ADS/ IE Data Request Guide for Programmatic Accreditation Representatives

Matt Peele and Michael Zamperini

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Often, program representatives working on accreditation tasks need to request data from university resources. In fact, any externally-reported data must be obtained from the university data files via a Service Now ticket. One often repeated programmatic accreditation request described below is for the number of students enrolled in a given program. This guide provides general tips for a smooth data pull, without potentially time consuming and frustrating rework on both the side of the data customer and the analyst.

Tips for successful university data requests:

- Use a Service Now ticket to request the needed data, under Miscellaneous -> Report Request, with as much lead time as possible. One to two months is ideal. This allows time to refine the request and the output as needed.
- On the Service Now ticket, indicate "Yes" in the box that asks whether the report will be used beyond internal Liberty University staff (if it is for programmatic accreditors or other external stakeholders).
- Be as specific as possible. If available, provide the specific output (a table of numbers, percentages, ratios, etc.) that you need. This allows the ADS analyst to ensure that the necessary data is collected and manipulated correctly.
- If your programmatic accreditor has specific rules for their data submissions, provide that information. For example, one program's accreditor defined program students as people who had taken a specific class within the program.
- If you've made the same data request successfully in the past, mention this fact and provide the past ticket number so that the analyst can reference the older query to more quickly replicate the same updated data.
- Perhaps counter-intuitively, there are a number of different higher education data definitions of "student" in use for various purposes. Some of the common definitions follow. Be sure to understand and specify which definition you need for a data request involving program students. Also, please note that the timing of a count of program students can have a big impact. The highest count for total students over an academic year will come at the end of the spring semester.
    - Current Student: A student who is enrolled in a program's course work in a given time frame (note, this is the most common definition of "student" for programmatic accreditation purposes). Numbers of current students in a program are tallied by unduplicated count.
    - Unduplicated count - The sum of students enrolled for credit with each student counted only once during the reporting period, regardless of when the student enrolled.

- o FTE Students - The number of FTE students is calculated based on the credit and/or contact hours reported by the institution on the IPEDS 12-month enrollment (E12) component and the institution's calendar system, as reported on the IC Header component. Normally used for student to faculty ratios.
  - o Cohort - A specific group of students established for tracking purposed.
  - o Completer - A student who receives a degree, diploma, certificate, or other formal award.
  - o Fall cohort - The group of students entering in the fall term established for tracking purposes.
  - o Fall enrollment - Count of matriculated students as of the institutions official fall reporting date for the Fall semester. This is updated in December.
  - o Full-time student –
    - ▪ Undergraduate: A student enrolled for 12 or more semester credits, or 12 or more quarter credits, or 24 or more contact hours a week each term.
    - ▪ Graduate: A student enrolled for 9 or more semester credits, or 9 or more quarter credits, or a student involved in thesis or dissertation preparation that is considered full-time by the institution.
  - o Transfer-in student - A student entering the reporting institution for the first time but known to have previously attended a postsecondary institution at the same level (e.g., undergraduate, graduate). The student may transfer with or without credit.
- Be aware of the University's "Data Integrity Policy," which requires data for external use to be requested with a Service Now ticket, and for the department fulfilling the request to create and save documentation on the request, and the specific query used to produce the data. This policy also has good tips for data customers and analysts.
- Note that Argos/ Tableau tools are intended for internal convenience only, not external reporting.
- If you receive data from a Service Now ticket that does not make sense to you, please go back to the analyst to clarify. Sometimes mistakes can happen based on data definition assumptions, coding errors, etc.
- Michael Zamperini, the Institutional Effectiveness Office's representative to programmatic accreditors, is available for consultation on implementation of these best practices for your data request Service Now tickets.

Use of these best practices should streamline university data retrieval process for all stakeholders. The goal is for the right data to be produced quickly and with minimal rework.

Please contact Michael Zamperini (mbzamperini@liberty.edu) with any questions, or suggestions on how to improve this guide.