

Policy Type: Administrative

Applies to: Faculty, staff, and students.

POLICY DATES

Issued: March 2024

Revised: A. Huter

Edited:

Reviewed: 10/24/2023 (Burlingame, Dorris, Turko)

Policy Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidance for survey administration by members of the campus community which, for the purposes of this policy, are defined as all current students, faculty, and employees. This policy does not address surveys conducted to collect data from persons who are not, nor have ever been, students, faculty, staff, or alumni of the University of Mount Union or the formerly named Mount Union College.

Ethics and Best Practices Statement

All surveys administered by the campus community must be in alignment with the University's guidelines for ethical conduct and must be compliant with [FERPA](#), HIPPA, [IRB](#), and IT Security's [Information Privacy Policy](#) and [Mass Email Policy](#).

All surveys collecting data about participants' opinions, beliefs, and/or practices, about a subject should align with methodological best practices which require any correspondence soliciting participation in a survey to clearly state in the invitation or introduction 1) the *purpose of the survey*, 2) whether the survey is *anonymous* or *confidential* (see definition section), and 3) that *participation is voluntary and a participant can opt-out at any point of the survey*.

The Office of Institutional Effectiveness (OIE) will work collaboratively with any member of the campus community to help create a survey instrument that is well-designed, effective, and respectful of prospective participants' time and privacy.

Policy Scope

This policy is intended to:

1. Emphasize the importance of ethical, methodologically sound administration of surveys to, and collection of data from, the campus community,
2. Acknowledge the freedoms of academic, administrative, and organizational groups to solicit information from their constituents without undue restrictions.
3. Identify a survey review process for those surveys collecting data from the entire campus community or subsets of populations.
4. Establish the need for a Survey Review Council to ensure compliance, effectiveness, and advantageous timing of reviewable surveys.

This policy does not replace the need for Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval to conduct research or assessment projects in which data is collected. All individuals or groups conducting data collection are responsible for obtaining required IRB exemptions, approvals, and/or permissions before implementing any survey or other data collection method. IRB approval must also be obtained prior to presenting research findings at any non-UMU affiliated forum.

Campus Survey Policy ADM 39.0

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Definitions

Term	Definition
Institutional Review Board	University body charged with reviewing proposed data collection projects to ensure compliance with research ethics regulations for collection of data and presentation of findings in public forums not affiliated with the University.
Data Collection	A systematic process of gathering information and observations.
Survey	A data collection method that gathers information through questionnaires, interviews, or focus groups.
Population	The full set of individuals from which information can be obtained in a survey.
Anonymous Survey	A survey instrument in which a response cannot be associated with a respondent in the data collection phase. In-person, virtual, and phone interviews <i>cannot</i> be anonymous.
Confidential Survey	A survey instrument in which a response can be associated with a respondent in the data collection phase. The respondent's identity must not be divulged without permission.
Sponsored Survey	A survey instrument proposed and supported by an individual or group from the campus community which is designed to obtain information from all members of the campus community or from a subset of populations of students, faculty, or employees across disciplines, departments, or units. Sponsored surveys are coordinated through the Office of Institutional Effectiveness.
Self-Administered Survey	A survey instrument initiated by an individual or group from the campus community which is designed to obtain information from its own members, employees, enrolled students, or alumni. A self-administered survey is administered by the initiating individual or group.

Policy Details

PROCEDURE

Sponsored Surveys - Subject to oversight by the Survey Review Council (SRC)

Sponsored Surveys are defined as survey instruments proposed and supported by an individual or group from the campus community that are designed to gather information from all members of the campus community or from a subset of populations across disciplines, departments, or units. *Sponsored Surveys* are subject to review by Survey Review Council (SRC) per the conditions of this policy. Electronic forms of *Sponsored Surveys* are administered by the OIE. If, after reviewing this policy, you are unsure whether your survey instrument is a *Sponsored Survey*, please contact the [Office of Institutional Effectiveness](#).

Examples of survey populations are 1) all members of the campus community, all students, all faculty, all staff, or 2) subsets of populations of students, faculty, or employees identified by selected demographic characteristics.

Examples of Demographic Characteristics

Age, Gender, Race/Ethnicity, Group Affiliation such as:

- Student type (e.g., undergraduate, graduate)
- Cohort (e.g., all undergraduates admitted in Fall 2022)
- Student class (e.g., first year, sophomore, post baccalaureate)

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- Faculty rank (e.g., full time, part time, adjunct, tenured, or tenure track)
- Employee rank (e.g., administrators, hourly staff, student workers)

An individual or group who is sponsoring a survey must submit the instrument and suggested timing for its administration to the OIE. The OIE will review the information and facilitate its submission to the Survey Review Council (SRC) whose purpose and scope are outlined in the following section.

All solicitations from outside the University for the distribution of surveys to any member of the campus community must be forwarded to the OIE for submission to the SRC for review.

Purpose and Scope of the SRC

The purpose of the SRC is to review *Sponsored Surveys* to ensure compliance with University and regulatory guidelines, and to maximize the effectiveness of data collected from surveys administered to the campus community, or populations thereof, while reducing duplicated efforts in survey administration and participants' survey fatigue.

This policy recommends the SRC be organized as a sub-committee of the Compliance Oversight Committee (Compliance). The chair of Compliance will serve as the coordinator of the SRC, and the director of the OIE and chair of the IRB will serve as ex-officio members. Additional representatives should be sought from the administrative and faculty members of Compliance as well as other university constituents who could contribute relevant expertise to the survey review.

The OIE will facilitate submission of survey instruments to the SRC and will remain the primary contact for all sponsors. Surveys forwarded to the SRC will be considered in a timely manner and submitters of reviewable surveys should expect an initial response within two weeks (if IRB approval has been granted.) The review of the instrument and the timing of its administration should be a collaborative effort, and the goal of all parties should be effective data collection and compliance with university ethics guidelines and methodological best practices.

Self-Administered Surveys – Not subject to oversight by the SRC

Self-Administered Surveys are defined as survey instruments initiated by an individual or group from the campus community and are designed to gather information from members, employees, enrolled students, or alumni of an initiators department, program, or unit. *Self-administered Surveys* are not subject to review by the SRC, however, they should be reviewed and verified for methodological best practices by the initiator's designated administrator. All *Self-Administered Surveys* that may potentially lead to data presentation at a non-UMU forum must be reviewed by IRB.

The following are examples and characteristics of different types of *Self-Administered Surveys*. This is a guide- not an exhaustive list- of various data collection activities. If, after reviewing this policy, you are unsure whether the data collection method you would like to implement is a *Self-Administered Survey*, please contact the [Office of Institutional Effectiveness](#).

Committee/Administrative surveys

These surveys are used by committees, organizations, academic departments, or administrative units to gather information about their members or attendees. Examples include:

- Membership-related surveys/polls internal to student organizations, committees, or working groups.
- Program/event scheduling, registration, RSVPs.
- Point of service feedback (e.g., an experience or exit poll) for an activity or organized function (e.g., training and development events, alumni events.)
- Employee, faculty, department chair/program director evaluation surveys.

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Programmatic surveys

These surveys are used to collect data from constituents enrolled, participating, teaching, or working in an academic school, program, or department. Examples include:

- Surveys by a school/program/department of its majors, minors, faculty, staff, or participants.
- Surveys by an instructor of students enrolled in his/her course or courses within his/her discipline.
- Course and instructor evaluation surveys
- Alumni surveys to collect data regarding academic program review for a specific discipline.
 - o **Timing of all alumni surveys must be coordinated through the [Office of Alumni Relations](#).**

Research surveys (conditionally considered Self-administered Surveys)

Research surveys intended to collect data from students, faculty, or employees *within* the researcher's school, program/department, course, or administrative unit are not subject to the survey review conditions set forth in this policy. These surveys will still be subject to review by IRB.

If a researcher intends to collect data from the entire campus community or subsets of populations as outlined in the preceding "Sponsored Surveys" section, the survey will be considered a *Sponsored Survey* and will be subject to review by the SRC as previously outlined.

Institutional surveys

Surveys administered by professional organizations, or by the OIE, at the request of university executives to collect data for institutional planning, decision-making, and reporting, are not subject to review by the SRC. Institutional surveys are coordinated through the OIE. Examples include:

- Higher Education Data Sharing (HEDS) Consortium's Campus Climate Survey
- Indiana School of Education's National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE)
- Ruffalo Noel Levitz's Student Satisfaction Survey (SSI)
- Entering Student Questionnaire
- Graduate Success (First Destination) Survey
- Student Alcohol and Drug Survey

Responsibilities

Position or Office	Responsibilities
Office of Institutional Effectiveness	The Office of Institutional Effectiveness supports the University's mission-centered initiatives through a systematic and continuous process of data collection, evaluation, and assessment.

Contacts

Subject	Office	Telephone	E-mail/URL
	Office of Institutional Effectiveness	(330) 829-8223	effectiveness@mountunion.edu

History

All changes must be listed sequentially, including edits and reviews. Note when the policy name or number changes.

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