

COMPLETIONS

DATA FILE HANDBOOK

VERSION 1.0



NJ SURE
State of New Jersey
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Executive Summary

The Student Unit Record (SURE) system which began in 1985 is a comprehensive collection, storage, and retrieval system for data on enrolled and graduated students. The SURE system was designed to strengthen the capacity of New Jersey Higher Education by creating efficiencies in documentation, data collection, student tracking, and other key processes. With the added efficiencies provided by the SURE collection and a suite of analytic tools, New Jersey Higher Education has the ability to effectively and flexibly plan, coordinate responsibilities, conduct and disseminate research, and assist New Jersey's public colleges/universities and independent institutions.

New Jersey's establishment of a P-20W Statewide Longitudinal System (SLDS) has created the opportunity for New Jersey Office of the Secretary of Higher Education (OSHE), New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE), and the New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce Development (NJLWD) to collaboratively strengthen the collection, cooperative analysis, and communication of student data to inform important decisions at every level of education. As New Jersey's higher education data collection and storage capacity increases to support the development of the P-20W SLDS system, -maintaining accuracy and consistency in reporting remains important. SURE's handbooks have been published to support New Jersey's higher education institutions in this effort.

SURE's collections capture a set of postsecondary components that comprise the categories of enrollment, completions, and non-credit activity. Enrollment components are fall and spring semester "snapshots" and a 12-month enrollment file. The completions component captures data for an entire academic/state fiscal year. The non-credit file provides data on registrations for training that does not lead to college credits.

This handbook serves as a guide for the state's colleges and universities during their data submissions. Certain principles have guided the development of the SURE system such as considerations for planning at both the statewide and institutional levels, standardization, maintaining the confidentiality of individual-level data, and facilitating research.

The Completions Data Handbook outlines the data elements, layout and definitions for both the Fiscal Year and Summer Completions files. These files contain information on graduated students and for the Fiscal Year files are used to complete a mandated Federal IPEDS Survey which stipulates:

"The purpose of the Completions component of IPEDS is to collect data on the number of awards conferred by postsecondary institutions during the 12-month time period beginning July 1 of the previous calendar year and ending June 30 of the current calendar year. The awards reported range from sub-baccalaureate certificates to doctor's degrees and must be formal credit awards conferred by the postsecondary institution as the result of completion of an academic or occupational/vocational program of study (the program's instructional activity can be measured in credit hours, contact hours, clock hours, or some other unit of measurement)."

For Summer Completions files, institutions report on awards from July 1 through August 30. These same awards are then also included in the following cycle's Fiscal Year file. The earlier reporting of these summer awards are required to meet definitions in the Federal Graduation Rate Survey and to complete the New Jersey New Transfer Report.

Each award received by a student during the report period should be reported as a separate record

Privacy and Security

Privacy of student records is required by the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). FERPA requires state and local education agencies to protect the privacy of education records that contain “information directly related to a student” and which are maintained by an educational agency or institution. Education data stored from this collection qualifies as education records within the limits of FERPA. Absent written consent from the student, or a valid court order, FERPA prohibits the release of education records to anyone other than institutional officials, or federal and state education agencies with legitimate educational interests for the information

New Jersey Higher Education and SURE take privacy and security concerns extremely seriously. To ensure confidentiality of student records, security tools and procedures have been set in place. First, an audit trail of all logins, changes and logouts are recorded for all registered and authorized users. The audit trail allows for early notification of potential security breaches. It also encourages legal and appropriate use of student information since all activities within the portal are monitored. Persons who illegally access or download information will be prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law. Second, information submitted to the data collection is segmented or compartmentalized with security rights set up by the institution so that only registered and authorized users have access to information where they have a legitimate educational interest.

Revision History

Date	Version	Comment
April 28, 2016	V1.0	Added Additional Note to Birth Year

Data Elements and Definitions

This handbook includes data elements that are collected and maintained by higher education institutions. Not all data elements are relevant to each student (e.g., students without available birth information will not have a Birth Year value) It is important to understand how each definition is implemented. In those situations, where the implementation of a definition is not clear it should be reported to NJ SURE so that a collaborative resolution can be reached.

The following information is provided for each data element in the *Handbook*:

Name of Data Element	The data element name used within the SURE system.
SURE Code	The alpha, numeric, or alphanumeric identification of the data element, which will remain in effect over time regardless of data elements retired or added.
Definition	A brief description of the data element.
Functional, Policy or Legal Rationale	The rationale for collecting the data element, and how the data element will be used. Other policy and legal implications for its collection.
Type	Data element types such as alpha, numeric, alphanumeric, or date indicate how the field should be treated in order to meet formatting requirements.
Min Length	The minimum number of characters permitted.
Max Length	The maximum number of characters permitted.
Range of Values	The value options of each data element.
Required Element?	Indication of whether the data element is required for file submission.
Validation Checks	Measure set in place to ensure proper data entry.
Format	Requirement for how each data element must be arranged/ reported.
Additional Notes	Additional relevant notes about the data element, including specifics on data validation to occur with respect to each data element.

Date of Award

SURE Code

D01

Definition of Data Element

The month and year that a degree or certificate was conferred to a student.

Functional, Policy or Legal Rationale

Date of Award is required for file maintenance.

Is this Data Element Required?

Field is **mandatory** for all students.

Acceptable Values

Type: Date

Minimum Length: 6

Maximum Length: 6

The first and second digits are the month the award was conferred; the third through sixth digits are the calendar year

Validation Checks

- Date must be in MMYYYY format. Do not include any separators such as "/" or "-". For example, 012011 is January 2011.
- Date of Award must fall within the current reporting period.

Additional Notes

- For 12-Month Completions Submission, the current reporting period is between July 1st of previous calendar year and June 30th of current calendar year.
- For Summer Completions Submission, the current reporting period is between July 1st and August 31st of current calendar year.

Common Errors

- **Error Message:** Date must be a valid value.
Resolution: The date of award must be in MMYYYY format.

Institution Code

SURE Code

D02

Definition of Data Element

A number assigned to an institution, in most cases by the College Entrance Examination Board (CEEB).

Functional, Policy or Legal Rationale

Institution CEEB Code is needed for file maintenance

Is this Data Element Required?

Field is **mandatory** for all students.

Acceptable Values

Type: Numeric

Minimum Length: 6

Maximum Length: 6

For a list of Institution Codes, please refer to the *Institution Code List*.

Validation Checks

- Institutions may only input codes included on the above listing, which includes CEEB codes and additional codes created for institutions not coded by CEEB.
- Institution Code must be equal to the Institution Code of the submitting Institution, unless the submission file combines various institution codes used by the same college/campus (for ex, Rutgers New Brunswick).

Additional Notes

- The 5th digit indicates primary degree level: 2= Associate Degree, 4 = Bachelors or higher.
- The 6th digit indicates control of affiliation: 1= Private, 2= Public.

Common Errors

Social Security Number

SURE Code
D03

Definition of Data Element

The nine-digit number of identification assigned to the student by the Social Security Administration.

Functional, Policy or Legal Rationale

Social Security Number is needed for record management.

Is this Data Element Required?

Field is **mandatory** for all students.

Acceptable Values

Type: Numeric

Minimum Length: 9

Maximum Length: 9

Validation Checks

- Social Security Number must be entered in XXXXXXXXX format. Separators such as “-“will not be accepted.
- Social Security Number cannot have three or more leading zeros
- Social Security Number cannot end in four zeros
- Social Security Number cannot start with digits 666

Additional Notes

- In 2011 the Social Security Administration changed their SSN procedures to allow valid SSNs between 729 and 899.
- If a student does not have a valid SSN, institutions must create a temporary identifier in the following format 9XXXXXXX (it is recommended that institutions use their institutional ID padded out to 9 digits)

Common Errors

- **Error Message:** Field must be a valid Social Security Number.
Resolution: Ensure the number entered meets all noted validation checks above.

Sex

SURE Code

D04

Definition of Data Element

The concept describing the biological traits that distinguish the males and females of a species.

Functional, Policy or Legal Rationale

Sex is required for the federal IPEDS Completions Survey.

Is this Data Element Required?

Field is **mandatory** for all students.

Acceptable Values

Type: Numeric

Minimum Length: 1

Maximum Length: 1

0 = Not reported by student

1 = Male

2 = Female

Validation Checks

- Error will occur if value is not a 0, 1, or 2.

Additional Notes

- For federal reporting purposes, students reported as sex unknown are classified as male.

Common Errors

Citizenship

SURE Code

D05

Definition of Data Element

An indication of whether a student is a citizen of the United States, resident alien, or a non- resident alien.

A non-resident alien is a person who is not a citizen or national of the United States and who is in this country on a temporary basis and does not have the right to remain here indefinitely. A resident alien is a person who is not a citizen and has been lawfully admitted for permanent residence and who holds an alien registration receipt card – form 1-551/155

Functional, Policy or Legal Rationale

Citizenship is required for the federal IPEDS Completions Survey.

Is this Data Element Required?

Field is **mandatory** for all students.

Acceptable Values

Type: Numeric

Minimum Length: 1

Maximum Length: 1

0 = Information not available

1 = U.S. Citizen

2 = Non-resident alien

3 = Resident alien

Validation Checks

- Error will occur if value is not a 0, 1, 2, or 3.

Additional Notes

- For federal reporting purposes, students reported as citizenship unknown are classified as citizens.

Common Errors

Birth Year

SURE Code
E07

Definition of Data Element

The year in which an individual was born. This data element must correspond to the child's birth certificate or other legal documentation.

Functional, Policy or Legal Description

This data element is used to verify the unique identification of the student.

Is this Data Element Required?

Field is **mandatory** for all students.

Acceptable Values

Type: Numeric

Minimum Length: 4

Maximum Length: 4

Validation Checks

- Date cannot be in the future
- Student cannot be younger than 11 or older than 120 years of age.
- Date must be in YYYY format. Do not include any separators such as "/" or "-".

Additional Notes

- Use the default 9999 value if Birth Year is not available.

Common Errors

Admissions Status

SURE Code

D08

Definition of Data Element

The indicator denoting what criteria applied when a student was first admitted to the institution at this level of study.

Functional, Policy or Legal Rationale

Admissions Status is useful for program evaluation.

Is this Data Element Required?

Field is **not** required but should be reported if available.

Acceptable Values

Type: Numeric

Minimum Length: 1

Maximum Length: 1

1 = Regular

A student admitted according to regular admissions criteria.

2 = Special

A student admitted on the basis of alternative admission criteria (i.e., potential aptitude).

3 = E.O.F. Non-transfer

A student who has been admitted through the Educational Opportunity Fund (EOF) and who is not classified as a transfer student.

4 = Transfer

A student who has not been previously enrolled at the institution, and brings or seeks to bring college credits from another institution.

5 = Other

A student who did not go through the applications and admissions process.

6 = E.O.F. Transfer

A student who has been admitted through the Educational Opportunity Fund (EOF) and who is also classified as a transfer student.

Validation Checks

- Admissions Status must have a value of 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, or 6.

Additional Notes

- EOF non-transfers must be reported as code 3.
- EOF transfer students must be reported as code 6.
- The definition of Code 4 (transfer students) does not include "internal transfers" (i.e., students who transferred within the institution from one status or program to another).

Common Errors

Year of Matriculation

SURE Code

D09A

Definition of Data Element

The point in time (year) at which a student was first matriculated at the institution for the degree being awarded.

Functional, Policy or Legal Rationale

Year of Matriculation is used for program evaluation purposes.

Is this Data Element Required?

Year of Matriculation is not required but should be reported if available.

Acceptable Values

Type: Numeric

Minimum Length: 4

Maximum Length: 4

Validation Checks

- Error will occur if format is not a four digit year YYYY (i.e. 2001).
- Year of Matriculation cannot be a future date.

Additional Notes

Common Errors

- **Error Message:** Date must be a valid value.
Resolution: The date of matriculation must be in YYYY format.

Semester of Matriculation

SURE Code
D09B

Definition of Data Element

The semester a student first matriculated at the institution for the degree being awarded.

Functional, Policy or Legal Rationale

Semester of Matriculation is not required but should be reported if available.

Is this Data Element Required?

Semester of Matriculation is a suggested field.

Acceptable Values

Type: Numeric

Minimum Length: 1

Maximum Length: 1

2 = Spring (January to May)

3 = Summer (June to August)

4 = Fall (September to December)

Validation Checks

- Unless blank, Semester of Matriculation must have a value of 2, 3, or 4.

Additional Notes

Common Errors

Number of Awards Conferred

SURE Code

D10

Definition of Data Element

The total number of degrees and certificates conferred to the student during the fiscal year reporting period.

Functional, Policy or Legal Rationale

Awards Conferred is required for file maintenance.

Is this Data Element Required?

Field is **mandatory** for all students.

Acceptable Values

Type: Numeric

Minimum Length: 1

Maximum Length: 1

Report the whole number that represents the number of awards conferred.

Validation Checks

Additional Notes

- Number of Awards Conferred must equal the number of records in the file for the student.

Common Errors

Award Type

SURE Code

D11

Definition of Data Element

An indication of the degree/ certificate conferred during the fiscal year reporting period. For multiple awards in the same reporting period, multiple records must be submitted for the student.

Functional, Policy or Legal Rationale

Award is required for the federal IPEDS Completions Survey.

Is this Data Element Required?

Field is **mandatory** for all students.

Acceptable Values

Type: Numeric

Minimum Length: 3

Maximum Length: 3

For the list of degrees/ certificates, see the Degree/ Certificates Codes List.

Validation Checks

- Award must have a valid value from the Degree/ Certificates Codes list.

Additional Notes

Common Errors

Award Major (CIP Code)

SURE Code

D12

Definition of Data Element

A student's primary field of study. Degree majors are approved degree/ formal award programs, and are categorized and coded according to the "Classification of Instructional Programs" (CIP) Manual.

Functional, Policy or Legal Rationale

Award Major is required for the federal IPEDS Completions Survey.

Is this Data Element Required?

Field is **mandatory** for all students.

Acceptable Values

Type: Numeric

Minimum Length: 6

Maximum Length: 6

For accepted codes, refer to the Program Inventory.

Validation Checks

- Award Major must have a valid value from the Program Inventory.

Additional Notes

Common Errors

Accumulated Degree Credits

SURE Code

D19

Definition of Data Element

The number of academic degree credits (a unit of measure that represents an activity for which one hour of credit is granted towards a degree) accumulated by a student as of the reporting date.

Functional, Policy or Legal Rationale

Accumulated Degree Credits is requested for attendance status validation and program evaluation purposes.

Is this Data Element Required?

Field is not required but should be reported if available.

Acceptable Values

Type: Numeric

Minimum Length: 4

Maximum Length: 6

Up to 3 whole numbers with 2 decimal places

For example:

1.00 = 1 credit

1.25 = 1 and one-quarter credits

1.33 = 1 and one-third credits

1.50 = 1 and one-half credits

100.00 = 100 credits

Validation Checks

- Unless blank, field must be a numeric value in X.XX, XX.XX, or XXX.XX format.

Additional Notes

Common Errors

Accumulated Grade Point Average

SURE Code

D20

Definition of Data Element

The calculation of the average of grades received for all degree-credit courses completed by a student as of the reporting date.

Functional, Policy or Legal Rationale

Accumulated Grade Point Average is requested for program evaluation purposes.

Is this Data Element Required?

Field is required and can only be left blank if information is not available.

Acceptable Values

Type: Numeric

Minimum Length: 4

Maximum Length: 4

1 whole number with 2 decimal places

For example:

3.25= 3.25 GPA

3.96= 3.96 GPA

Validation Checks

- Field must be a numeric value in X.XX format.
- Accumulated Grade Point Average cannot be higher than 4.50

Additional Notes

- Leave this field blank if student information is not available
- G.P.A is calculated as the quotient of the sum of Values times Credit, divided by Credits

Common Errors

- **Error Message:** Field must be a numeric value in X.XX format.
Resolution: Accumulated Grade Point Average is a numeric value with two decimal places. Ensure the two digits following the decimal point are included.

Hispanic/ Latino Code

SURE Code

D21

Definition of Data Element

An indication that a person most identifies as having origins in any of the peoples of Central or South American, or other Spanish origins.

Functional, Policy or Legal Rationale

Race/ Ethnicity Codes are required for the federal IPEDS Completions Survey.

Is this Data Element Required?

Field is **mandatory** for all students.

Acceptable Values

Type: Numeric

Minimum Length: 1

Maximum Length: 1

0 = Not reported by student

1 = Yes, a student identifies as being Hispanic or Latino.

Validation Checks

- Field must be a value of 0 or 1.

Additional Notes

- Multiple values for ethnicity can be reported.

Common Errors

American Indian/ Alaskan Native Code

SURE Code

D22

Definition of Data Element

An indication that a person most identifies as having origins in any of the original peoples of North or South America (including Central America), and who maintains cultural identification through tribal affiliations or community recognition.

Functional, Policy or Legal Rationale

Race/ Ethnicity Codes are required for the federal IPEDS Completions Survey.

Is this Data Element Required?

Field is **mandatory** for all students.

Acceptable Values

Type: Numeric

Minimum Length: 1

Maximum Length: 1

0 = Not reported by student

1 = Yes, a student identifies as being American Indian or Alaskan Native

Validation Checks

- Field must be a value of 0 or 1.

Additional Notes

- Multiple values for ethnicity can be reported.

Common Errors

Asian Code

SURE Code

D23

Definition of Data Element

An indication that a person most identifies as having origins in any of the original peoples of the Far East, Southeast Asia, or the Indian Subcontinent. This area includes, for example, Cambodia, China, India, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, Pakistan, Philippines, Thailand, and Vietnam.

Functional, Policy or Legal Rationale

Race/ Ethnicity Codes are required for the federal IPEDS Completions Survey.

Is this Data Element Required?

Field is **mandatory** for all students.

Acceptable Values

Type: Numeric

Minimum Length: 1

Maximum Length: 1

0 = Not reported by student

1 = Yes, a student identifies as being Asian.

Validation Checks

- Field must be a value of 0 or 1.

Additional Notes

- Multiple values for ethnicity can be reported.

Common Errors

Black /African American Code

SURE Code

D24

Definition of Data Element

An indication that a person most identifies as having origins in any of the black racial groups of Africa.

Functional, Policy or Legal Rationale

Race/ Ethnicity Codes are required for the federal IPEDS Completions Survey.

Is this Data Element Required?

Field is **mandatory** for all students.

Acceptable Values

Type: Numeric

Minimum Length: 1

Maximum Length: 1

0 = Not reported by student

1 = Yes, a student identifies as being Black or African American.

Validation Checks

- Field must be a value of 0 or 1.

Additional Notes

- Multiple values for ethnicity can be reported.

Common Errors

Native Hawaiian/ Pacific Islander Code

SURE Code

D25

Definition of Data Element

An indication that a person most identifies as having origins in any of the original peoples of Hawaii, Guam, Samoa, or other Pacific Islands.

Functional, Policy or Legal Rationale

Race/ Ethnicity Codes are required for the federal IPEDS Completions Survey.

Is this Data Element Required?

Field is **mandatory** for all students.

Acceptable Values

Type: Numeric

Minimum Length: 1

Maximum Length: 1

0 = Not reported by student

1 = Yes, a student identifies as being Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander.

Validation Checks

- Field must be a value of 0 or 1.

Additional Notes

- Multiple values for ethnicity can be reported.

Common Errors

White Code

SURE Code

D26

Definition of Data Element

An indication that a person most identifies as having origins in any of the original peoples of Europe, North Africa, or the Middle East.

Functional, Policy or Legal Rationale

Race/ Ethnicity Codes are required for the federal IPEDS Completions Survey.

Is this Data Element Required?

Field is **mandatory** for all students.

Acceptable Values

Type: Numeric

Minimum Length: 1

Maximum Length: 1

0 = Not reported by student

1 = Yes, a student identifies as being White.

Validation Checks

- Field must be a value of 0 or 1.

Additional Notes

- Multiple values for ethnicity can be reported.

Common Errors

NJ SMART State Identification Number

SURE Code

D27

Definition of Data Element

Identification number assigned to a student by the New Jersey Department of Education's NJ SMART (New Jersey Standards Measurement and Resource for Teaching) System.

Functional, Policy or Legal Rationale

Field is required for file maintenance and data matching

Is this Data Element Required?

Field is required if student has a valid NJ SMART State Identification Number.

Acceptable Values

Type: Numeric

Minimum Length: 10

Maximum Length: 10

Validation Checks

- Unless blank, field must be a valid NJ SMART issued SID.

Additional Notes

- NJ SMART ID numbers are only assigned to students who attended primary or secondary school at a New Jersey public or charter school.
- Leave this field blank if student's high school transcript does not contain an NJ SMART ID number.

Common Errors

Institutional Student Identification Number

SURE Code
D28

Definition of Data Element

The identification number assigned to the student by the Institution.

Functional, Policy or Legal Rationale

Institutional Student Identification Number will assist in record management and improve student tracking.

Is this Data Element Required?

Field is **mandatory** for all students.

Acceptable Values

Type: Alphanumeric

Maximum Length: 15

Validation Checks

Additional Notes

- The Institutional Student Identification Number must be unique for each student. The Institutional Student Identification Number can appear on multiple records in this file but should only refer to a single student.
- Enter the default value of student's Social Security Number into this field **ONLY** if valid Institutional (local) Student ID is not available for the student.

Common Errors