



SUBJECT: SURVEY POLICY AND PROCEDURES

I. INTRODUCTION: Southern Utah University (SUU) participates in a number of surveys intended to collect data about its students, faculty, staff, alumni and community members for administrative, data-informed decision-making, planning and scholarly research purposes. In response to the University's ongoing commitment to accountability and to serving the needs of its campus community, SUU acknowledges the importance of survey data. This policy represents a means to enhance: (a) survey construction, (b) data collection, (c) meaningful data interpretation of surveys within the institution and (d) appropriate handling of sensitive information.

II. PURPOSE: The purpose of this policy is to provide coordinated guidance regarding survey creation, distribution and analysis. This policy is intended to: (a) prevent survey fatigue by limiting the number and timing of surveys, (b) encourage the use of sound survey methodology and design, (c) maximize response rates, (d) safeguard respondent confidentiality and data security, (e) avoid duplication of data and (f) encourage sharing of aggregate survey results (no raw data will be shared).

III. DEFINITIONS:

- A. **Academic Research:** Academic research is defined as the systematic investigation including research development, testing and evaluation, designed to develop or contribute to generalizable knowledge.
- B. **Anonymity:** Anonymity indicates that data are recorded with no identifiers. No one, including the researcher(s) can link subjects' responses with subjects' identities.
- C. **Confidentiality:** Confidentiality is an implied guarantee that the researcher(s) will make every effort to prevent anyone except the specified researcher(s) from linking individuals' responses with individuals' identities. Confidentiality infers that the researcher(s) will use codes to link individuals with their responses.
- D. **Informed Consent:** Informed consent ensures that research participants are aware of the possible risks involved in partaking in survey research. Informed consent includes apprising participants about a survey's: (a) purpose, (b) risks, (c) benefits and (d) procedures.
- E. **Population:** A population is the total of all the individuals who have certain characteristics that the researcher is interested in studying and is considered the target group under investigation. Examples of SUU populations include: (a) all students taking ENGL 1010 in fall 2014, (b) all women employees, (c)



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all Hispanic students, (d) all first-generation students, (e) all students and (f) all employees.

- F. President's Cabinet Representative: There are seven (7) SUU administrators that serve on the President's Cabinet. Each SUU employee falls under one of the President's Cabinet Representatives. For example, the President's Cabinet Representative for Academic Affairs' employees is the Executive Vice President and Provost.
- G. Small-Scaled Survey: A small-scaled survey is a survey that is administered to fewer than 50 participants.
- H. Sponsored SUU Research: Survey requestors external to SUU wishing to conduct survey research at SUU require an SUU employee to sponsor (co-administer) the survey and Office of Planning and Institutional Effectiveness (OPIE) approval to administer the survey.
- I. Survey: A research tool that includes at least one question which is either open-ended or close-ended and employs an oral or written method for answering these questions. The goal of a survey is to gain specific information about either a specific group or a representative sample of a particular group.

IV. POLICY:

A. SCOPE: OPIE will serve as SUU's survey clearinghouse. Unless exempt under the APPLICABILITY section of this policy, survey administrators will require OPIE approval for surveys that require student, faculty, staff, alumni or community participation. External community members will not be permitted to conduct *un-sponsored* survey research at SUU. Individuals and offices wishing to conduct a survey covered by this policy must first gain approval from their dean or senior department supervisor and then complete and submit the Survey Submission Form located on the OPIE website.

B. APPLICABILITY: The following surveys are exempt from this policy: (a) student evaluations of course instruction; (b) engagement surveys such as NSSE, FSSE, HERI and SSI; (c) faculty-driven classroom surveys meant to assess teaching and learning; (d) simple feedback surveys conducted immediately following an event or point of service; (e) small-scaled surveys that are part of faculty-assigned work for SUU students, (f) faculty/staff organizations surveying their membership, (g) employee evaluation surveys



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and (h) faculty/staff scholarship research that doesn't involve surveying an entire SUU population (see section III, E).

C. CONFIDENTIALITY: Through informed consent, respondents must be informed that their responses will be confidential but not anonymous and that their participation is voluntary. Confidentiality indicates that the data is recorded in such a way that it is not immediately identified with the subject that supplied the data. If email addresses, login credentials or other personally identifiable information is captured as part of the survey completion process, confidentiality of the data must be assured. All surveys must comply with the: (a) Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, (b) Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act, (c) Belmont Report's Ethical Principles and Guidelines for the Protection of Human Subjects of Research and (d) American Association of Educational Research Code of Ethics.

D. DATA SECURITY: The individual conducting the survey is responsible for managing the obtained survey data. Survey results will only be presented in aggregate form and released data will not contain any identifiable respondent information. When presenting survey results, survey administrators are responsible for ensuring the confidentiality of respondents. Additionally, by accepting the authorization to administer the survey, individuals understand and acknowledge that they have an obligation to use the data compiled responsibly, ensuring that data is not redistributed to parties inside or outside the SUU community, unless clearly detailed when requesting survey approval. No survey responses may be stored, hosted or collected on any technology platform that SUU does not maintain as part of its network.

E. INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD (IRB): IRB review will be required if the purposes of the survey fall into the realm of academic research. Academic research is defined as the systematic investigation including research development, testing and evaluation, designed to develop or contribute to generalizable knowledge (45 CFR 46102(f)). Applicable surveys should be submitted to OPIE prior to IRB submission. Survey approval through OPIE does not denote IRB approval. If you are unsure whether your survey requires IRB approval, please see SUU's IRB website.

F. ACCEPTABLE FORMS OF SURVEY ADMINISTRATION: Because email is not a secure medium to exchange confidential information, surveys are not to be sent via email attachment. Online surveys are to be created in the SUU-approved survey tool. SUU supports one university-wide survey tool with multiple user accounts. Survey data collected through the approved



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survey tool is encrypted and hosted in a secure data center. Mass emailing (greater than 300 students) is restricted to official SUU surveys.

G. USE OF INCENTIVES: Please contact the Office of Finance and Administration for incentive usage guidelines.

H. SURVEY PUBLICITY: Individuals administering large-scale surveys should contact the Office of Marketing Communication for guidance on publicizing their survey.

I. USE OF SURVEY RESULTS: It is the responsibility of the survey administrator to abide by all confidentiality regulations when sharing survey results. Survey results will only be used as outlined in the survey's informed consent. In an effort to avoid duplicative survey administrations, survey administrators shall provide OPIE with a copy of the final, aggregated survey results.

J. SURVEY SUPPORT: While University surveys receive priority, OPIE survey review and assistance is available on a first-come, first-serve basis. Please contact OPIE as soon as you know you will be needing survey assistance, but no later than 90 days prior to the anticipated survey administration date. Depending on OPIE workload, survey assistance may not always be readily available.

K. SURVEY SUBMISSION PROCESS: The Survey Submission Form is located on the OPIE website. Survey approval time is dependent on the suitability of the survey presented. All surveys will be reviewed using the OPIE Survey Approval Form, also located on the OPIE website. It is in the best interest of the survey administrator to review the OPIE Survey Approval Form prior to submitting their survey for approval to ensure all required information is provided at the time of submission. OPIE will communicate survey approval status within 10 business days of receipt.

V. SANCTIONS: Written notification to the responsible party's supervisor and President's Cabinet Representative will occur if personnel administer surveys that violate this policy. Policy violators will need clearance from their President's Cabinet Representative before they can submit future survey requests.