

Procedure for using PRIMS data linked to CBS microdata

Version: 4 February 2026

Introduction

Statistics Netherlands (CBS) provides, under certain conditions, access to microdata for statistical and scientific research. The Netherlands Cohort Study on Education (*Nationaal Cohortonderzoek Onderwijs*; NCO), hosted by CBS, combines administrative data on students' educational careers with rich background information (for more information, see Haelermans et al., 2020). The PRIMary to Secondary education (PRIMS) dataset is collected to complement NCO, and contains survey and network data from over 3,000 Dutch students in the transition from primary to secondary education (see Zwier et al., 2025 for a detailed data collection report and codebook).

PRIMS can be linked at the student and (primary and secondary) school level to CBS microdata, including NCO. This document explains how to apply for access. Another version of PRIMS (not linkable to CBS microdata) is available via DataverseNL: <https://doi.org/10.34894/U6XDT0>.

Procedure

CBS hosts a copy of PRIMS data files with encrypted identifiers in the CBS-microdata environment. To use these data, permission is required from the PRIMS research team and CBS. Before applying, consult the CBS website for information on costs and available data: www.cbs.nl/en-gb/our-services/customised-services-microdata/microdata-conducting-your-own-research. Access to NCO data also requires permission from the National Knowledge Institute for Education (*Nationaal Kennisinstituut Onderwijs*; NKO), on top of the regular CBS application procedure: www.nationaalcohortonderzoek.nl/toegang-aanvragen-voor-onderzoek-met-de-nco-data.

Follow these steps to apply for access to the linked PRIMS data:

1. Complete the application form via <https://www.nationaalcohortonderzoek.nl/prims>.
2. NKO processes the request and forwards it to the PRIMS researchers for evaluation. All requests are evaluated based on the following criteria:
 1. *Relevance*: Does the research question align with the objectives of PRIMS?
 2. *Overlap*: Does the proposed study interfere with ongoing research?
 3. *Feasibility*: Can the research question be answered using PRIMS?You will receive a decision by email.
3. If approved, contact CBS Microdata Services (and NKO, if applicable) and include a copy of the permission email to arrange access rights.

Data description

Short data description

PRIMS investigated the role of peers in the transition from primary to secondary education. The dataset includes survey data, classroom network data collected at one or two time points in primary school, and ego-centered network data in primary and secondary school, covering two student cohorts. Cohort 1 includes two waves. Wave 1 was collected in the final year of primary school, just before students received their final track recommendation for secondary school (January-February 2020). Wave 2 was a survey about students' transition experiences during the COVID-19 pandemic, administered shortly after the transition to secondary school (October-November 2020). Cohort 2 includes three waves: two in primary school, before (Wave 1:



February-March 2021) and after (Wave 2: May-June 2021) students receive their final track recommendation, and one approximately six months after the transition to secondary school (Wave 3: January-February 2022). Schools were selected using a stratified sampling design, resulting in a school sample representative of regular Dutch primary schools in terms of region, urbanization degree, and socioeconomic composition.

Matching procedure

PRIMS data were linked to CBS microdata using combinations of student information and, when necessary, school information. Matching was based on student gender, date of birth, six-digit postal code, and house number, using reference dates from the time of data collection. If no (valid) house number was available, matches were made using gender, date of birth, and postal code. If address information was missing or invalid, CBS used a combination of student and school characteristics: i.e., student gender, date of birth, school identifier (BRIN), and school location identifier (VNR). This approach was needed because address data were incomplete, particularly for the first cohort, as they were collected through a separate questionnaire. By also using school information, >98% of students in all waves could be linked to a unique personal identifier (RINPERSOONS + RINPERSOON) in the registers (see Zwier et al., 2025, Section 2.8). Students who could not be linked were removed from the data files available in the CBS-microdata environment.

Data files

PRIMS data are provided as one file per wave (see Table 1). A full overview of available variables per wave is given in Chapters 4-5 of the data collection report and codebook (Zwier et al., 2025). This document briefly describes how the data files in the CBS-microdata environment differ from the open-use files.

Table 1. Overview available PRIMS data files.

Wave	File name	N
Cohort 1, Wave 1	PRIMSC1W1CBS	1,457 students
Cohort 2, Wave 2	PRIMSC1W2CBS	594 students
Cohort 2, Wave 1	PRIMSC2W1CBS	1,614 students
Cohort 2, Wave 2	PRIMSC2W2CBS	1,603 students
Cohort 2, Wave 3	PRIMSC2W3CBS	780 students

Identifying variables at the student, classroom and primary school level are encrypted to **std_id_crypt**, **class_id_crypt**, and **brin_crypt** (use with **vnr** to identify primary schools). Cohorts are indicated by the variable **cohort**. Note that some schools participate in both cohorts. The files also include CBS personal identifiers (**RINPERSOONS** and **RINPERSOON**) to enable linkage with other microdata files. Variables used for matching (**std_dateofbirth**, **std_gender**, **std_postcode4** and **std_refdate**) are included in all waves.¹ The same encryption key used for student identifiers (**std_id_crypt**) is used for all variables containing nominations on the classroom network questions. Network data are stored in wide format, with each variable representing one nomination. PRIMS also includes information on students' preferred secondary school (in primary school waves) and chosen secondary school (in secondary school waves). These variables contain the encrypted school identifiers (BRIN_crypt and VNR) used in the registers.

¹ Students' birth dates are recoded to the first day of the month (see [Gbapersoontab](#)) and four-digit (rather than six-digit) postal codes are provided to avoid identification.

Citation requirements

Acknowledge the use of CBS microdata as follows: “Results based on calculations by [name of research institution or commissioning party] using non-public microdata from Statistics Netherlands. Under certain conditions, these microdata are accessible for statistical and scientific research. For further information: microdata@cbs.nl.”

Cite the PRIMS data as: Zwier, D., Lorijn, S.J., Van den Brink, E., Bol, T., Geven, S., Van de Werfhorst, H.G., Engels, M.C., & Veenstra, R. (2025). *PRIMS. Data collection report and codebook, version 1.1*. Groningen/Amsterdam: University of Groningen/University of Amsterdam. <https://doi.org/10.34894/U6XDT0>

References

Haelermans, C., Huijgen, T., Jacobs, M., Levels, M., van der Velden, R., van Vugt, L., & van Wetten, S. (2020). Using data to advance educational research, policy, and practice: Design, content, and research potential of the Netherlands Cohort Study on Education. *European Sociological Review*, 36(4), 643–662. <https://doi.org/10.1093/esr/jcaa027>

Zwier, D., Lorijn, S. J., Van den Brink, E., Bol, T., Geven, S., Van de Werfhorst, H. G., Engels, M. C., & Veenstra, R. (2025). *PRIMS. data collection report and codebook, version 1.1*. University of Groningen/University of Amsterdam. <https://doi.org/10.34894/U6XDT0>

PRIMS data application form

Working title	
Applicants	
Affiliations	
Research questions/ hypotheses	
Analytic plan	
Required data files (waves) and variables ^a	
Required CBS microdata ^b	

Note: ^a If approved, access is granted to the full data file(s), not to a subset of variables. This question is used to assess whether the proposed project overlaps with ongoing PRIMS research and whether the research question can be addressed using PRIMS data.

^b For an overview of available files, see <https://www.cbs.nl/en-gb/our-services/customised-services-microdata/microdata-conducting-your-own-research/microdata-catalogue>. If approved, contact CBS (and NKO, if applicable) to request access to the microdata. This information is used to assess whether the proposed project aligns with the objectives of PRIMS.

Please complete this form via the [NCO website](#)