

Millersville University Survey Guidance

Introduction

The purpose of this survey policy is to provide guidelines covering the administration of surveys to Millersville University (MU) students, alumni, faculty, and staff. Such surveys include but are not limited to the following:

1. Paper surveys administered on-campus, either at one location or multiple locations.
2. Electronic surveys administered on-campus, either at one location or multiple locations via a desktop PC, laptop PC, and/or other electronic devices.
3. Electronic surveys administered via email.
4. Surveys designed and conducted by members of the University community (“internal”) as well as those designed and/or administered by outside organizations, agencies, or consultants (“external”).

Rationale

The ease and low cost of conducting surveys on-line may encourage a climate of over-surveying at many higher education institutions. This can lead to “survey fatigue”, lowered response rates, and unrepresentative or superficial responses. In order to conduct surveys that yield high-quality data, Millersville University has taken steps to manage campus survey activity through better coordination and scheduling, as well as consultation on survey design and administration procedures.

Who Does This Policy Apply To?

This policy applies to University students, faculty, staff, departments, committees, commissions, councils, student organizations, and external individuals or organizations.

Procedures

Any individual associated with Millersville University who wishes to conduct a “large-scale” survey (defined below) of MU community members must secure approval for your survey by notifying the Assistant Vice President, Institutional Assessment and Planning via email at least one month before the proposed survey is scheduled to be administered. (A form for submitting information about the proposed survey may be found here: [Survey Approval Request Form](#)).

A request to revise the survey proposal may be made if:

1. Data and/or information similar to what is being requested already exists.
2. The survey places an undue burden on individuals being surveyed.
3. The survey may reduce response rates of other surveys being conducted.
4. The requested timing conflicts with another survey of the same or similar population.
5. There is insufficient information regarding the use of survey results.

It is recommended to contact the Office of Planning, Assessment, and Analysis prior to the development of any large-scale survey to discuss the nature of the survey, the proposed timing, and the proposed sample. A calendar of already approved surveys may be consulted here: [Survey Calendar](#) to inform the proposed timing.

Large Scale Surveys

A large-scale survey is defined as any data-collection activity in which questions are presented to the MU community (faculty, administrators, staff, students) as a whole, or any substantial sub-population (e.g., all transfer students, graduating seniors, registered students in a given College, currently teaching faculty). “Substantial” may be construed as large in number (a desired sample size greater than 100) or complexity (e.g., across multiple departments, class levels, or administrative units).

Exception Cases

The following kinds of survey/data collection are exempted from this policy:

- University course student feedback
- Employee performance evaluations
- Information collection that is required for university employment, admissions, or enrollment
- Surveys conducted by faculty and administered to currently enrolled students in their classes as part of instruction
- Student-originated surveys conducted as part of academic coursework
- Same-day, brief surveys soliciting feedback from participants regarding a specific campus event or program
- Point-of-service surveys administered during or immediately following a service interaction
- Surveys sent to members of a voluntary distribution listing

Scholarly Research Surveys & IRB

The policies and procedures set forth in this document are **in addition to and do not replace** approval by MU’s Institutional Review Board (IRB) for the protection of human subjects, when applicable. IRB review is generally required for scholarly research, intended for publication, that meets the federal regulatory definition of human subject research. Surveys that are administered by the University for institutional assessment only and that are not shared externally do not require IRB review.

University personnel and students who are unsure whether their work falls under the requirements of IRB review should contact the MU IRB. ([IRB web page](#)).

Inclusive Excellence in Practice

The following are several survey procedures that may be adopted to support the University’s goal of excellence in inclusion and diversity practices:

1. Utilize the multi-language support feature in the survey software platform where appropriate. Don’t rely solely on automatic translation; make time for review by fluent speakers in the survey development process.

2. Consider providing alternative links to access surveys by cell phone using text messaging (SMS/RMS) for subjects without access to computers. This feature has some quotas and legal requirements which are regulated by Millersville's license with Qualtrics, so anyone planning to utilize this communication possibility is advised to contact the PAA office for guidance.
 3. Preview survey materials prior to administration to see if they are friendly to assistive technology readers for visually-impaired subjects.
 4. Maintain consistency in race/ethnic category definitions for demographic questions by utilizing standardized labels and descriptions.
 5. Please pay attention to issues of under-represented sub-populations when choosing content during the design and analysis of surveys.
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Qualtrics Survey Software

Qualtrics is the preferred University survey tool used for electronic survey design and administration. All members of the University community—students, faculty, and staff—are entitled to a licensed, full-featured copy of Qualtrics for free upon request, which can only be obtained from the University.

Individuals can obtain a free trial version of Qualtrics through Qualtrics.com directly, but it is not full featured (e.g., no data export) and it causes problems if the user has both a free and a MU-licensed account in the same name.

Account Requests

To request a Qualtrics user account, please complete and submit a [Qualtrics Account Request Form](#) to the Planning, Assessment & Analysis office. Once you have obtained a username and password, you may log in to Qualtrics with the following link ([Millersville Qualtrics](#)), which you may bookmark and save for convenience.

Technical Support

Planning, Assessment and Analysis is available to assist individuals or groups in developing survey proposals for review and approval.

Various forms of support are available for conducting surveys and/or analyzing them. These include:

- Consultation; pooled expertise
- Training, recordings, webinars
- Standard demographic questions
- Library of templates for survey management

Contacts & Links

Survey Research Group Membership

Dr. Larry A. Adams (Chair), Director, Research and Assessment
Office of Planning, Assessment, and Analysis

William R. Benton, Assistant Director of Student Success Initiatives
Office of Academic Support Services

Matt J. Davis, Assistant Vice President of Enrollment Management & Chief of Operations
Office of Enrollment Management

Gregory E. Freedland, Assistant Vice President
Office of Communications and Marketing

Jeffry B. Porter, Associate Vice President
Office of Grants, Sponsored Programs and Research Administration

Dr. Ron Wiafe, Associate Vice President
Office of Student Affairs

Carlos A. Wiley, Chief Diversity & Inclusion Officer
Office of Diversity & Social Justice

Quick Links

For further information and support, contact the Office of Planning, Assessment & Analysis (phone: 717-871-7871).

[IRB web page](#)

[Survey Approval Request Form](#)

[Survey Calendar](#)

[MU Qualtrics Account Request Form](#)

[MU Qualtrics Login Page](#)