

## **UNIVERSITY OF PUGET SOUND SURVEY POLICY**

For the purpose of this policy, a survey is defined as a gathering of information through questionnaires, interviews, etc., to make inferences about or predict the behavior of a population. The Office of Institutional Research (OIR) will serve as the University of Puget Sound's survey clearinghouse. All surveys intended for distribution to any members or prospective members of the Puget Sound community (e.g., applicants, students, faculty, staff, board members, and alumni) must be approved by OIR using the procedures described herein. OIR approval is encouraged but not mandated for (a) faculty-supervised survey research that contributes toward students' academic progress, (b) evaluation of an event by participants, (c) feedback from clients at the point of service, (d) teaching evaluation forms, or (e) forms used to collect information for administrative purposes (e.g., scheduling). The Guidelines for Conducting a Survey at Puget Sound (p. 3) apply to all surveys at Puget Sound, even those that do not require OIR approval. OIR participation in surveying of students can be helpful in reducing survey fatigue and in increasing response rates.

Approval by OIR to administer a survey is not a substitute for a review by the Institutional Review Board (IRB). If a survey research project is subject to review by the IRB, approval is required before it can be administered within the college. In addition to the survey research exempted from OIR approval, review by the IRB is generally not required for survey research conducted to evaluate or compare programs, practices, curricula, methods, or outcomes for use solely by the institution.

Surveys may be administered using paper and pencil, phone, or electronic format. Regardless of the method used, all surveys must be approved by the Office of Institutional Research before the survey can be administered except those specifically exempted by this policy.

Acceptance of authorization to administer a survey establishes an obligation on the part of the researcher to use these data responsibly, including not distributing the data to others in or outside the college, unless the researcher is an authoritative source for and an authorized distributor of the data and the recipient is authorized to receive the data. In addition, a person who receives e-mail or traditional mail addresses of individuals in schools or offices will be responsible for that information and must agree to adhere to Puget Sound policies for handling data. Puget Sound's Information Use and Security Policy may be viewed [here](#).

### **Sanctions for Policy Violations**

Failure to adhere to the policies and guidelines relating to the use of surveys will result in a written notification to the data collector and the Vice President who is responsible for their unit or department. Violators of this policy must receive clearance from the Vice President to administer any future surveys for a period determined by the Vice President.

### **Policy Review Cycle**

This policy shall be reviewed at the beginning of each even-numbered academic year.

Origination Date: 2/2010

Owner: Institutional Research

Contact: [Director of Institutional Research](#)

## PROCEDURES

### The Approval Process

Individuals and offices wishing to conduct a survey that is covered by the survey policy must provide the information listed below:

- Description of the survey project, including the purpose and intended use of results;
- Specific population receiving the survey;
- Method of survey distribution (e.g., online or hard copy, via email, in class, at event, etc.);
- Time frame for administering the survey, including beginning and end dates;
- Evidence of IRB approval (if necessary);
- Description of any planned incentive program for respondents; and
- Current draft of the survey and all invitation and cover letters.

Applicants must submit the above information to OIR at least two weeks prior to the start date of the survey. If a recurring survey has been approved in an earlier year, it will be necessary only to submit information about the proposed administration dates. Surveys that had been approved in prior years, but which have been significantly changed, must be re-approved. If a survey is approved by the IRB, OIR will accept the IRB protocol in lieu of the survey application. It is recommended that individuals and offices wishing to administer a survey consult with OIR before submitting a survey proposal to ensure that there is no duplication of effort.

The Office of Institutional Research will review the survey application and provide a response to the applicant within five business days of the date the proposal was received. The Office of Institutional Research will review the application based on the following questions:

- Is the purpose of the survey clear and is it explained to the prospective participants?
- Does the survey provide information useful for planning or improving services?
- Is the survey well-designed and of an appropriate length? Does it follow sound survey methods and practices? Are the questions easily understood and interpreted?
- What is the target population? Will the entire population or a sample be surveyed?
- Are the rights of perspective participants clearly explained?
- What actions are being taken to ensure the confidentiality of the responses?
- When will the survey be conducted? What is the optimal timing to ensure it does not compete with other college surveys and activities?
- How will the results be used?
- Will the findings be disseminated to appropriate college audiences? Who will have access to the information, and will it help them make better decisions as a result?
- Has the Institutional Review Board approved the project (if necessary)?
- Can the proposed survey be combined with other planned surveys?
- Are there other data available that will allow the survey to be avoided?

The OIR's [web site](#) will provide guidelines on sampling, structuring of survey items, and follow-up reminders. Staff in OIR will provide feedback to the applicant, either approval of the survey project as-is or a change notice with feedback regarding specific changes needed for approval. If you have any questions about the survey policy, please contact the [Director of OIR](#).

## **Guidelines for Conducting a Survey at Puget Sound**

All surveys conducted at Puget Sound should adhere to the following guidelines.

### ***The Rights of Respondents***

- The survey form must include “contact information” (i.e., name, e-mail address, telephone number) should the respondents have any questions about the content of the form or about the use and/or publication of survey results.
- All participants must be notified that their participation is voluntary.
- Respondents must be notified in advance if data collected will not be anonymous.
- Respondents must be protected from risk of unreasonable harm, including any risks regarding confidentiality or privacy.
- If your survey or data analysis will include academic or contact information for Puget Sound students, you may be subject to Federal Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) regulations. Non-public student data can be used without the student’s consent by college employees for “legitimate educational” purposes, provided the data are not reported in such a way that individual students can be identified. All other users must receive written consent from the students to access non-public student data. To learn more about FERPA, contact the [Registrar’s Office](#).
- Surveys that request individual health information may be subject to HIPAA (Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act). For more information, contact the [Associate Dean of Students](#).
- A summary should be made available on request to persons who completed the survey.
- Respondents should be informed if the data or survey results will be published or distributed, including whether individual responses will appear in the published results.
- In some circumstances, data may be confidential and may not be made available publicly or to the respondents. Any such limitation should be made clear to respondents at the time the survey is conducted, as well as within the report itself. When restrictions apply, publication and/or presentation of survey results must honor the stated restrictions.
- If subjects are promised anonymity and a login is required to access the survey (e.g., UPSIDs), the researcher must ensure that login information will not be collected and stored in a way that it can be connected to survey results.

### ***Sponsorship***

- All surveys should clearly identify the group or person who is conducting the survey.
- The use of the name “University of Puget Sound” on a survey instrument or cover letter suggests an official survey being conducted by the college. If you plan to use the name on your survey, you must have approval from the appropriate individuals or offices (contact OIR for assistance).
- Information from surveys conducted by administrative offices, faculty committees, and other college committees are the property of Puget Sound. The researcher, department, unit, or committee responsible for conducting the survey must be consulted prior to the release and distribution of the survey’s findings.

- The use of mass e-mailing lists to promote or distribute a survey to Puget Sound faculty, staff, or students is limited to official surveys approved by the Puget Sound administration. Appropriate individuals or offices must first approve these surveys. Please [contact OIR](#) for more information.

### ***Confidentiality***

- Personally identifiable information should be collected only as required in relation to the expressly stated purpose of research or a project. Personally identifiable information includes UPSID, Social Security Number, first name, last name, and date of birth, either singly or in any combination.
- The use of prizes or other incentives to encourage participation typically requires the collection of personal information from the respondents (i.e., name or e-mail address). If the respondents have been promised anonymity, collection of this information may appear to be a violation of the promise. Two methods are typically used to circumvent this apparent conflict:
  - Respondents can be assured that their participation and responses will be confidential, but not anonymous. In this sense, “confidentiality” means that none of the information collected can be associated with a specific individual.
  - A double-blind procedure is developed in which a second party ensures that the analyst does not see any personally-identifiable information.

### ***Data Security***

Use of the college’s survey administration system (Qualtrics) is recommended for conducting campus surveys. Using Qualtrics, you can assume that your data is secure. If you use another survey system, it is considered the same as using an off-campus host, and the researcher assumes the full responsibility for the security and privacy of the data.

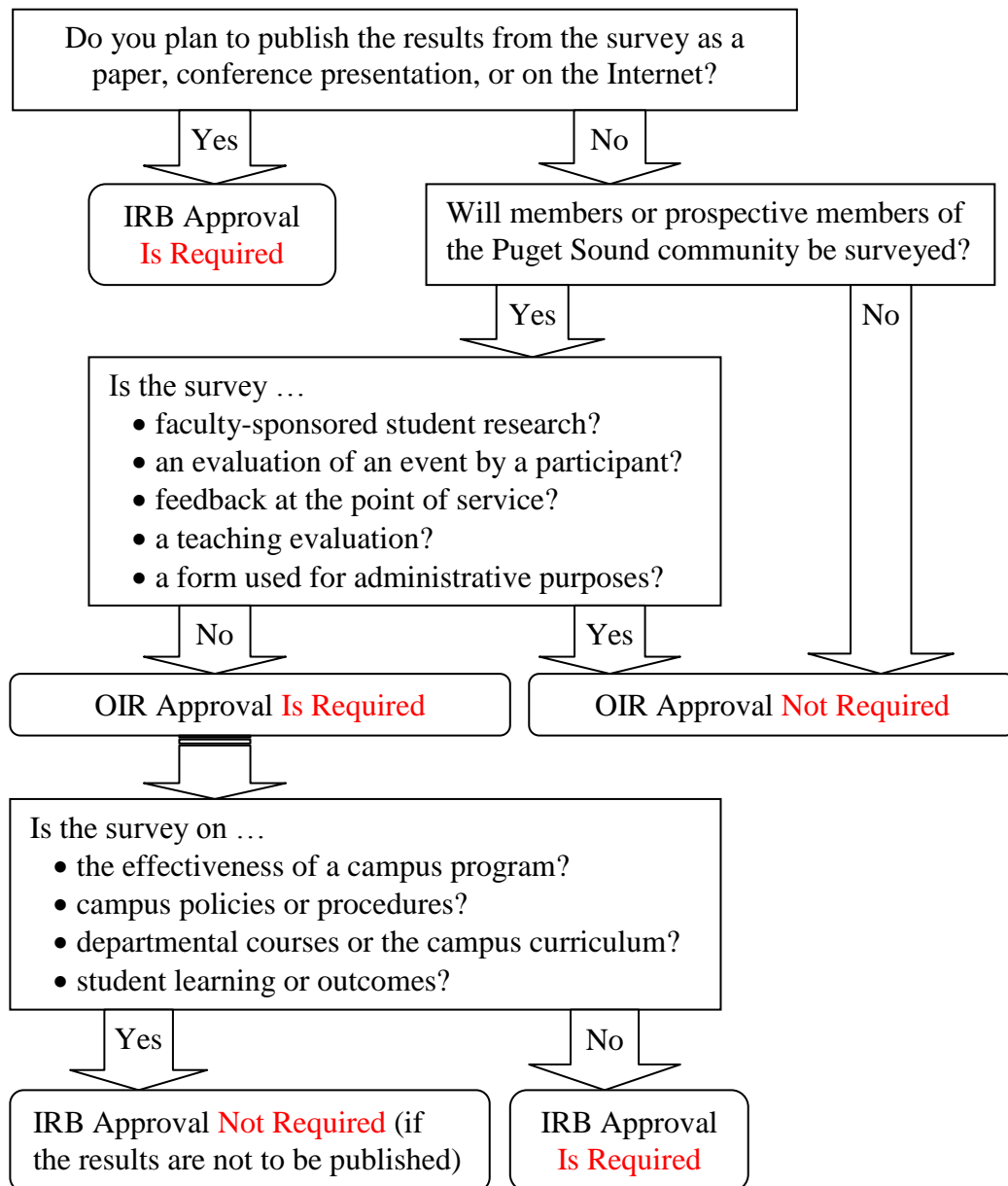
- The person conducting a survey is responsible for managing and releasing the data collected. Raw data from surveys are typically not shared with people outside of Puget Sound except under special circumstances (e.g., a data sharing consortium). If survey data are shared, (a) its use should conform to Puget Sound’s Information Use and Security Policy, (b) the data should not contain any information that will identify a respondent, and (c) its release must be approved by the appropriate Vice President.
  - In addition, if survey data are released to a Puget Sound student for a class project, the student must sign a Non-Disclosure and Confidentiality Agreement (available [here](#)).
- If the survey is hosted by an off-campus site, the researcher is responsible for the security and privacy of the data. Thus, the investigator should ensure that the external host system provides security in both data transfer and storage (e.g., disassociation of responses from the ISP address, SSL encryption, and firewall and intrusion prevention technology).

## Institutional Review Board Review

You and the college may incur legal liability if the treatment of survey recipients is unethical, if data resulting from your survey are misused, or if any part of the survey violates certain protected rights of individuals. Survey researchers should be aware of their responsibilities and make every effort to protect the rights of survey recipients.

IRB approval is required if the findings from the survey are to be used for any purposes other than data collection about campus programs, practices, curricula, or outcomes for use solely by the college. Students and faculty using surveys to conduct academic research should contact the IRB. The IRB and OIR review processes are not independent and are summarized below.

### Puget Sound's Survey Review Process



Generally, the results of academic research are reported through outside publications or presented in forums that include individuals outside of the university. If your results will be published (including via the web), the IRB requires that you submit your survey instrument and research design for review before data are collected.

If a survey research project does not qualify as exempt under IRB standards, the proposal must proceed through the formal IRB approval process and will require additional time for review. If you are unsure whether or not your survey requires an IRB review, consult the [IRB webpage](#). OIR may also request that a researcher submit a survey for review by the IRB before it is administered. Once the IRB approves the administration of a campus survey, OIR will accept the IRB protocol in lieu of the college's survey application.

### **Survey Calendar and Scheduling**

OIR will post a calendar of scheduled surveys that may be viewed on the [OIR Survey Policies and Procedures webpage](#). Anyone requesting approval to administer a survey should consult the calendar before submitting a survey request. The availability of the survey on the web is typically limited to ten working days.

### **Use of Qualtrics for Administering Web Surveys**

Puget Sound's web survey system, Qualtrics, has limited licenses on campus. Please contact OIR to arrange the best way to administer your survey on the web. OIR is available to provide support.

### **Use of E-mail for Administering Surveys**

E-mail is a convenient and effective way to contact and communicate with potential research subjects; however, e-mail is a fundamentally insecure medium. E-mail messages are typically transmitted to a number of different computers before reaching their final destination. At each intermediary computer, backups can create additional copies of the original message. Thus, messages may reside on one or more servers for extended periods, during which time they may be read, subpoenaed, etc. Theoretically, it is possible for subjects to return surveys through anonymous re-mailers, but interception and duplication remain possible during the initial transmission. It is possible to conduct secure e-mail surveys with encryption technology, but this is rarely used in actual practice. In short, subjects cannot be assured of the confidentiality of their data in e-mail surveys. E-mail may be safely used as a vehicle only to contact potential subjects, who may then be given the option to (a) print and return an anonymous survey via campus or surface mail, or (b) go to a web link to complete an online survey.

### **Survey Publicity**

The survey requestor is responsible for initiating all publicity for their survey. Surveys can be publicized through media such as *The Trail*, e-mail, message boards, and posters. Notices and reminders by students, members of the staff (e.g., residence advisors) and faculty (e.g., department chairs) are most effective.

## **Incentives**

A policy on the use of incentives to encourage participation in campus surveys is in development by the offices of Accounting & Budget Services and Human Resources. If the cost or fair value of a survey incentive is greater than \$50, the value of a survey incentive may be taxable to the recipient. The survey requestor needs to provide the tax reporting information to the Accounts Payable Office within one week of issuing the survey incentive so that Puget Sound can comply with tax reporting requirements.

The policy also states that incentives may be offered or given only to student survey participants and not to faculty or staff members. If there is a compelling reason to offer a survey incentive to faculty and/or staff survey participants, it is imperative that the survey requestor first consult with the [Director of Compensation and Benefits](#) in Human Resources and the [Director of Financial Reporting and Tax](#) in Accounting and Budget Services well before the survey incentive is offered. This will help ensure that the survey incentive does not create additional compensation and/or tax reporting requirements for the university. Upon completion of the review process, the incentive policy will be available on the Human Resources web site on campus-wide policies.

## **Assistance with Survey Development, Administration, and Reporting**

OIR is available to advise on and assist with the development, deployment and analysis of surveys conducted by academic departments, committees and task forces, and administrative units as time permits. Assistance with external projects (e.g., grant-related projects) conducted by Puget Sound faculty and staff may also be considered, but these will have a lower priority.