Draft Policy for Consultation

Institutional Surveys

Feedback can be sent to Policy@Mun.ca

Authority

The Provost and Vice-President (Academic) through the Director of the Centre for Institutional Analysis and Planning.

Purpose

To optimize the benefits of Institutional Surveys at the University by ensuring a coordinated and consistent approach.

Scope

Institutional Survey activities that engage any broad sampling or census of members of the University community and that involve direct requests to individuals for information.

This policy does not apply to:

- surveys that involve a research question and require review by a Research Ethics Board (REB), in accordance with the policy Ethics of Research Involving Human Participants.
- surveys limited to classroom or course activities such as in-class polls (e.g., use of clicker technology) or assigned course work (e.g., survey projects that constitute a course requirement).
- surveys issued to participants upon their immediate receipt or completion of training sessions/courses, information sessions, professional services or consumer transactions to assess their participation experience.
- course evaluation questionnaires.
Definitions

Administrative Purpose – A use of information for the operating functions of the University. This may include activities for assessment, evaluation, quality assurance, management or improvement purposes and any other non-research activities pertaining to how the University and/or its Unit(s) operate.

CIAP – Centre for Institutional Analysis and Planning.

ISOC – Institutional Survey Oversight Committee, the Terms of Reference are found here.

Institutional Survey – A Survey conducted by a University unit or its subsidiaries, or by a third-party under the direction of the University, for an Administrative Purpose and directed towards a sample or population of the University. University populations include prospective students, current students, employees, alumni, or other stakeholders. For the purpose of this policy, focus groups, interviews, votes, registration forms, and forms to manage or inventory operational activities and practices are not included in the definition of an Institutional Survey.

Survey – The formal collection of information from a sample or population of individuals regarding a topic, program, service, opinion, or experience.

Unit – Academic or administrative unit, as defined in the University calendar, or any board or other body appointed or elected to carry out University business.

University – Memorial University of Newfoundland and Labrador.

Policy

Institutional surveys are centrally coordinated to ensure that:

- consistent and appropriate survey designs and methodologies are used.
- privacy protection and information management protocols are followed.
- efficiencies around resources and information gathering efforts are achieved.
• survey results are shared and used in an effective manner.
• the University has an appropriate understanding of the survey demands being placed upon its various populations.

In accordance with its Terms of Reference, CIAP is the University’s principal agent for surveys for students, employees and alumni. CIAP is the initial point of contact for survey requests. The Procedure for Requesting Survey Approval must be followed for all Institutional Surveys. Scheduling of Institutional Surveys occurs on an academic year basis. The Schedule of Institutional Surveys reflects the current and upcoming surveys and is updated as surveys are approved. CIAP maintains the approved Schedule of Institutional Surveys.

ISOC is responsible for the review and approval of survey requests through a standardized process. The guiding principles for the approval of survey requests are:

• the purpose of the Institutional Survey is consistent with the strategic objectives of the University;
• the timing, target population, and content of the Institutional Survey do not overlap with previously approved surveys;
• opportunities for efficiently consolidating surveys are considered;
• survey administration will follow appropriate and best practices methodologies, including:
  o appropriate content and design of the survey instrument, and
  o use of standard methods and systems as currently recommended by CIAP;
• the information to be collected by the survey normally cannot be obtained through any other methods or sources;
• there will be measures in place for the protection, use, retention and disposal of survey information, in accordance with University policies including Appropriate Use of Computing Resources, Electronic Data Security, Information Management, and Privacy and their related procedures;
• the survey does not place an undue burden on students in consideration of their academic commitments.
• the survey does not interfere with the normal operations of the University.

Student surveys may not be administered during the regularly scheduled examination period of a semester.
Institutional Surveys may not be administered until approval has been granted by ISOC. ISOC may determine that certain regularized Institutional Surveys or survey frameworks require a one-time approval and do not require approval for each subsequent administration. The list of approved, regularized surveys is available [here](#).

Institutional Surveys that are approved by ISOC must be administered according to the Procedure for Administering Institutional Surveys, and the protocols outlined in the Institutional Survey Request Form, incorporating any amendments made by the ISOC as a condition of approval.

Surveys that have not been approved by the ISOC may result in the termination of the survey and destruction of any collected data.

**Related Documents**

- Appropriate Use of Computing Resources policy
- Contract Administration policy
- Electronic Data Security policy
- Ethics of Research Involving Human Participants policy
- Information Management policy
- Privacy policy
- Terms of Reference - ISOC
- Institutional Survey Request Form
- Privacy Compliance Checklist
- Schedule of Institutional Surveys
- Research Impacting Indigenous Groups policy
- Standards for Survey Methodologies

**Procedures**

- Procedure for Requesting Institutional Survey Approval *(Revised Draft Below)*
- Procedure for Administering Institutional Surveys *(Revised Draft Below)*
- Procedure for Checking Privacy Compliance
• Procedure for Retention and Disposal Schedules
• Procedure for Retention of Personal Information

Contact

Centre for Institutional Analysis and Planning General Office at ciap@mun.ca or 709-864-4016.

*See Draft Procedures for Consultation Below*
Draft Procedures for Consultation

Procedure for Requesting Institutional Survey Approval

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1. University Units or subsidiaries (the “requestor”) that intend to conduct an Institutional Survey must complete the Institutional Survey Request Form. The Procedure for Administering Institutional Surveys should be referred to when completing the request form.

2. A completed Institutional Survey Request Form must be submitted by the “requestor” to CIAP. The completed form should be submitted as early as practicable before the anticipated commencement of the survey so that sufficient time is available for consideration of the request.

3. CIAP carries out an initial review of the Institutional Survey Request Form for content and completeness and will contact the “requestor” if clarification is needed on any item(s).

4. CIAP forwards the Institutional Survey Request Form and any supplementary documentation to members of the ISOC for their review and approval.

5. The ISOC’s decision to approve an Institutional Survey request is made in accordance with the guiding principles stated in the Institutional Surveys policy. The ISOC may request additional information from the “requestor” as part of the review process.

6. The decision of the ISOC is one of:
   - Not approved
   - Approved, with amendments
   - Approved, as submitted

   The decision is communicated to the “requestor” in a written response from the ISOC.

7. If an institutional survey request is not approved, the rationale for the decision is provided in the written response from the ISOC.
8. If an institutional survey request is approved with amendments, those shall be included in the written response from ISOC. The “requestor” must incorporate those into the Institutional Survey before proceeding.
Draft Procedures for Consultation

Procedure for Administering Institutional Surveys

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Survey Approval

All Institutional surveys must have approval from the Institutional Survey Oversight Committee (ISOC), in accordance with the Institutional Surveys policy.

Required Protocols and Documents

1. The survey introduction and/or instrument must include:
   - a statement of purpose, use, and voluntariness as part of the informed consent process; some survey methodologies may require a separate signed consent form from the participant.
   - a statement of confidentiality and/or anonymity in the survey introduction.
   - a Privacy Notice, stating authority and purpose for the collection and use of information.

2. Determine if a Privacy Compliance Checklist is required. See the Privacy policy and the Procedure for Checking Privacy Compliance.

3. Ensure that any individuals who will be handling survey related information who are not regular university employees (e.g., student employees, work-term students, etc.,) complete a Confidentiality Agreement. A sample confidentiality agreement is available here.

4. If using a third-party server to host the survey:
   - In accordance with the Information Management policy, an Information Risk Assessment must be completed when considering the use of such external services. Contact the Office of the Chief Information Officer to initiate the completion of the applicable Information Risk Assessments.
   - Inform participants at the survey start that their data will be stored on a third-party server.
5. If an external third-party agency/contractor is conducting the survey on behalf of the University:

   - Arrange for a Privacy Schedule to be signed by both the third-party contractor and the University before any aspect of the survey process begins.

   - Determine if an additional research agreement is required by the third-party contractor. Submit this agreement to the IAP office. Additional review may be required by the General Counsel. See the Contract Administration policy.

6. The University office (e.g., Registrar’s Office) that will be supplying the file of contact information for the survey population/sample may require a Researcher Agreement, available here, and other documentation related to privacy protection, data use, and confidentiality.

**Design and Methodology**

Institutional Surveys must follow established standards for survey methodologies. These standards are available from the CIAP office and relate to the following:

   - Sampling
   - Timing
   - Question design
   - Survey messaging and contact attempts (invitations, reminders, promotion)
   - Incentives/prizes
   - Analysis and Reporting

**Information Management and Protection of Personal Information**

The University’s Privacy, Information Management and Electronic Data Security policies must be followed throughout the survey administration. Particular attention should be given to the following as related to survey administration:
• Transmit all information (population/sample file, survey results, etc.) through encrypted and password protected files, or by uploading to a secure server (password protected).

• Confirm that the contact information for the intended survey population/sample can be used for the purpose of administering the survey.

• Limit the amount of personal information included in population/sample files to the minimum amount of information that is necessary to administer the survey, particularly in the case of third party administration where population/sample files will be transmitted electronically. Where possible, mask any required personally identifiable information in the population/sample file, such as student number.

• Limit the information collected by the survey to just that which is required for the intended purpose.

• Report survey results in aggregate form only with no personally identifiable information included.

• Manage the information produced as a result of the survey in accordance with the Information Management policy, with consideration to data storage, usage, retention and removal. If the survey is conducted by a third-party consultant these considerations will be addressed in the Privacy Schedule or detailed in a supplementary agreement.

• Use the data collected from the survey for the purpose it was intended and that was communicated to participants.

Report and disseminate the results of institutional surveys in a manner appropriate to the nature and scope of the survey.