

Data Governance Policy

Purpose

This policy establishes uniform data governance standards and identifies the shared responsibilities for assuring the integrity of the data and that it efficiently and effectively serves the needs of Howard Community College.

Howard Community College values access to timely, accurate, and consistent information while fully appreciating the basic security and privacy requirements involved. Controlled access by employees to administrative information is necessary to support business functions.

This policy provides direction on the classification, ownership, and retention of data and information for Howard Community College as well as clarifying accountability for data and information. Data and information as pertaining to this policy includes both electronic and non-electronic data.

Howard Community College is reliant upon the confidentiality, integrity, availability, security, and privacy of its data and information to successfully conduct its operations, meet internal and external stakeholders' expectations, and provide services. Therefore, all staff, contractors, users, and external parties of Howard Community College have a responsibility to protect organizational data and information from unauthorized generation, access, modification, disclosure, transmission, or destruction and are expected to be familiar with and comply with this policy.

Scope

- This policy applies to all critical data and information in Howard Community College, including data and information hosted outside of Howard Community College stored in a cloud service. "Critical data," in this context, includes email, personal and shared files, specific application system records, website contents, and operating system-level information and data. The definition of critical data and scope of this policy will be reviewed annually by Planning, Research and Organizational Development (PROD) and Information Technology (IT).
- This policy applies to all who may be creators and/or users of such data. The policy also applies to third parties who access and use Howard Community College systems and IT equipment or who create, process, or store data owned by Howard Community College.

Definitions

Terms	Definitions
Business Glossary	A business glossary is a central repository that contains key business terms whose names and definitions have been agreed upon by cross-functional subject matter experts. The glossary will also document the meta-data, or data about data, associated with the business terms such as key notes that document the institutional knowledge about the terms, best practices on usage, a reporting index where the term is used and associated code and decode values to name a few. The business glossary is designed for nontechnical users.
Content	Content is information with relevant metadata that has a specific use or is used for a particular business purpose.
Data Catalog	A data catalog can inform both casual users and technical analysts about the available data sets and data fields that are available along with metadata such as the business and technical definitions associated with the data. A data catalog may also provide the ability to search and retrieve data.
Data Classification	A method or process whereby information/data is classified in accordance with the impact Classification of data being accessed inappropriately and/or data being lost.
Data Domain	The set of data and processes related to a specific subject area within one or more systems of record.
Data Quality	Data quality is a perception or an assessment of data's fitness to serve its purpose in a given context. The quality of data is determined by factors such as accuracy, completeness, reliability, relevance, and how up-to-date it is.
Data Use Standards	Guidelines and policies for handling and protecting the college's institutional data.
Metadata	Metadata is a set of data that describes and gives information about the data. It is a description and context of the data. Examples of metadata include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Title and description • Tags and categories • Who created it and when • Who last modified and when • Who can access or update
Technical Definition	Information about the tables that the data comes from, any transformations or logic that was used to derive or modify the data between the source system and the warehouse or reporting layer. This information is helpful in discussions between analysts and developers.

Policy Statements

1. All data is owned by Howard Community College and, as such, all staff of Howard Community College are responsible for appropriately respecting and protecting the asset.
2. In order for Howard Community College to effectively manage and safeguard the data assets, procedures must be in place to guide appropriate data access, ensure the security of the data, and provide a means to address procedural exceptions.
3. A sustained data administration function should reinforce a set of definitions for commonly consumed data, with the understanding that there may be multiple valid definitions.
4. Data should be safeguarded to maintain the confidentiality and privacy of personally identifiable information; such safeguards should be balanced and reflect the necessity for Howard Community College to conduct its business. Data should be classified based on an agreed-upon data classification scheme and approved by Data Owners.
5. Access to Howard Community College data should be based on the business needs of the organization and should enhance the ability of Howard Community College to achieve its mission. Employees should have access to the data needed to perform their responsibilities, without regard to arbitrary barriers. In many cases, that data need not be individually identifiable.
6. Before individuals will be allowed to access Howard Community College data, training in the use and attributes of the data, functional area data policies, and Howard Community College policies regarding data is mandatory.
7. Extraction, manipulation, and reporting of Howard Community College data must be done only for Howard Community College business purposes:
 - Personal use of Howard Community College data, including derived data, in any format and at any location, is prohibited.
 - Where appropriate, before any information is used outside the Data User's functional unit, verification with the functional area manager and data owner is recommended.

8. Individuals seeking permission to access data outside of the access plan and defined roles must submit a written request for nonstandard access.
 - This request should include a statement indicating the access being sought and the reason for the request and should be submitted to Planning, Research and Organizational Development.
 - The Executive Director of Planning, Research and Organizational Development will send the request to the appropriate Data Steward/Owner for review and decision.

Noncompliance

Violations of this policy will be treated like other allegations of wrongdoing at Howard Community College. Allegations of misconduct will be adjudicated according to established procedures. Sanctions for noncompliance may include, but are not limited to, one or more of the following:

1. Disciplinary action according to applicable Howard Community College policies
2. Termination of employment
3. Legal action according to applicable laws and contractual agreements

Agreement

I have read and understand the Howard Community College Data Governance Policy. I understand that if I violate the rules explained herein, I may face legal or disciplinary action according to applicable laws or company policy.

Employee Name

Employee Signature

Date

Date: May 7, 2026

Approved By: Senior Leadership Team