

**Considerations for Creating Institutional Survey Questions
(Supplementary to the ISOC Standards for Survey Methodologies document)**

NOTE: Examples presented are not from actual surveys but are rather illustrations of the types of question design issues commonly noted by the ISOC.

	Original Example	Revision
Use language that will be relevant to the participant.	<i>Have you experienced any technical issues with the learning management system this semester?</i>	<i>Have you experienced any technical issues using Brightspace this semester?</i>
Include only one distinct idea in a question to ensure responses can be clearly interpreted.	<i>The textbook was affordable and useful.</i>	<i>The textbook was affordable. The textbook was useful.</i>
Avoid language that may direct respondents to provide a desired answer.	<i>As an important step in reducing plastic waste, do you think the food establishments on campus should ban plastic food utensils?</i>	<i>Do you think food establishments on campus should discontinue the use of plastic food utensils?</i>
Use scales that are balanced in response options.	<i>A satisfaction scale of 1 to 5: 1 – Dissatisfied 2 – Neutral 3 – Somewhat satisfied 4 – Satisfied 5 – Very satisfied</i> <i>[The neutral option is not the mid-point and there are more positive options than negative.]</i>	<i>A satisfaction scale of 1 to 5: 1 – Very dissatisfied 2 – Dissatisfied 3 – Neutral 4 – Satisfied 5 – Very satisfied</i>
Use consistent response formats throughout the survey.	<i>Question 1: How would you rate the quality of the service? 1 – Poor 2 – Fair 3 – Good 4 – Excellent</i> <i>Question 2: On a scale of 1 to 5 with 1 = Poor and 5 = Excellent, how would you rate the quality of the training received?</i>	<i>Use the same response options and format for both Question 1 and 2</i>
Make response options specific to ensure standardized interpretation by all respondents.	<i>How often did you visit the campus bookstore this semester? More than once a week Occasionally 1-2 times a month A few times during the semester Never</i> <i>[Varied interpretations of these options, e.g., “1-2 times a month” might be considered the same as “A few times during the semester”.]</i>	<i>Approximately how many times did you visit the campus bookstore this semester? None 1-5 visits during the semester 6-10 visits during the semester 11-15 visits during the semester More than 15 visits during the semester</i>
Replace open-ended items with structured response options whenever possible to facilitate analysis.	<i>What is your preferred method for receiving communication from our office? _____</i>	<i>Which of the following is your preferred method for receiving communication from our office? (select one only) Email Mail Social media Other</i>

<p>Avoid overlapping categories in response option lists.</p>	<p><i>For how many years have you worked in this department?</i> <i>Less than 1 year</i> <i>1-5 years</i> <i>5-10 years</i> <i>10-15 years</i> <i>15 or more years</i></p> <p><i>[An employee who is working for 5 years could select either 1-5 years or 5-10 years as their answer.]</i></p>	<p><i>For how many years have you worked in this department?</i> <i>Less than 1 year</i> <i>1-5 years</i> <i>6-10 years</i> <i>11-15 years</i> <i>More than 15 years</i></p>
<p>Include question branching wherever possible to reduce the amount of time required by all participants to complete the survey.</p>	<p><i>How often did you visit the campus health clinic this semester?</i> <i>1-2 visits</i> <i>3-4 visits</i> <i>More than 4 visits</i> <i>I did not visit the health clinic</i></p> <p><i>Did you visit the campus health clinic this semester to obtain an immunization?</i> <i>Yes</i> <i>No</i> <i>I did not visit the health clinic</i></p>	<p><i>Did you visit the campus health clinic this semester?</i> <i>Yes</i> <i>No</i></p> <p><i>Question branching for "Yes":</i> <i>How often did you visit the campus health clinic this semester?</i> <i>1-2 visits</i> <i>3-4 visits</i> <i>More than 4 visits</i></p> <p><i>Did you obtain an immunization at any of these visits this semester?</i> <i>Yes</i> <i>No</i></p>
<p>Group survey questions by topic area to minimize switching back and forth between unrelated questions.</p>	<p><i>Overall, how satisfied are you with your experiences at the help centre?</i></p> <p><i>What is your current year of study?</i></p> <p><i>Would you recommend the help centre to another student?</i></p> <p><i>Are you registered as a full-time student this semester?</i></p>	<p><u><i>Satisfaction</i></u> <i>Overall, how satisfied are you with your experiences at the help centre?</i></p> <p><i>Would you recommend the help centre to another student?</i></p> <p><u><i>Demographics</i></u> <i>Are you registered as a full-time student this semester?</i></p> <p><i>What is your current year of study?</i></p>