

## Risk Level Assignment for UAB Restricted and Sensitive Data

Per UAB’s Data Classification Rule, university-owned data is classified as belonging to one of three tiers:

- **Public Data:** Data that may be disclosed to the general public without harm. Examples: Public web sites, press releases, newsletters, etc.
- **Sensitive Data:** Data that should be kept confidential. Access to these data shall require authorization and legitimate need-to-know. Privacy may be required by law or contract. Examples: FERPA, budgetary plans, proprietary business plans, etc.
- **Restricted/PHI Data:** Data that is highly confidential in nature, carries significant risk from unauthorized access, or uninterrupted accessibility is critical to UAB operation. Privacy and Security controls are typically required by law or contract. Examples: HIPAA PHI, Social Security numbers, credit card numbers

Based on these definitions and the desire to properly identify and gauge the level of risk tied to Sensitive and Restricted data owned by UAB, the following data classification and exposure taxonomies have been created. Per the Data Classification Rule, Restricted and Sensitive data have respectively been assigned risk levels of High and Moderate (Table 1). The Exposure Taxonomy details the level of risk via potential exposure based on whether the data is available externally, internally, or both. The greater the exposure, the greater the risk (Table 2).

| Data Classification | Assigned Risk Level |
|---------------------|---------------------|
| Restricted          | High                |
| Sensitive           | Moderate            |

Table 1: Data Classification Taxonomy

| Exposure Factor       | Assigned Risk Level |
|-----------------------|---------------------|
| External and Internal | High                |
| External only         | Moderate            |
| Internal only         | Low                 |

Table 1: Risk Exposure Taxonomy

## Risk Assignment Matrix

When combined, the various levels of each taxonomy work together to form a Risk Assignment Matrix. Reading left to right, the Assigned Risk Level for the Data Classification and Exposure Factor are compared. The high-watermark level of risk tied to each specific pairing is given precedence and is assigned as the definitive Overall Risk Level for each data classification/exposure factor combination.

| Data Classification  | Assigned Risk Level | Exposure Factor       | Assigned Risk Level | Overall Risk Level |
|--|---------------------|-----------------------|---------------------|--------------------|
| Restricted   | High                | External and Internal | High                | <b>HIGH</b>        |
| Restricted   | High                | External only         | Moderate            | <b>HIGH</b>        |
| Restricted   | High                | Internal only         | Low                 | <b>HIGH</b>        |
| Sensitive  | Moderate            | External and Internal | High                | <b>HIGH</b>        |
| Sensitive  | Moderate            | External only         | Moderate            | <b>MODERATE</b>    |
| Sensitive  | Moderate            | Internal only         | Low                 | <b>MODERATE</b>    |
| <b>DATA CLASSIFIED AS PUBLIC IS ASSIGNED A LOW OVERALL RISK LEVEL REGARDLESS OF EXPOSURE</b> |                     |                       |                     |                    |