student records across data sets, please see the document titled “Texas ERC ID Mapping Protocol.”

Saving Your Work

The private folder will be set up which will be named your UT EID. In addition, a project share folder can be set up on the Terminal server for researchers to who are working on an active research project together. Please contact a Texas ERC staff member to set up a project share folder if needed.

Statistics Programs

The Texas ERC currently provides STATA, SPSS, SAS, HLM, M-Plus, and multiple versions of R.

Data Files

The Texas ERC data sets are provided to researchers in the same structure and timeframe breakdown as the original data files are received from the source agencies. Please see the Data Inventory spreadsheet, available through the Texas ERC web site, for a complete list of available files.

Researchers need to request the specific files, years of files, and format (Text, SAS, SPSS) they will need for each approved project. A Texas ERC staff member will move the requested files to your private folder and/or the project share folder. The best approach to investigating the files you will need are the Data Inventory and Data Documentation described above. Please match your request with what was approved in your proposal.

Getting Help

The Texas ERC system is generally available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week depending on location hours and building access. Technical support is available during regular business hours, Monday-Friday, 8AM-5PM. For questions regarding application usage and data availability, formats, and content, please contact Celeste Alexander (celeste.alexander@austin.utexas.edu / 512-471-4528) or Cindy Corn (cindy.corn@austin.utexas.edu / 512-471-4739). For issues concerning the set-up and management of your user account on the client workstation and to the server environment, please contact Cindy Corn. For questions and issues about network, server, and application availability, please call 512-475-9400 or send an e-mail to mss-erc1@austin.utexas.edu.

ADDENDUM A

Template for Reader's Guide

Instructions: Below is a template for a Reader's Guide which should be 2-3 pages and attached before your full proposal. The sections in the Reader's Guide cover the most frequently asked questions by Board members (these sections have been derived from newly adopted rules and previous proposal procedures which are attached to the end of the template). The Reader's Guide should help inform the Board as well as frame your proposal for success.

Following the Reader's Guide, you should attach a Full Proposal (10-15 pages) which fully outlines your project and its design. In the Full Proposal, you should detail the need for the study, the framings/underpinnings of your work based on current research, the study's design including sampling and methodology, and considerations of implications for furthering academic research and policy.

Date

Proposed Project:
Title

Researcher Name
Researcher Affiliation

Abstract
(No More than 200 Words)

Reader's Guide

Give a brief description of the project if the abstract is not enough information. This may include who the researcher is (if it is an organization), what the impetus is for research, and other information which speaks to the importance of the project.

Research Questions

- 1) ...
- 2) ...
- 3) ...

Data Elements from ERC Database

*This project will require the following variables from ERC data for the years 19XX - 19XX:
(List either the variable names as in the example or the files needed such as c_cbm001...p_attend_demogxx, p_exitreasonxx, p_graduatexx, taks3subject-10xx, starrsubject_xx, ...).*

Research Methods

Share briefly your analytic approach without bogging down the reader in jargon (you may get more specific in your full proposal).

Researcher's Qualifications

Name and share a small amount of pertinent information for all researchers who will be involved with the project and/or data.

Benefit to Texas

Make sure to include not only what you intend to examine, but how the research will benefit education in the state. Consider including implications such as broadening the participation of underrepresented groups (e.g. gender, ethnicity, geographic, etc.), enhancing the infrastructure for research and education, and benefiting and/or informing educational policy and practice.

Related Policy

Identify probable areas that the predicted results and outcomes will be able to influence or address.

Dissemination Strategy

It is a requirement upon completion of the project that you complete a short, implication-gearred paper (Policy Brief) that links your findings to Texas policy or practice (2-5 pages). First, speak to what audience you intend to write your policy brief towards (policymakers, practitioners, etc.). Then share the rest of your dissemination plans including presentations, conferences, peer review journals, and other strategies for publishing and sharing findings.

Financial Resources

If it is a funded project, where will the funds come from to cover the cost of data access?

ATTACH FULL PROPOSAL

Proposal Guidelines*

1. Potential contribution to theory and/or practice
 - Theoretical and/or empirical support for the proposed project is stated
 - The practical importance of the project is clear
2. Potential to benefit education in the state of Texas
 - The proposal makes a strong case for benefiting education in the state of Texas
3. Strength and appropriateness of methodology
 - Proposal contains clear, concise hypotheses or research questions
 - Data selected are appropriate for addressing the research questions
 - The type of analysis being proposed is appropriate given the research objectives
 - If the project involves evaluating an intervention, the type of intervention being evaluated (e.g. curriculum, teacher professional development, policy) is described
 - Participants and/or student population is described
 - If the project requires the collection of primary supplemental data, the instruments to be used in the project are described
4. Researchers qualifications
 - The researcher, research team or doctoral student (or advisor) demonstrates expertise in the relevant content area and other related research activities (e.g. data analyses)
5. Broader impact of the proposed project, whereby the proposed project is likely to:
 - Broaden the participation of underrepresented groups (e.g. gender, ethnicity, geographic, etc.)
 - Enhance the infrastructure for research and education
 - Benefit and/or inform educational:
 - Policy
 - Practice
6. Dissemination strategy
 - The proposal lays out an effective strategy for disseminating results
7. Access to adequate resources
 - The researcher(s) have adequate resources to complete the project in a timely manner

*Proposal length

Due to the volume of proposals reviewed by the Advisory Board, proposals are requested to be no longer than fifteen pages (excluding references and the reader's guide)

ADDENDUM B

Researcher Confidentiality Agreement

Between

The University of Texas at Austin Education Research Center and

Researcher Name

UT EID

For

Research Project Title

Project Approved on this Date: _____

Please refer to the attached applicable proposal Reader's Guide that describes the project purpose, scope, and the type of personally identifiable data needed to complete the project.

As an associate of the Texas ERC, you have access to confidential data. By your initials and signature below, you acknowledge and agree:

- _____ 1) that you have received a copy (or accessed online at www.utaustiner.org) of both the Policies and Procedures of the Texas Education Research Centers AND The University of Texas at Austin Education Research Center Policies and Procedures,
- _____ 2) to abide by the terms of the Texas ERC Policies and The University of Texas ERC Policies and its subordinate processes and procedures,
- _____ 3) that you have completed formal FERPA training through either The University of Texas at Austin or another qualified organization,
- _____ 4) to access and use the Texas ERC data for only authorized research,
- _____ 5) that you will use the confidential data for only the purpose or purposes of the study,
- _____ 6) not to attempt to identify individuals or publicly release confidential data,
- _____ 7) to ensure that all research conducted and all generated research products (papers, abstracts, PowerPoint presentations, etc.) using Texas ERC data are compliant with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), which explicitly means no information will be released that could identify individuals,
- _____ 8) to never remove unapproved confidential information from the physical or electronic workspace of the Texas ERC,

- _____ 9) to request Texas ERC review and approval of all research products generated using confidential Texas ERC data, prior to any public release of those products,
- _____ 10) to report, as soon as possible, any known or suspected breach of confidentiality, including the removal or inappropriate sharing of data, to the Director or Database Administrator of the Texas ERC,
- _____ 11) that you understand that access to the Texas ERC can be suspended based on any violation of this contract or risk of unauthorized disclosure of confidential information,
- _____ 12) to grant permission for the manual and electronic collection and retention of security-related information, including photographic or videotape images, of your attempts to access the facility.
- _____ 13) that you understand that the data files you create for this project will be destroyed 5 years following the completion of the project (unless specific permission is granted for an extension by the ERC Advisory Board or applicable state agency).

The estimated date of data destruction (date approved + 2 years + 5 years) is: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____
Researcher Name

Signature: _____ Date: _____
Dr. Celeste Alexander, Texas ERC Director

Client Access Points Request: ____Access at Ray Marshall Center ____Access at Sanchez Building
(Check One or Both)

Contact information:

Email: _____

Phone Number: _____

ADDENDUM C

The Texas ERC Fee Schedule

Effective July 1, 2009

To offset the costs of providing the operational and audit functions required by ERC contracts and to comply with the rules of the Texas education agencies and the ERC Joint Advisory Board, the Texas ERC levies the charges shown below in the Annual Access Fee schedule.

Definitions:

Approved Project – a research project utilizing the ERC data, to be conducted under the auspices of the ERC and for which approval has been granted by the Joint Advisory Board

ERC Authorized Researcher – A person who is authorized to access the ERC data to conduct work as part of an Approved Project, at either the ERC primary host site or a specified remote ERC access location. An ERC Authorized Researcher must either be a primary investigator designated for an Approved Project or be assigned to conduct work on behalf of an Approved Project by one or more of its primary investigators of record. An Authorized Researcher must have a current, signed confidentiality agreement on file with the Texas ERC.

Student – an ERC Authorized Researcher who is currently seeking a college degree

Within System – an institution that is a member of the same Texas university system as the Educational Research Center's institution (e.g. The University of Texas at San Antonio)

Annual Access Fee:

<u>Affiliation</u>	<u>ERC Authorized Researchers*</u>	<u>Student</u>
Within System	\$10,000.00	\$500.00
Other	\$15,000.00	\$5,000.00

The Texas ERC may, at its sole discretion, waive access fees.

* The charge for ERC Authorized Researchers covers two researchers working on an Approved Project. For Approved Projects with special requirements, annual fees may be negotiated between the Texas ERC and the principal investigators.