

INSTITUTIONAL SURVEY POLICY

1. INTRODUCTION

Purpose

Survey research is an important tool for Ball State University (BSU) to gather data to help inform and evaluate strategic institutional initiatives. However, the overuse of survey research has created issues with survey fatigue and reduced response rates. This policy aims to create an institutional environment for survey research that improves coordination and increases efficacy.

This policy describes the process that BSU uses to approve and schedule all institutional surveys to coordinate efforts, ensure quality, avoid duplicate information, protect respondent's privacy, achieve meaningful response rates, and collect useful insights upon which to base decisions. This policy establishes a BSU Survey Review Committee and process for coordinating and deploying surveys to achieve these goals.

Scope of this policy

This policy applies to all surveys conducted by BSU offices or staff or any surveys commissioned of BSU students, alumni, faculty, or staff by outside agencies. Any survey that meets one of the following conditions should undergo the BSU Survey Review process:

- Surveys that are administered to BSU students, faculty, or staff populations including random sampling.
- Surveys that will generalize to the broader BSU population of students, faculty, or staff.
- Surveys that target specific subpopulations such as enrollment status, gender, ethnicity, etc.
- Any surveys used for institutional measures and improvement.
- Any non-anonymous surveys which use individualized links and are distributed via email to 200 or more email addresses.

Additionally, this policy extends to any survey that does *not meet* an exemption outlined below. However, it is suggested that these exempted are conducted in consideration with the BSU survey calendar to avoid competing with strategic research surveys.

- Academic evaluative surveys conducted by faculty, staff, or students
- Surveys conducted by students in courses solely to fulfill the requirements of a course or degree program
- Participants' event evaluations or event planning
- Polls that involve voting
- Feedback collected at point-of-service
- Course evaluations

The Office of Institutional Research and Decision Support (IRDS) shall have primacy and responsibility for surveys of strategic institutional intent. The table in the appendix provides examples (not comprehensive nor exhaustive) of typical surveys conducted at BSU and covered by this policy. However, strategic research surveys are highlighted to communicate the IRDS's responsibility for administration and analysis.

2. SURVEY REVIEW COMMITTEE

The survey review committee will serve the following purposes:

- Review university survey proposals to ensure the information sought serves university interests and is not already available in another form.
- Coordinate the administration of university surveys to minimize overlap and duplication in content, sampling, and scheduling.
- Disseminate best practices and provide support and/or training for university survey development, administration, and analysis.
- Approve university survey requests by outside entities.
- Maintain a university survey calendar, which will be posted on the Institutional Research and Decision Support (IRDS) website.

The survey review committee will be led and convened by the Associate Vice President of IRDS. The committee will convene every semester or as needed.

Survey Review Committee composition:

One continuing representative from each of the following:

Provost Office

Institutional Review Board (IRB)

Office of Inclusive Excellence

Office of Research and Academic Effectiveness

Student Affairs

University Foundation

Information Technology

Two representatives from the faculty, each from different colleges:

e.g., CSH, CH, TC, MCOB

Two continuing representatives from IRDS (one in addition to the AVP)

Total of 11 members, six continuing and four on one or two-year terms.

3. SURVEY REVIEW PROCESS

A. Any person/unit who wishes to administer a survey covered by this policy must first obtain approval from the Survey Review Committee. Steps include:

1. Complete the online form after September 1st and prior to November 15th to request that your survey be scheduled for the following Spring or Summer.
2. Complete the online form after March 1st and prior to May 15th to request that your survey be scheduled for the following Fall.
3. The Survey Review Committee will approve or reject requests by December 1st for Spring survey administrations and by June 1st for Fall survey administrations.

B. Survey Scheduling Proposal: To obtain approval to administer a university survey, the individual must provide the BSU Survey Review Committee with the following information:

1. The name of the survey.
2. The person and unit responsible for the survey.
3. The purpose of the survey.
4. A description of the proposed sample and rationale for sample selection.
5. The intended method of survey administration (e.g., email, web, mail, etc.).
6. The proposed survey administration schedule including time in the field and reminder notifications to encourage participation
7. Frequency of survey administration (e.g., annually, biannually)
8. A description of any planned incentive program for respondents.
9. An explanation of how the surveyor will ensure voluntary participation and address issues of confidentiality and anonymity.
10. Acknowledgment that university survey administration and analysis must comply with the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA); university standards for Confidentiality of Employee, Student, and Faculty Data; university policy on Human Subjects Protection in Research; and university accessibility policies.
11. A draft of any proposed survey communications (e.g., invitation to participate, reminder, thank you). Communications must address issues of confidentiality and anonymity, as well as the voluntary nature of the survey.
12. A draft of the survey items.
13. Approval from within the individual's department or unit.

C. Upon approval, the university survey will be added to the university survey calendar maintained by IRDS.

4. GUIDING PRINCIPLES

1. No survey should place participants in harm's way or cause possible harm.
2. Survey results must not be used to harm a participant in any way.
3. The data must not be used for alternative purposes. (This includes the collection of data that requires IRB approval.)
4. Whenever possible, surveys should be anonymous.
5. Personally identifiable information should be collected only as required in relation to the expressly stated purpose of the research or project.
6. Do not ask for data/information that is not needed, or is already available.
7. Survey participation should be informed and must be voluntary. The use of prizes or incentives to encourage participation can present issues with assurances of response anonymity.
8. Undue influence over survey participation or requiring survey participation must be avoided.
9. The person conducting a survey is responsible for managing and releasing the data collected in accordance with BSU policies relating to appropriate use, retention, and storage (see 5. Related Policies).

In coordination with the Director of Research Integrity and the University Survey Review Committee, the Office of Institutional Research and Decision Support will maintain protocols consistent with internal controls necessary to maintain institutional and federal-wide assurance.

All surveys shall be conducted in accordance with federal copyright and other pertinent regulations.

5. RELATED POLICIES

Related policies can be found at:

<https://www.bsu.edu/about/administrativeoffices/information-technology/about/policies-procedures-forms>

Survey support and resources can be found at: TBD

Appendix

IRDS Recurring Surveys	Scope	Frequency
Ball State Graduating Senior	University	Semesterly
Ball State Alumni	University	Yearly
Ball State Graduate Program Alumni	University	Yearly
Freshman Survey (MAP, Week 3)	University	Yearly
NSSE	University	Bi-Annually
Student Climate Survey	University	Bi-Annually
Faculty Community Engagement	Community	Spring/Summer
Student Community Engagement	Community	Spring/Summer
Community Partner Survey	Community	Spring/Summer
Other recurring surveys	Scope	Frequency
NACE First Destinations Survey	Career Center	Yearly
Course Evaluations	Departmental	As needed
Chair/Director Administrative Evaluations	Departmental	As needed
Dining Survey	Dining Services	Yearly
Homecoming King and Queen Nominations	Foundation	Yearly
Housing and Residence Life Quality of Life	Housing	Yearly
Tobacco Affidavit	HR	Yearly
Maplewood Mansion Learning Lab Survey	Maplewood	After Stay
Orientation Evaluation	Orientation	Yearly
Student Center Hotel Survey	Pittenger Hotel	After Stay
Student Government Elections	SGA	Yearly
Excellence in Teaching Survey	Strategic Learning	Yearly