

Macalester College

Data Release Policy for Unit-Record Data*

Approved by EPAG on September 16, 2010

The Office of Institutional Research (IR) has a wide variety of datasets at its disposal. Most of these data are actually owned by other offices and contain highly confidential and sensitive information. There is also considerable time and effort involved in preparing datasets for external analysis. Therefore, Institutional Research will not release any unit-record data* except under very specific conditions. Normally, all identifiers will be stripped thereby maintaining the confidentiality of the data. The specific conditions for release of unit-record data are:

1. Requests by trustee members, senior administrators and faculty representatives of standing committees or academic departments for decision-support, institutional planning or departmental assessment, upon approval by the Director of Institutional Research or the Associate Dean of the Faculty.
2. Requests by faculty members for use in: a) classroom exercises; or b) independent student research projects that have been approved by a Macalester ethics review board and for which the student researcher has a Responsible Conduct of Research (RCR) certificate on file with the Academic Programs Office.
3. Requests by recognized researchers for scholarly work, upon approval by the Director of Institutional Research and the Associate Dean of the Faculty.

Unit-record datasets will not be released to any other parties. Those requiring general information, or who have questions about this policy are encouraged to speak with the Director of Institutional Research or the Associate Dean of the Faculty. Institutional Research cannot release unit-record datasets directly to students for classroom use or research purposes.

** Unit-record level data present data on individuals rather than groups, where each row of data represents one individual. Aggregate results of some Institutional Research surveys are considered public and are posted on the IR web server (<http://www.macalester.edu/ir/surveys/index.htm>).*