



SERU CONSORTIUM
SERU Data Preparation, Access, and Usage Guidelines
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These guidelines are for use and reporting of SERU Survey results by SERU Consortium member universities and provide rules for granting data access to researchers for scholarly research purposes.

Three principles guide these protocols:

- Access to SERU Survey data by Consortium members is guided by the principle that members mutually agree to share their survey data with other SERU members via a centralized SERU data set managed at the University of Minnesota; if a SERU Consortium member does not agree to this general principle, then the member cannot have access to other campus SERU data sets.
- To encourage maximum use of SERU data exchanges among member institutions, SERU member campuses must have confidence that SERU staff and Consortium member campus representatives will follow established data-sharing guidelines and rules during presentation and dissemination of SERU data.
- The purpose of the SERU Consortium Survey data is to both enhance the internal academic management of member universities and to promote policy relevant scholarly research.

I. WHO PREPARES SERU CONSORTIUM DATA FOR RELEASE

In the case of the SERU-AAU data file, the University of Minnesota staff prepares the SERU-AAU data for release. The SERU-AAU consortium consists of the AAU members, the nine University of California (UC) undergraduate campuses, and the UC Office of the President (UCOP). This preparation will include fully labeling the data file, merging data from the exchanged central records into the survey response file. Preparation may also include creating "higher order" or "recoded" variables, creating summary variables such as factor scores and scales, fixing fields so that the data represent appropriate populations (for example, those who did not use a service should not evaluate that service), cleaning data elements in general, and providing a basic codebook describing the variables.

AAU Members will receive open-ended items only for their own campuses. UCOP will provide University of California Experience Undergraduate Survey (UCUES) campus-specific data files aligned with the SERU-AAU version of the core (sans open-ended responses) to the University of Minnesota for preparation of the multi-institutional SERU-AAU Common Data File. UCUES to SERU survey alignment is defined as the same variables names, variable labels, and scales as utilized in the SERU-AAU undergraduate survey.

In the case of SERU International data, under the supervision of the SERU-International Managing Director, i-graduate staff prepare SERU International data for release. This preparation will include fully labeling the data file, merging data from the exchanged central records into the survey response file. Preparation may also include creating "higher order" or "recoded" variables, creating summary variables such as factor scores and scales, fixing fields so that the data represent appropriate populations (for example, those who did not use a service should not evaluate that service), cleaning data elements in general, and providing a basic codebook describing the variables.

II. ACCESS TO SERU DATA

A. Administrative Access

Each SERU-AAU Consortium member campus has access to the full data set for their campus of SERU Survey data.

SERU-AAU Consortium member campuses have access to the full SERU-AAU Survey Common Data File, excluding student name identification numbers (e.g., social security number, ETS number) other than a randomly assigned SERU id, and open-ended items, but including SERU survey items, demographic and academic input and outcome variables from the seed and supplemental exchange files. This survey data set will be made available to:

1. SERU Principal Researchers
2. Designated SERU Staff
3. Designated Research Staff at the University of California's Office of the President
4. SERU Consortium member campus staff as designated by the [SERU primary campus representative](#) (SERU representative), provided the campus agrees to sharing its data with all or designated SERU Consortium member campuses.
5. SERU-International Consortium

5a. Shared SERU-AAU and SERU-International (SERU-I) consortium collaboration and coordination is specified in SERU Agreement between CSHE and the University of Minnesota, Exhibit A, Part C.4 which stipulates that SERU-I members who receive SERU consortium data will abide by the same usage and reporting guidelines as adopted by the SERU-AAU consortium, this section states:

SERU-I Consortium campuses and i-graduate have access to SERU data (devoid of student IDs and conforming to IRB policies) plus the secondary data of SERU-AAU campuses who agree to share data with the SERU-I Consortium. Both SERU-I and SERU-AAU member campus must conform to SERU data access and use protocols.

5b. The SERU-AAU /SERU-I exchange data file will be a copy of the SERU-AAU common file (i.e., unique student identifiers removed, no open-ended responses, etc.), but will be a subset of those member institutions who have opted into the exchange. Data elements not already in the SERU dataset cannot be provided. The University of Minnesota will create the data file and conduct the exchange with the SERU-International consortium. SERU-I has responsibility to ensure that i-graduate, and any other service vendors, are prohibited from any use of the data other than activities specified to facilitate an effective data exchange between participating SERU-AAU and SERU-I campuses. All data i-graduate accesses must be secured according to institutional IRB requirements and all applicable laws.

5c. The University of Minnesota uploads a subset of the common file directly to i-graduate via a secure protocol. Once i-graduate has completed the merger, it sends copies to Minnesota and CSHE via the same secure protocol. And then i-graduate distributes the file to its respective members, and Minnesota will then distribute the file to the appropriate AAU members.

B. Access for Scholarly Research

The SERU PRs, SERU-AAU, SERU-I campus representatives and their designated staff have access to their respective common files for scholarly research.

The SERU PRs, SERU-I campus representatives, and participating SERU-AAU members in the international exchange who want to use the SERU-AAU/SERU-I exchange data for scholarly research may do so using data as provided under section II A. 5, or may request additional data following the protocols in this section.

If specific campus data or data with campus identifiers is to be reported, the researcher must obtain prior approval from a campus sponsor to be identified by the SERU representative. The sponsor may be the SERU representative for that campus or their approved designee. The sponsor must have written approval from a senior administrative officer (Vice Chancellor, Undergraduate Dean/Provost, Vice Provost or higher), as designated by the chief administrative officer.

All others may request access to specific SERU survey data elements, excluding identification numbers, and institutional identifiers, but including variables relevant to the topic under study will be provided for scholarly research under the following protocols:

1. Obtain approval from the designated SERU Principal Researcher (PR) or designated SERU staff. See Appendix for contact information.

2. Agree to conditions for data release and reporting to be jointly determined by the principal researchers and SERU staff through a formal data sharing agreement, similar to the one shown in the Appendix.
3. Obtain human subjects approval on their local campuses.
4. If specific campus data or data with campus identifiers is requested, the applicant must obtain prior approval from a campus sponsor to be identified by the SERU representative. The sponsor may be the SERU representative for that campus or his or her approved designee. The sponsor must have written approval from a senior administrative officer (Vice Chancellor, Undergraduate Dean/Provost, Vice Provost or higher), as designated by the chief administrative officer.

Access Protocol

To be approved by SERU, researchers will provide a 3-5 page proposal (exclusive of the variable list) and a 100-word abstract.

The variable list must specify the SERU variables, demographic variables, and other input and outcome measures requested by the researcher. Data dictionary files are available on request from the designated SERU PR referenced in appendix.

Reporting data by campus will be regulated through conditions imposed in these data sharing guidelines. Data elements not already in the SERU dataset cannot be provided.

Once SERU approval is obtained and conditions of the release of the data are agreed upon by the PRs, a formal data sharing agreement, will be issued (see Appendix) and a data file will be prepared by the University of Minnesota.

On an annual basis, SERU PRs shall provide the SERU Board a summary of the proposals received, where data was provided, along with a brief summary of research findings and/or link to published materials.

III. GUIDELINES FOR COMPARING SERU DATA ACROSS CAMPUSES FOR INTERNAL IMPROVEMENT

The ability to compare peer campuses using SERU data, especially in areas of program/service evaluation and academic program review is one of the great advantages and objectives of the SERU Consortium.

However, it is also important that there be “no surprises” for campuses that may be shown in an unfavorable light should comparative data be made public. The following provides guidelines for campus comparisons:

1. Institutional/Student Research Directors and others on campus who are provided access may analyze and examine, but not disseminate, SERU data by campus. As an exception to this policy, the above named staff may provide SERU findings that compare individual campuses to senior administrative officers (defined as: Vice Chancellor, Undergraduate Dean/Provost, Vice Provost, and similar or higher positions) with the caveat that the findings not be disseminated beyond senior administrative officers.

Data disseminated in this manner cannot be published or made available for public release. These reports should be labeled CONFIDENTIAL Not for Public Release.

2. Campuses may make public campus comparisons of SERU/UCUES data elements via one of the following methods:
 - 2a. All SERU consortium members need a minimum of five institutions comprising the aggregated benchmark in their comparison group for reports that may become public or housed on public websites. Institutions may list the institutions comprising the peer group, at their own discretion.

-OR-

- 2b. Campuses may be directly compared to each other if the comparison campuses are not identified by name and if the information provided in the report will not allow comparison campuses to be readily identified. It is possible under this provision to display values for the highest and the lowest unidentified campuses on various SERU items. Suppressing identification may require not reporting enrollment numbers, specific major or college names at different campuses, nor aspects of the student demographics that could be unique to a SERU Consortium institution.

-OR-

- 2c. Campuses may be compared and their identities made public, only if permission to do so is granted to the requester by a senior administrative officer (Vice Chancellor, Undergraduate Dean/Provost, Vice Provost or higher), as designated by the chief administrative officer for each of the campuses being identified. Written confirmation (e.g. email) is considered sufficient evidence. Materials that will be presented publically must be shared with both the senior administrator(s) who provided written approval and the SERU campus rep(s) affiliated with each institution that would be identified 30 days in advance so they can review and provide feedback if necessary.
3. A minimum cell size of 5 is required for all public reports involving personal identifying information such as race and gender.

APPENDIX

SAMPLE SERU DATA SHARING AGREEMENT
CONFIDENTIALITY AND USE AGREEMENT REGARDING THE RELEASE OF SERU
DATA FOR THE PURPOSE OF CONDUCTING RESEARCH

_____ (“Researcher”) and the SERU Principle or their designated Research Staff agree as follows:

1. SERU hereby agrees to release to Researcher, data for conducting the research described in condition #2 below, pursuant to the terms and conditions of this Confidentiality Agreement.
2. Researcher will use the data for research purposes only. Research conducted with these data is restricted solely to the project specified immediately below:

The New SAT I in the Animated Universe: Is it Ducky or just plain Goofy? - A research proposal approved by I.M. Nothere on July 4, 2005.
3. <NOTE: OPTIONAL PROVISION> Researcher agrees that, at least 30 days prior to publishing, circulating, or otherwise disseminating research based on the data provided pursuant to this agreement, he or she will submit to SERU Principal Researchers any materials intended for such dissemination along with a thorough accounting of how the results of said research were derived. Such materials include, but are not limited to, preliminary or final drafts of research papers or presentations. Researcher may provide such materials only to I. M. Administrator, Director of Alumni Fun-in-the-Sun or to staff or agents designated by him.
4. Researcher agrees to hold the data in strict confidence under the terms of this Agreement. Researcher agrees not to release data it receives from University of Minnesota to any other person or organization. Researcher agrees that any research associate working with these data must be closely supervised, and will not have access to the data prior to signing a copy of this Agreement. Any violation of this paragraph or other requirements in this Confidentiality Agreement will result in the termination of this Agreement and applicable penalties. In the event of such a termination, University of Minnesota will demand the destruction or return within three (3) working days of all data supplied to Researcher pursuant to this Agreement, and all of the data derived therefrom.
5. Researcher shall retain data furnished by University of Minnesota in a place physically secure from access by unauthorized persons. Data in electronic format – including but not limited to hard drives, CDs, magnetic tape, or diskettes – shall be stored and processed in such a way that unauthorized persons cannot retrieve the data by means of computer, remote terminal, or other means. Researcher agrees that any computer on which the data reside will be password protected at all times.
6. Researcher may not make public comparisons in which individual campuses are identified unless permission is granted as described in section II B 4 of the SERU Data Preparation, Access, and Use Guidelines document. Campus identification in publications and presentations is limited to listing the institutions comprising the analysis and where individual institutional identification cannot be determined by the information presented.
7. No individual shall be identifiable in any reports, publications, or other documents that are created by Researcher with the use of the data provided by the University of Minnesota. Results for groups of individuals will only be reported when the number of individuals (i.e., the “cell size”) is five or greater and in such a manner that results for groups of less than five individuals cannot be easily calculated from other reported data.

<NOTE: OPTIONAL PROVISION>. In the event of the inadvertent discovery of a student or students’ identity through data analysis, the Researcher agrees not to publish or disclose in any way data that would reveal students’ identities. If the discovery is made, the Researcher will inform the University of Minnesota how this discovery was made so that the University of Minnesota may correct this problem in future distributions of the dataset.
8. Researcher shall have one year from the date of this Agreement to work with the data provided by the University of Minnesota, at which point this Agreement shall expire. This Agreement may be extended by mutual agreement of the parties. Researcher agrees to destroy or return the data when no longer needed for purposes specified in this Confidentiality Agreement, at which point this Agreement shall terminate. All provisions of this Agreement related to confidentiality shall continue in effect after the termination or expiration of this Agreement. Researcher shall retain no copies of the data after the termination or expiration of this Agreement.
8. Researcher shall adhere to all Federal, State, and local statutes, regulations, and other requirements pertaining to the security, confidentiality, and privacy of data provided by University of Minnesota including, but not limited to, the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) (20 U.S.C. § 1232g; 34 CFR Part 99), the California Information Practices Act (California Civil Code Section 1798 et seq.), and the Privacy Act of 1974, as amended, (5 U.S.C. § 552).
10. Pursuant to FERPA, personally identifiable information from student records may not ordinarily be disclosed without the student's consent, except as provided in Title 34, Code of Federal Regulations 99.31. Notwithstanding this provision, the intent of University of Minnesota pursuant to this agreement is not to disclose information commonly used to identify individuals, including name, social security number, student identification number(s), and date of birth. In the event that Researcher discovers that data provided do in fact contain such common

identifying information, said data shall be destroyed or returned to University of Minnesota by Researcher within three (3) days of this discovery. University of Minnesota acknowledges that other information contained in the data may constitute personally identifiable information, and is releasing said data to Researcher in accordance with provisions permitting disclosure for purposes of research conducted on behalf of the institution. (See 34 CFR 99.31(a)(6)(i)(c) and 99.35; Civil Code Section 1798.24(t)). Researcher agrees that no attempt will be made to use these data to determine or reveal the identity of individual students. Researcher agrees that no data will be released which would make an individual's identity easily traceable.

11. Researcher shall indemnify, defend, and hold harmless University of Minnesota and its personnel against any and all losses, liability, damages and expenses (including reasonable attorneys' fees and costs) which may arise in connection with: (i) any claim or action against University of Minnesota with respect to the unauthorized release and use of the data outside the terms and conditions of this agreement; and (ii) a breach of any of the covenants and agreements made by Researcher herein. This provision shall survive the termination or expiration of this Agreement.
12. Any violation of the terms, conditions, or other requirements in this Confidentiality Agreement will result in the termination of this Agreement and the imposition of penalties on the Researcher, as appropriate. Researcher agrees that such penalties may include: (i) liability for any and all costs incurred by University of Minnesota remedying the unauthorized dissemination of data or research results or any other violation of this agreement, (ii) prohibition from publication or other dissemination of any results based on data provided pursuant to this Agreement, (iii) disqualification from further data releases to the Researcher for a period of at least five years, and (iv) any other remedies permitted by law. In the event that this agreement is terminated because of a violation of its terms, conditions, or other requirements, University of Minnesota will demand the destruction or return within three (3) working days of all data supplied to Researcher pursuant to this Agreement, and all of the data derived therefrom. This provision shall survive the termination or expiration of this Agreement.
13. Pursuant to the SERU consortium agreement between the University of Minnesota and the University of California Board of Regents, the SERU consortium retains all rights to and ownership of any and all data provided to Researcher pursuant to this Agreement. The consortium retains all right, title, and interest in and to these data, and all copies thereof. The consortium permits publication of analyses derived from these data, provided that any publication conforms to all terms and conditions of this agreement, including limitations on use and confidentiality provisions.

In witness whereof the parties have executed this Agreement by their respective proper signing authorities duly authorized in that behalf.

RESEARCHER

Signature _____

Printed Name _____

Title _____

Institution _____

Date _____

SERU PRINCIPLE RESEARCHER OR ASSIGNED DESIGNATE

Gregg Thomson at gthomson@berkeley.edu

Signature _____

Date _____