



PROCEDURE FOR CONDUCTING SURVEYS AT TUSKEGEE UNIVERSITY

With the regional accreditors and federal government requiring demonstration of evidence-based decision making, increasing numbers of Tuskegee University departments are surveying the University community. In response to this, a survey procedure for conducting surveys has been developed within the University community.

For the purpose of this document the “community” will be defined as all students, alumni, staff, and faculty. The need for a procedure is threefold: to protect the community members’ privacy, to monitor survey frequency to avoid survey fatigue, and to ensure the safety of data collection and usage.

Procedure

The Office of Institutional Effectiveness, Research, Assessment, and Strategic Planning shall be informed fourteen days in advance for survey approval. However, there are times when permission is not required. This is when a survey:

- a. is used to collect data strictly for internal uses and occurs in one’s own department and involves fewer than 100 people;
- b. asks for feedback from clients at the point of service (e.g., after a function or program) fewer than 100 people
- c. is a course evaluation form; or
- d. is used to collect information for administrative purposes (e.g. scheduling).

The Office of Institutional Effectiveness will keep a comprehensive list of approved surveys so the University community will have access to the list and the anticipated delivery date of each survey.

IRB Approval

This policy does not replace the necessary approval from the Human Subjects Committee/IRB. The primary goal of the University IRB is to protect the welfare and dignity of human subjects. A secondary goal of the IRB is to assist investigators in conducting ethical research that complies with applicable regulations.

Collecting and Storing Data

Survey administrators must store data securely and use data only for the designated and intended purposes.

Survey administrators must agree to adhere to University procedures for handling data. Data containing participant names, identifying information, e-mail addresses, or other confidential information must be saved in an encrypted format on computers or drives that belong to the University, and these data should be disposed of when the survey is completed. These data must not be stored on computers or servers outside the University.

What Is a Survey?

For the purpose of this procedure, a survey is defined as the gathering of information through questionnaires, interviews, or focus groups to make inferences about a population. This policy applies to surveys that are administered by Tuskegee University personnel.

Types of Surveys

There are many types of surveys used for data collection. Examples include:

1. National surveys offered through professional organizations that seek students' perceptions and attitudes.
2. Internally developed "homegrown" surveys that ask for students' perceptions and attitudes.
3. Program- and activity-level surveys asking for students' opinions about programs.
4. Surveys conducted to evaluate or compare programs, practices, curricula, methods, or outcomes for use solely by the institution.
5. Institutional surveys asking staff and faculty to report their attitudes, opinions, and perspectives (e.g., climate surveys).

Survey Request Form

To register a survey, one must complete a survey request form and e-mail it to the Office of Institutional Effectiveness. Please allow a week for a response to one's request.

Approval of a survey request will be based on the criteria established below in the "survey approval" section and the schedule of other planned University surveys.

Survey Approval

Survey requests will be reviewed based on the following criteria:

- a. Is the purpose of the survey clear, and is it explained to the prospective participants?
- b. Does the survey provide information useful for planning or improving services?
- c. Is the survey well-designed and of an appropriate length? Does it follow sound survey methods and practices?
- d. Are the questions easily understood and interpreted?
- e. What is the target population? Will the entire population or a sample be surveyed?
- f. What actions are being taken to ensure the confidentiality of the responses?
- g. When will the survey be conducted? What is the optimal timing to ensure it does not interfere with other University surveys and activities?
- h. How will the results be used?
- i. Will the findings be disseminated to appropriate University audiences? Who will have access to the information and will it help them make better decisions as a result?
- j. Has the IRB approved the project, if required?
- k. Can the proposed survey be combined with other planned surveys?

Survey Calendar

Many of the University's longitudinal surveys occur annually at the end of the spring term, so surveyors are encouraged to consider surveying during other times of the year.

The University will attempt to curtail student participation in surveys to two times per semester and request that the surveys take no more than 45 minutes to complete. For this to occur, applicants may be asked to survey samples of the population.

After approval, OIE will e-mail their approved survey schedule dates.

Those who administer surveys are expected to follow these guidelines closely, understanding their obligation to protect participants' confidentiality and to comply with all legal and professional obligations.