

**Weber State University**  
**Campus Survey Guidelines**

**September 2016**

**Policy**

With our growing culture of assessment and evidence-based decision making, increasing numbers of Weber State University individuals are surveying the University community. In response to this, the University has established a policy and procedure for conducting surveys with campus constituents. The need for a policy is fourfold: to protect community members' privacy, to monitor survey frequency and redundancy in order to avoid survey fatigue, to ensure the quality of surveys distributed, and to ensure the safety of data collection and usage.

**Definitions**

1. Campus constituent is defined as:
  - Any prospective, current, or former students (e.g. alumni); or
  - Any current university employee (staff, faculty, or administrator).
  
2. University survey is defined as:
  - A survey for which the sample is comprised of 100 or more prospective, current, or former students;
  - A survey for which the sample is comprised of 50 or more university employees (staff, faculty, or administrators); or
  - A survey for which the sample is randomly selected from a population of campus constituents.

**Types of Surveys**

There are many types of surveys used for data collection. Examples include:

1. National surveys offered through professional organizations or other entities that seek students' perceptions and attitudes.
2. Internally developed "homegrown" surveys that ask for students' perceptions and attitudes.
3. Program and activity-level surveys asking for students' opinions about programs.
4. Surveys conducted to evaluate or compare programs, practices, curricula, methods, or outcomes for use solely by the institution.
5. Institutional surveys asking staff and faculty to report their attitudes, opinions, and perspectives (e.g., climate surveys).

## 6. Faculty/staff research surveys.

Some types of surveys may be given higher priority than others. For example, national surveys and surveys that address an acute University need have the highest priority. Faculty and staff research projects have the lowest priority. This may or may not affect the likelihood of approval for a survey. During particularly heavy survey administration periods, priority will be given consideration.

### **Survey Approval**

All surveys intended for distribution to members or prospective members of the Weber State community (e.g. applicants, students, faculty, staff, board members, and alumni) must be approved by Institutional Assessment using the appropriate procedures. Institutional Assessment approval is not required for (a) faculty-supervised survey research that contributes toward students' academic progress, (b) evaluation of an event by participants, (c) feedback from clients at the point of service, (d) teaching evaluation forms, (e) leadership and management evaluation surveys, or (f) forms used to collect information for administrative purposes (e.g. scheduling).

**Exclusions.** The following common survey types do not need to be submitted for review and approval:

- Evaluation surveys administered to program participants or service users at the conclusion of the program or service.
- Class projects surveying students only within that class.
- Surveys distributed via social media, listservs, or other media through which students, faculty, or staff are devising their own sample.
- Surveys to fewer than 100 undergraduates.

Survey requests will be reviewed based on the following criteria:

1. If the requestor is a student, does the need for the survey fall within the acceptable scope of a class or academic position on campus?
2. If the requestor is a faculty or staff member, does the need for the survey fall within the
3. Is the purpose of the survey clear, and is it explained to the prospective participants?
4. Does the survey provide information useful for planning or improving services?
5. Is the survey well-designed and of an appropriate length? Does it follow sound survey methods and practices? Are the questions easily understood and interpreted?
6. What actions are being taken to ensure the confidentiality of the responses?
7. When will the survey be conducted? What is the optimal timing to ensure it does not interfere with other University surveys and activities?
8. How will the results be used?

9. Will the findings be disseminated to appropriate University audiences? Who will have access to the information and will it help them make better decisions as a result?
10. Has the IRB approved the project, if required (see below for more on IRB requirements)?
11. Can the proposed survey be combined with other planned surveys?
12. Does the survey follow both University and Federal policies for collecting and managing data (e.g. FERPA, 10-1 Information Security Policy)?

### **Submitting surveys for review**

The checklist of items to submit when completing an online survey request includes:

1. Completed [Online Survey Request Form](#)
2. Final version of the online survey instrument to be used
3. All e-mail invitations and reminders to be used

For surveys that require Institutional Review Board approval provide documentation from the Weber State IRB indicating either that the project has been approved or has been submitted to the IRB and is undergoing review.

Formal review of request may take up to two weeks once all materials are received.

### **Samples**

We will only share campus constituent samples in the following instances.

1. Faculty
  - a. If the survey information provides information back to the university to be used in decision making processes
  - b. Provost approval
2. Staff
  - a. When the survey meets a University need and has approval of the appropriate VP or designated representative
3. Students
  - a. For most classroom projects, University samples are not provided
  - b. If a need arises for an exception based on access (i.e. Veterans, CCEL, research in conjunction with a Center), approval required from the appropriate Director or head of the Center/Department, as well as Institutional Assessment.
  - c. For funded research (i.e. grants, internships), an exception can be made assuming the project has approval by the Provost and has had the appropriate faculty-level and IRB-level approval; faculty in a sense sponsor the project and assume responsibility
4. Executive Level
  - a. Provided as needed for university level decision making
  - b. Survey schedule is taken into consideration

## **Institutional Review Board (IRB) Approval**

The mission of Weber State University IRB is to protect the rights and welfare of human research participants recruited to participate in research conducted by employees or agents of Weber State University. WSU IRB is charged with ensuring all research projects adhere to Federal, State and University Guidelines.

Weber State University Institutional Review Board is responsible for reviewing all research projects involving human subjects that are conducted at WSU facilities or property; are sponsored by WSU; are conducted by or under the direction of any employees or agents of WSU in connection with their institutional responsibilities; or involves the use of these institutions' non-public information to identify or contact human research subjects or prospective subjects.

Some research projects are exempt from the IRB process. To be exempt from IRB review, the research needs to fall within the following categories listed in 45 CFR 46.101(b):

1. The study of some educational practices
2. Surveys of adult subjects or public figures (non-sensitive topic areas, only)
3. Observation of non-institutionalized adults, and minors under some specific circumstances
4. Archival or secondary use of data or specimens with no identifiable info
5. Demonstration or service projects under the "Social Security Act"

For more information about the IRB review process or for instructions on completing an IRB application, please see the [Weber State Institutional Review Board](#) webpage.

Decisions of the Institutional Assessment team may be appealed to the Associate Provost/Dean of Undergraduate Education.