

Accuracy of LEA Data Reported to USBE

Two men were examining the output of the new computer in their department. After an hour or so of analyzing the data, one of them remarked: "Do you realize it would take 400 men at least 250 years to make a mistake this big?" – Anonymous

The accuracy of all of USBE’s federal and state reports hinges on the accuracy of the data submitted by our LEAs. This document is intended to help LEAs in recognizing their importance in data accuracy and to provide specific examples of the most common data errors that USBE encounters.

CACTUS vs. SIS vs. Reality...

The key points for LEAs to consider are:

- 1) While exceptions exist, the vast majority of CACTUS data should match with appropriate student data stored in LEA SIS systems and submitted to USBE through UTREx.
- 2) In the case where CACTUS/UTREx reporting guidelines do not allow for LEA data to be reported accurately, LEAs should consult with USBE personnel to determine the most appropriate way to enter the data.
- 3) CACTUS assignment data should NEVER be entered based solely on ensuring that a teacher shows as qualified for their assignment.
 - a. Any such data entry could be seen by data auditors as an attempt to circumvent Utah Administrative Rule R277-520.

To help LEAs in the monumental task of ensuring the accuracy of their data, USBE has prepared this document to point out common errors and suggest possible solutions. USBE is very aware that it is not possible to have 100% accurate data, but it is hoped that this document will help eliminate as much error as possible.

CACTUS Example:

End Date	Contact Hours	Salary	Add on	Contract Days	FTE	Status	State	Intern	
06/30/9999	1440	\$51,159		193	1.000	Active	UT	No	Terminate

Assignment	Percent	Status	Mail Pickup	USOE YIC Qualified	Show Requirements	NCLB Qualified
Mathematics - Grade 6	70%	Active	No <input type="checkbox"/>	Yes	Show	Yes
Grade 7	20%	Active	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	Yes	Show	No
Student Study Skills	10%	Active	No <input type="checkbox"/>	Yes	Show	Not Applicable

Discrepancy Report Example:

Matches	Warehouse	CACTUS	Expand All	Matched	CACTUS Warning	Warehouse Warning	Probable Error
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		2	0	0	3
<ul style="list-style-type: none">06010000050 Debate02010000045 Drawing I02010000046 Drawing II02010000061 Drawing II (Foundations II)06020000040 Language Arts 9 				MATCH			CACTUS
				MATCH			CACTUS WAREHOUSE

		Matched	CACTUS Warning	Warehouse Warning	Probable Error		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Matches	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Warehouse	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Cactus	<input type="button" value="Expand All"/>	2	0	0	4
23010000200	Applied Skills				WAREHOUSE		
08020000010	Biology	MATCH					
08040000010	Earth Systems (9-12)				WAREHOUSE		
08040000025	Investigation Science	MATCH					
06020000060	Language Arts 11				WAREHOUSE		
09060023020	US Government & Citizenship - Special Ed				WAREHOUSE		

Avoidable Errors

Examples:

1. Individual mistypes last name when requesting initial background check for licensure.
2. Individual's gender is incorrectly entered in CACTUS.
3. Educator's CACTUS ID is entered into SIS system with one incorrect digit (91090 becomes 91091).
4. CACTUS user misunderstands the definition/use of a course code and uses the code inappropriately.

Possible Solutions:

1. Encourage teachers to review their own CACTUS data through my.uen.org.
2. Use the Discrepancy Report in CACTUS to check for inconsistencies between CACTUS and UTREx.
3. Use the course code descriptions in CACTUS and the [Educator Categories](#) document to determine the most appropriate course code when it is unclear.
4. Two common course code errors:
 - a. Grade 7 and Grade 8 codes (22-01-00-00-030 and 22-01-00-00-040)
 - i. These codes represent a Grade 7 or Grade 8 class in an elementary setting.
 1. Elementary setting is defined as a group of students meeting with one teacher throughout the school day. The teacher is responsible for providing instruction to the group of students in all areas of the Utah Core Standards for the appropriate grade level.
 - b. LEA-based Specialist vs. School-based Specialist:
 - i. School-based Specialist: Licensed educators who provide specialized support for students and teachers (i.e. Reading Specialists, Math Specialists) assigned to a school setting. Educators in this assignment can serve multiple schools, but have a high frequency of interaction with students.
 - ii. LEA-based Specialist: District/Charter based licensed educators who provide specialized support to teachers and other support personnel in order to promote student achievement. They do not provide face-to-face instruction with students in schools as part of their daily work.
5. In general, "look" at the data you are reporting, particularly if you are not entering/preparing the data yourself. Does it appear correct? Does it pass the "smell" test? You know what "Mrs. Johnson" teaches, does what is displayed in CACTUS for her make sense?

Unavoidable Errors

Examples:

1. A school is using "leveling" or using multiple teachers to provide instruction for K-2 teachers. UTREx rules prohibit reporting more than one teacher-of-record for a student in these grades.
2. A student is served in a full-time summer program resulting in the student receiving 200 days of instruction. UTREx rules prohibit reporting more than 180 days of membership for any 1 student (due to funding rules).
3. A student transfers from a traditional calendar school to a year-round school during the school year. This results in the student receiving a total of 210 days of instruction. UTREx rules prohibit the student from having more than 190 total days of membership (180 + 10 for 1 transfer) reported.
4. A teacher is working part-time for multiple LEAs. The CACTUS program's original design prohibits an educator from being assigned to multiple LEAs simultaneously.

Possible Solutions:

1. Document through other avenues what is occurring (using the teacher code on appropriate CRT test documents) in case of audit.
2. Document consultation with USBE personnel to determine the most appropriate way to report the data.
3. Work closely with other LEAs (#3 and #4 above) to ensure that funding is distributed as equitably as possible.

Intentional Errors

Examples:

1. A teacher leaves a position in January. The LEA utilizes a “Long-term Substitute” for the remainder of the year even though this is prohibited by Board Rule (R277-508-3). The LEA then reports the 2nd semester course data through UTREx using the CACTUS ID of the previous teacher.
2. An LEA enters CACTUS data matching the SIS data for a particular teacher. This teacher shows as underqualified for the position. The LEA then changes the CACTUS assignment data so the teacher shows as qualified, but does not change the SIS data or the teacher’s actual assignment.

Possible Solutions:

1. Inform yourself, as much as possible, on USBE Policies and Board Rules that apply to you and your school to avoid putting yourself in this type of situation.
2. Work with USBE to help ensure that data policies allow our systems to reflect reality as accurately as possible.