What is Institutional Data?

Institutional data is official information about the university as a whole. There are several categories this data fits into.

Live Data:

Live data includes data collected from offices such as Admissions, the Registrar, and Human Resources. This data covers a wide range of topics, for example:

- Who our students are
- What they're studying
- Who is teaching which classes
- How and when classes are being taught

The data collected by these offices is constantly changing as students add or drop classes, instructors submit grades, and new applicants apply for admittance. Because it's updated in real time, this type of information is often called "live data."

Snapshot Data:

Most institutional data used for official reporting is collected on a specific day each term. For example, enrollment data is usually gathered on "Census Day" —often the 10th day of the term—when the university finalizes enrollment numbers. This data is often referred to as "10th Day" or "Census Day" data. Similarly, graduation data is collected at the end of the term, once grades are submitted and degrees are confirmed.

This kind of data is called "snapshot data" because it captures the university at a single moment in time. Snapshot data is especially useful for making more meaningful year-over-year comparisons, such as how many students enrolled each fall. Because snapshot data is collected only a few times a year, official reports based on this data are typically updated once or twice annually.

Survey Data:

Institutional data also includes results from university-wide surveys. These surveys, which are approved by university leadership, help us understand student and employee experiences at UW-Whitewater. Most of these surveys are only conducted a few times per decade and are used to track changes over time.

The Office of Institutional Research, Assessment, and Planning is responsible for collecting, verifying, and reporting this data. They follow well-defined procedures guided by

UW System policies, state regulations, and federal laws. This office also ensures that all surveys meet FERPA and Institutional Review Board (IRB) standards.

How Is Institutional Data Used?

Institutional data serves both internal and external purposes.

Because UW-Whitewater is an accredited university that receives federal student aid, we are required to submit detailed data to the U.S. Department of Education. As part of the University of Wisconsin System, we also report to state government officials and the UW Board of Regents.

Beyond these obligations, we have an ethical responsibility to provide accurate, up-to-date information to:

- Current and prospective students
- Their families
- The City of Whitewater and Walworth County

This helps the public better understand our university and its impact on the local community and citizens of Wisconsin.

Institutional data is also used by many groups within the university. For example:

- The Chancellor's Office uses it to make informed decisions about university policy and proposed projects
- College deans use it to support departments and student success
- Departments and programs use it to track academic outcomes

Externally, data is reviewed by accreditors and used by ranking organizations like *U.S. News & World Report* to compare UW-Whitewater with other institutions.