Policy & Procedure for Students to Opt-Out of Postsecondary Data Collections

September 2013
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**For Inquiries Concerning Nondiscrimination in All Other Pennsylvania Department of Education Programs and Activities:**
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Harrisburg, PA 17126-0333 www.education.state.pa.us

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Introduction
In order to meet federal and state reporting requirements, the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) collects unit-level education data three times per year in a statewide longitudinal data system called the Pennsylvania Information Management System (PIMS).

PIMS was developed with the purpose of:
- Allowing the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) to meet federal and state reporting requirements;
- Streamlining the reporting processes from educational institutions to PDE and the U.S. Department of Education (USDOE);
- Reporting timely and accurate education data through standardized and ad hoc reporting capabilities;
- Improving educational decision-making through the use of high quality data and decision support tools; and
- Providing longitudinal data on educational progress over time.

Act 24 of 2011 authorizes PDE to collect unit-level data that are required by state or federal statute or federal regulation.

<table>
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<th>POSTSECONDARY DATA COLLECTION</th>
<th>LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY</th>
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<tr>
<td>Pennsylvania Statewide Transfer and Articulation System</td>
<td>24 P.S. § 20-C</td>
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<td>Community College Annual Report</td>
<td>24 P.S. §§ 19-1918-A</td>
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<td>EDFacts State Data Collection</td>
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PDE collects data three times annually from postsecondary institutions to meet these requirements. Students may opt out of a commonwealth data collection by submitting the electronic [Postsecondary Data Collection Opt-Out Form](#) to PDE at least one month prior to the collection. Students are not permitted to opt out of federally-mandated collections.

In accordance with Act 24, PDE has developed the following policy and procedure for students wanting to opt out of a commonwealth postsecondary data collection that includes unit-level data.

**Student Opt-Out Policy**
Postsecondary students may opt out of a commonwealth data collection by completing the electronic [Postsecondary Data Collection Opt-Out Form](#) available on PDE’s website at least one month prior to postsecondary institutions submitting data to PDE. Students are not permitted to opt out of federally-mandated collections.

PDE collects data from postsecondary institutions three times annually (dates are approximate): October 1st for the Summer terms, February 1st for the Fall and Intersession terms and June 15th for the Spring term.
In accordance with Act 24, PDE will provide postsecondary institutions with written notice of the unit-level data elements being collected and the date by which a student may opt out of the collection. Institutions are required by Act 24 to provide students with an electronic notice of PDE’s request for data, and the process and timeline for opting out of the data collection.

Postsecondary students wishing to opt out of a commonwealth data collection must do so by the deadlines listed below. Students failing to meet the deadline will have their information forwarded to PDE by their respective postsecondary institution.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DATA COLLECTION</th>
<th>APPROXIMATE COLLECTION DATE</th>
<th>OPT-OUT DEADLINE</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Summer Term</td>
<td>October 1</td>
<td>September 1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fall/Intersession Term</td>
<td>February 1</td>
<td>January 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spring Term</td>
<td>June 15</td>
<td>May 15</td>
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</table>

Students are responsible for opting out of each data collection by the posted deadline and identifying the postsecondary institution(s) PDE should notify on their behalf. Students must submit a separate form for each postsecondary institution attended during the collection term.

Approximately one month prior to the collection date, PDE will provide postsecondary institutions with the Names (first and last) and Student Identification Numbers of students from their institution who have elected not to participate in a commonwealth data collection. The postsecondary institution is responsible for excluding those students’ information from its data submission. PDE and the postsecondary institution are not responsible for the sharing of data that may result from a student providing inaccurate information.

**Data Collection Opt-Out Process**

In accordance with Act 24 and this policy:

1. PDE will notify postsecondary institutions in writing of the unit-level data elements PDE will collect and the date by which students may opt out of the collection.
2. Postsecondary institutions will provide students with an electronic notice of PDE’s request for data, and the process and timeline for opting out of a commonwealth data collection.
3. Students may opt out of a commonwealth data collection by submitting the electronic Postsecondary Data Collection Opt-Out Form¹ to PDE at least one month prior to the collection.
4. Approximately one month prior to the collection, PDE will provide postsecondary institutions with the Names (first and last) and Student Identification Numbers of students from their institution who have elected not to participate in the data collection.
5. The postsecondary institution will exclude those students’ information from its data submission to PDE.

¹ [http://www.portal.state.pa.us/portal/server.pt/community/departmental_offices/7235/p/1422973](http://www.portal.state.pa.us/portal/server.pt/community/departmental_offices/7235/p/1422973)