

Obtaining Student Data & Contacting Students: A Guide for TWU Research Faculty

This reference guide serves to assist faculty who need to contact TWU students for research purposes. Whether you want to send a survey to all students or to request volunteers from a set of students based on certain criteria, this document addresses how to proceed.

Contacting Students Directly: List-servs

If faculty wish to contact all TWU students or all students at a specific campus, the easiest way to do so is through a list-serv. TWU list-servs are maintained at <https://lists.twu.edu/>. You must login with your TWU email address (@twu.edu) and password. All postings should be TWU business or event related. TWU lists are intended for posting only and are not intended to act as a discussion forum; students should not email list-servs.

On this site, you can see which lists are available by selecting the “List of Lists” tab at the top of the screen (in the center). You’ll quickly notice the list of lists is extensive. You will save time, if you instead use the search function (Ctrl-F) on a keyword, such as “students.”

These results will be more manageable. The students@lists.twu.edu will reach all enrolled students. Similarly, there are lists of students at each campus: dallasstudents@lists.twu.edu, dentonstudents@lists.twu.edu, and houstonstudents@lists.twu.edu.

To send email to a list, create a new email, and enter the email address of the list(s) that you would like to send it to in the **bcc field**. Once you completed the subject field and contents, hit the send button of

List-servs are ideal for contacting a large group. If a list-serv format is not available, recipient email addresses may also be copied and pasted into the bcc field.

Faculty may request a new list-serv (instructions are available on the [list-serv website](#)). It is the expectation that the faculty member will assume responsibility for the list, including acting as a primary contact for the list, managing subscribers and their access, managing the content of the list, and managing the list's functionality.

the email to send your announcement to the list(s). You may leave the To field blank. These lists are moderated and will be reviewed before they are released. Find all of the documentation for TWU listservs at <https://servicecenter.twu.edu/TDClient/KB/?CategoryID=3775>.

Protecting Student Data

All students enrolled in higher education are protected by the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). Additionally, researchers must protect Confidential Data such as Personally Identifiable Information (PII) and Protected Health Information (PHI). If PHI is collected and electronically transmitted, HIPAA rights may also need to be considered. Each of these types of protected data is covered in the [Data Management and Integrity in Human Research document](#).

Accessing Aggregate Data

TWU's Office of Institutional Research & Data Management (IRDM) publishes a number of reports that may contain the data you need. You may access these data at <http://www.twu.edu/institutional-research/reports-data--references/>. Additionally, they have an interactive fact book found on the X Drive for TWU faculty and staff internal use. It contains 10 years of enrollment pivot tables. Contact IRDM for access to the file. Instructions for use can be found on worksheet tab 1.

Requesting Data on Specific Students

The easiest (and recommended) process for requesting a set of student data is through the TWU Office of Institutional Research & Data Management. Please note that if you were required to obtain IRB approval for your project, you should attach a copy of the IRB approval along with the protocol number. The request is made through an email to irdm@twu.edu. On the [website](#), you'll see requested information to provide.

Tips for Getting the Data You Need

You can see that the data request form is straightforward. The ease of the form may be misleading. Any data provided will only be as useful as the parameters set in the request. The Office of Research & Sponsored Programs and the Office of Institutional Research & Data Management offer the following time-saving tips for procuring the best student data set:

- Be as specific as possible with your request;
- Give the precise time frame for which you need data (e.g., Fall, 2018, Academic year 2019, etc.);
- Specify if you need undergraduate (UG) or graduate (GR) information, or both;
- Call Institutional Research and Data Management for clarification on data definitions, if needed;
- Be prepared to provide clarification to IRDM as your request is being processed.