

## Trump Orders Universities to Report Race Data

August 8, 2025

— Categories: Uncategorized



Download IPFS

WASHINGTON, D.C. August 7, 2025, President Donald Trump has signed a presidential memorandum requiring U.S. universities to collect and disclose admissions data on race and gender, to enforce compliance with the 2023 Supreme Court ruling that ended affirmative action in college admissions.

The White House says the directive is aimed at ensuring educational institutions do not circumvent the Court's decision by using indirect methods to shape student demographics. Specifically, the memorandum targets the use of "diversity statements" in applications, which administration officials argue are being used to infer a candidate's race in the absence of explicit racial preferences.

According to the memo, colleges and universities must report to the Department of Education demographic information about their applicant pool, those admitted, and enrolled undergraduate students, including racial and gender identifiers. The National Center for Education Statistics, under the direction of Education Secretary Linda McMahon, has been tasked with collecting the data.

"Universities should be transparent and accountable," a senior Trump administration official stated anonymously. "Nothing in the Supreme Court's ruling prohibits the collection of demographic data, only its use in admissions decisions."

However, the American Council on Education (ACE), which represents over 1,600 colleges and universities across the United States, raised legal concerns about the requirement. Jonathan Fansmith, senior vice president at ACE, said many schools do not collect racial data from applicants, precisely because of the Supreme Court ruling.

"You can't consider race in admissions, so schools don't collect it," Fansmith said. "This seems to be an effort to get institutions to provide information we don't have and legally can't gather."

The move continues the Trump administration's broader rollback of diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) programs across federal and state institutions. Over the past two years, federal authorities have launched multiple investigations into higher education institutions suspected of maintaining DEI frameworks that may conflict with the Supreme Court's ruling.

Education officials under the Trump team argue the latest directive offers necessary oversight and helps prevent workarounds that maintain race-conscious admissions in practice, if not in policy.

Supporters of the memo argue that without enforcement, universities will continue to engage in covert racial balancing, despite the Court's intent to make admissions strictly

merit-based. Critics, however, suggest the directive may face legal challenges, especially concerning privacy laws and regulatory authority.

Legal scholars remain divided over the implications. Some assert that demographic data collection, when not used for admissions, is permissible and even common in broader institutional reporting. Others argue that requesting such data from applicants could itself be interpreted as a racial consideration.

The Education Department has not specified a deadline for compliance but indicated it would begin issuing formal data requests in the upcoming academic year. Universities that fail to comply may risk federal scrutiny or potential funding implications, though enforcement mechanisms were not fully outlined in the memorandum.

Meanwhile, many academic institutions are reviewing their application processes and internal policies to ensure alignment with both federal expectations and judicial limitations. Some universities have already removed optional diversity essays from their applications in response to recent legal shifts.

The Trump administration maintains that the new rules uphold the Constitution and reinforce equal opportunity. A spokesperson for the White House said the policy is about fairness and eliminating what it sees as unconstitutional preferences.

“This is not about stopping students from different backgrounds from succeeding,” the official said. “It’s about restoring a process based on individual achievement, not identity.”

While debate continues among educators, legal experts, and policymakers, the directive marks a definitive push to reshape the landscape of higher education admissions in the post-affirmative-action era.