

**New Mexico
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History

1. When was the student unit-record (SUR) system established?
New Mexico Commission of Higher Education (NMCHE) assumed responsibility in 1994.
2. By whom?
New Mexico Commission of Higher Education (NMCHE).
3. For what purpose (e.g., resource allocation/funding formula, IPEDS, tracking student retention/ graduation, tracking students across institutions)?
Funding Formula.

Coverage

1. What institutions are included in your SUR system?
All public postsecondary and limited private institutions.
2. Are any independent institutions included (number or percentage)? What about proprietary institutions? Are different kinds of data or different schedules for data collection used for any of these institutions?
Some.
3. Are there plans to expand the system's coverage in terms of institutions? Please explain.
We are working on incorporating the tribal colleges in the state.
4. When are data of which type collected (e.g. term/quarter/semester census date, annual, end of term, etc.)? Other reporting cycles?
All of the above. Student and course by census date and end-of-term for every semester, annual grads, financial aid.
5. Are there plans to collect data more frequently or on a different cycle?
No.
6. Is non-credit enrollment or instructional activity covered (e.g. ABE, ESL, GED, other job-related continuing education activity, etc.)? If so, is this in a separate database and what data elements are captured?
No.

Data Management and Manipulation

1. Who has authority over changing data elements and definitions?
Our office works with the institutions in an advisory group – we work toward consensus.

2. Are SSNs used as a key link? If they are not, what is used instead? Are there immediate or long-range plans to discontinue use of the SSN as a key link?
Yes and we have no plans to discontinue the use of SSN.
3. Can campuses access datasets (unit records) themselves -- access in what terms (results, unit record data after it has been cleaned, unit-record data value added). If yes, who has access and how is this managed?
Limited access – they can access their own data only.
4. How do you handle privacy and FERPA issues? Do you have an explicit privacy policy and/or policies governing the use of SUR data by third parties such as institutions and researchers?
We have detailed data-sharing agreements. We support the concept of individual privacy and the letter and spirit of the FERPA rules. However, FERPA was never intended to prevent research that would improve higher education systems. Specific research exceptions are included in the body of the legislation and are observed by NMCHE, as well as every precaution in safeguarding the privacy of individuals. Detailed data-sharing agreements are in place for specific projects; these agreements outline acceptable uses and safeguards for data.
5. Have any FERPA or privacy issues come up recently in your state? If so, how have they affected your ability to use student record information?
No.
6. Do you link SUR data within your state to other databases?
Yes we link with UI Wage Records and the office of education – we are working on linking with the K-12 public school system. We have had these linkages in place for some time and have a set schedule as to when and how the data is shared.
7. Have you cooperated with other state higher education agencies to share data? If so, please explain.
We would like to, but we do not at this time.

Reporting and Use of Data

1. What kinds of statistics and reports are generated regularly using SUR data?
Dozens of reports — graduation rates, enrollment, etc. (please see our web site).
2. If graduation and retention statistics are generated for institutions (or for the state or system as a whole), how are they calculated (e.g. IPEDS Graduation Rate Survey method, other methods)?
Yes, we do generate these statistics and we use the IPEDS Graduate Rate Survey method.

3. What kinds of research projects have recently been undertaken by the state or system using SUR data resources?
It varies, student success and economic impact of education are two that come to mind (please see our web site for more examples).
4. What are the biggest challenges you face with respect to using SUR data resources for analysis and reporting?
Unrealistic alignment between staff (resources) and the work wanted. Staff turnover is another issue – we are constantly training.

Overview

1. Have there been any significant developments in regards to your SUR system since 2002?
Well, our office has been working on putting together a feasibility report to link our database with other databases. We are looking at linking with the K-12 system, other in-state agencies and other state SUR databases. We are trying to find ways to do this with limited staff, limited budget, and determine the added value. One of our issues is that to link to the National Clearinghouse is just too costly.
2. Is there anything that you would like to add that we have not addressed?
No.