

## Tasks and Procedures of the Research Data Centre (Forschungsdatenzentrum, FDZ) at the Institute for Educational Quality Improvement (Institut zur Qualitätsentwicklung im Bildungswesen, IQB)

(As of March 31, 2026)

*This text is a translation of the original German text ("Aufgaben und Verfahrensweise des Forschungsdatenzentrums (FDZ) am Institut zur Qualitätsentwicklung im Bildungswesen (IQB)"). The German text shall prevail in case of doubt or dispute.*

*This text was translated into English with assistance from DeepL and Grammarly.*

### 1. Tasks

- (1) The Research Data Centre (Forschungsdatenzentrum, FDZ) at the Institute for Educational Quality Improvement (Institut zur Qualitätsentwicklung im Bildungswesen, IQB) archives and documents the German data sets from all major national and international school achievement studies for the purpose of educational monitoring<sup>1</sup>, as well as from national studies containing competence measurements in the field of education, and makes them available for scientific re- and secondary analyses.
- (2) The work of the FDZ at the IQB is guided by the recommendations of the German Data Forum (RatSWD).<sup>2</sup>
- (3) After five years of initial financing by the Federal Ministry of Education and Research (Bundesministerium für Bildung und Forschung, BMBF), the FDZ at the IQB was funded from October 2011 through December 2023 by the Centre for International Student Assessment (Zentrum für international Bildungsvergleichsstudien, ZIB), which is supported by the German federal government and the federal states. Since 2024, the FDZ at the IQB

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<sup>1</sup> A complete list of the large national and international school achievement studies for the purpose of educational monitoring available at the FDZ at the IQB can be found at [https://fdz.iqb.hu-berlin.de/de/daten-finden/datensuche/?is\\_monitoring=Ja](https://fdz.iqb.hu-berlin.de/de/daten-finden/datensuche/?is_monitoring=Ja)

<sup>2</sup> [www.ratswd.de](http://www.ratswd.de)

has been funded by the German federal government and the federal states in cooperation with the ZIB.

## **2. Submission of data to the FDZ at the IQB**

- (1) The data is transferred to the FDZ at the IQB by the data providers. The data providers ensure compliance with any applicable funding and licensing requirements. Data providers (with support from the FDZ at the IQB, if necessary) ensure that the data sets are anonymized in accordance with data protection regulations. As a rule, the data sets should be made available for re- and secondary analyses at the FDZ at the IQB three years after data collection. Data sets from large national and international school achievement studies for educational monitoring (see footnote 1) are generally submitted to the FDZ at the IQB two years after publication of the respective results report.
- (2) Any documentary material is made fully available to the FDZ at the IQB. This typically includes a handbook of scales, a technical report, a description of the study design, and additional materials related to data collection and scoring, provided that legal provisions do not preclude their disclosure. The FDZ at the IQB advises on data documentation and provides information material on the FDZ homepage.<sup>3</sup> The FDZ at the IQB is obligated not to make protected documentation materials and instruments accessible.
- (3) The FDZ at the IQB generates metadata to describe the research data in greater detail. This metadata is uploaded by the FDZ at the IQB to publicly accessible databases and can be found, among other places, on DataCite, in the Web of Science Data Citation Index, and in various repositories.
- (4) Upon publication of the data, a Digital Object Identifier (DOI) is assigned to the corresponding study so it can be cited unambiguously. Users of the data are contractually obliged by the FDZ at the IQB to cite the data package in all publications that use it, including the DOI and the names of the data producers.
- (5) When submitting their data, data providers may specify particular research questions they are still working on (restriction notes). These research questions are protected for up to two years after the data is submitted. This means that applicants may not address these specific research questions until the restriction period has expired. When the data is documented at the FDZ at the IQB, a binding list of research questions that remain restricted—including their respective time limits—is created; this list is used when reviewing incoming applications for data use.
- (6) The data providers name a contact person who will be available to answer any queries relating to the data.

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<sup>3</sup> For further information see <https://fdz.iqb.hu-berlin.de/de/angebote/daten-teilen/>

- (7) The submitted data are further documented at the FDZ at the IQB and prepared for re- and secondary analyses.

### 3. Application for data use

- (1) Researchers may apply to the FDZ at the IQB for scientific and non-commercial use of archived data. Commercial use is not permitted.
- (2) Applicants have to submit a research proposal of approximately two to five pages, which outlines the planned research questions and analyses.<sup>4</sup> Based on this application and the criteria set out in Section 4, Paragraph 1, the FDZ at the IQB examines whether access to the data can be granted. As data providers are generally the most familiar with the contractual provisions relevant to the studies, the FDZ at the IQB reserves the right to involve them in the assessment process on a case-by-case basis.

This general procedure applies, in principle, to data sets that were not collected for the purpose of educational monitoring, even if the request for data use includes access to the federal state identifier variable. This is without prejudice to any special regulations which have been laid down for the respective data set by its owners or producers.

For data sets from the large national and international school achievement studies collected for the purpose of educational monitoring, the general procedure described above is applied in the following cases:

1. Access to the federal state identifier variable is not required to examine the research question.
2. To examine the research question, access to the federal state identifier variable is required, which, however, is requested solely to replicate an already published comparison between German federal states (Länder).
3. Examining the research question requires access to the federal state identifier variable, which, however, is requested exclusively for control purposes to include it as a covariate in the projected analyses. The identification of individual federal states in the presentation of results is contractually excluded.
4. Examining the research question requires access to the federal state identifier variable, which, however, is requested exclusively to add contextual characteristics or other third-party variables. The identification of individual federal states in the presentation of results is contractually excluded.
5. Examining the research question requires access to the federal state identifier variable, which, however, is requested exclusively to compare aggregated groups of federal states (Länder). Each group must consist of at least two federal states and be compiled according to content-significant criteria. The identification of individual federal states in the presentation of results is contractually excluded.

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<sup>4</sup> Resolution of the 47th Chiefs of Staff Commission for Quality Assurance in Schools (Amtschefskommission „Qualitätssicherung in Schulen“) Item 3 (Part 4)

6. Examining the research question requires access to the federal state identifier variable, which, however, is required exclusively to describe the sample (e.g., the distribution of study participants across the German federal states [Länder] and across school types within federal states [Länder]).
- (3) Applications for the use of data from the large national and international school achievement studies for the purpose of educational monitoring with representative samples at federal state level that contain novel comparisons across German federal states (Länder)<sup>5</sup> must be accompanied by a project proposal of a maximum of 20 pages, which meets the application requirements adopted by the Conference of Ministers of Education (Bildungsministerkonferenz, BMK).<sup>6</sup> In this case, the application will be reviewed for compliance with the formal criteria and subjected to a scientific peer-review procedure based on the guidelines of the German Research Foundation (Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft, DFG).

#### 4. Requirements for data use

- (1) An application for the use of data provided by the FDZ at the IQB should generally be approved if:
  1. the intended use is scientific and non-commercial
  2. the data protection of the persons concerned is ensured,
  3. the planned analyses do not conflict with the contractual agreements with the data owners of the study (e.g., the KMK),
  4. the analyses do not conflict with current restriction notes (see Section 2. (5)), and
  5. there are no other conflicting reasons.
- (2) In the case of data applications which relate to the large national and international school achievement studies for the purpose of education monitoring with representative samples at federal state level (see footnote 5) and which intend to use these data to examine novel questions in a comparison across federal states, approval by the BMK is required in addition to the examination of the criteria specified in paragraph (1) (see Section 3. (3)).<sup>7</sup> In the case of federal state comparisons or analyses concerning federal states which are

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<sup>5</sup> Data applications for novel Länder comparisons may only refer to such national school achievement studies and national supplements to international school achievement studies that have samples representative at federal state level and that were commissioned by the German federal states (Länder) (see the list available at <https://fdz.iqb.hu-berlin.de/de/daten-nutzen/>).

<sup>6</sup> See number 2 of the Procedure for the decision of Conference of Ministers of Education on applications for the use of data for novel comparisons across German federal states (Länder), available at [https://fdz.iqb.hu-berlin.de/media/documents/2026-03-31\\_FDZ\\_Verfahren\\_neuartigeLvgl.pdf](https://fdz.iqb.hu-berlin.de/media/documents/2026-03-31_FDZ_Verfahren_neuartigeLvgl.pdf)

<sup>7</sup> See the Procedure for the decision of the Conference of Ministers of Education on applications for the use of data for novel comparisons across German federal states (Länder), available at [https://fdz.iqb.hu-berlin.de/media/documents/2026-03-31\\_FDZ\\_Verfahren\\_neuartigeLvgl.pdf](https://fdz.iqb.hu-berlin.de/media/documents/2026-03-31_FDZ_Verfahren_neuartigeLvgl.pdf)

merely replications of previously published results, such an FDZ-external review is not required<sup>8</sup> (see Section 3. (2)).

- (3) If the FDZ at the IQB concludes during the application review that the requirements for data access under paragraph (1) are met, the use of the data shall be governed by a contractual agreement between the FDZ at the IQB and the applicant. The FDZ at the IQB reserves the right to include conditions and other provisions in the agreement to be observed when using the data. The data may be used solely to answer the research questions outlined in the application.
- (4) In accordance with good scientific practice, the applicant agrees to explicitly cite the sources of the instruments and data in their own publications (i.e., to cite the data sets used, including the names of their authors and the DOI), to name the FDZ as the institution providing the data, and to send offprints or specimen copies of the resulting publications to the FDZ at the IQB immediately upon their publication (for the purpose of documenting the work).

## 5. Form of data use

- (1) Data access is generally provided through the transfer of password-protected Scientific Use Files.
- (2) Unprotected storage of data is not permitted. Provisions regarding the storage, transport, and disclosure of data are set out in the data use agreements.
- (3) If variables with a low degree of anonymization are used, it is not possible to submit Scientific Use Files. In such cases, the FDZ at the IQB allows researchers to use guest workplaces at the FDZ at the IQB to work with these data, subject to availability. The analyses outputs are reviewed at the FDZ at the IQB to ensure compliance with the relevant agreements. They are then made available to the researcher via a secure transmission channel.
- (4) For handling data that cannot be made available in the Scientific Use Files, researchers are provided with access to remote data processing, subject to availability, as an alternative to guest computing at the FDZ at the IQB. The analyses outputs intended for use in publications or presentations are reviewed at the FDZ at the IQB to ensure compliance with the relevant agreements. They are then made available to the researcher via a secure transmission channel.
- (5) The transfer of data on any data storage medium is permitted only in countries with an adequate level of data protection. Countries that provide an adequate level of data protection are: a) EU member states; b) countries of the European Economic Area (EEA):

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<sup>8</sup> Resolution of the 47th Chiefs of Staff Commission for Quality Assurance in Schools (Amtschefskommission „Qualitätssicherung in Schulen“) Item 3 (Part 4)

Norway, Liechtenstein, and Iceland; and c) countries for which the European Commission has issued a (positive) adequacy decision. An updated list is maintained on the European Commission's website. Data users located in countries without an adequate level of data protection at the time of application will not be provided with Scientific Use Files, but, subject to availability, will be offered the option of remote data processing.

- (6) In addition to Scientific Use Files and remote data processing, reduced and absolutely anonymized data sets (Campus Use Files) are available for selected studies for use in university teaching. These datasets are more highly anonymized than Scientific Use Files and are made available upon agreement to specific terms of use.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> The Terms of Use for the Campus Use Files provided by the FDZ at the IQB are available at <https://fdz.iqb.hu-berlin.de/de/daten-nutzen/cuf/nutzungsordnung-cuf/>