Header

Policy Name and Number: **Survey Administration** (**C4.4**)

Policy Developer(s): Office of Institutional Effectiveness

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Contact Person for Website: Director of Institutional Research

Body

POLICY

Any internal John Carroll University ("the University") community member or external researcher who wishes to survey students, alumni, or employees of the University must first obtain approval from the appropriate University authority.

PURPOSE

The purposes of the policy are as follows:

a. To establish a central clearinghouse for internal survey administration to minimize survey fatigue; reduce oversampling of students, employees, and alumni; reduce survey or question duplication; increase survey response rates; assure compliance with all applicable state and federal regulations as well as University policy; and improve survey quality.
b. To establish an approval protocol for external researchers interested in surveying the University's students, employees, or alumni.
c. To protect the rights, welfare, and privacy of people who participate in human subjects research, as defined by the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS).

SCOPE

This policy shall apply to all surveys sent to any faculty, staff, students or alumni, except as provided below in Exclusions.

PROCEDURES

A. All surveys conducted must comply with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA).
B. Faculty, staff or students must submit any draft survey to the Office of Institutional Effectiveness ("IE") with the following information:
    1. When the survey will be administered (please allow at least one week for review of surveys that do not require IRB approval)
    2. How long the survey will remain open
    3. How the results will be used

    4. Who is the target survey population (i.e., faculty, only sophomore and junior undergraduates, alumni, etc.)

C. The survey also must be submitted to the Institutional Review Board ("IRB") if it involves the collection of data from human subjects and meets the definition of [human subject](#) [research](#) or if the [Surveyor](#) plans to publish, present, or archive their research or otherwise share the results of the study, including uploading the results to an online or cloud-based platform. However, human subjects research that is not disseminated (e.g., it is conducted as part of coursework and is not shared outside of the classroom) is not subject to review by the IRB.

    1. If there is any question whether or not IRB approval is required, Surveyors must consult the IRB Administrator before beginning the research activity.

    2. Surveyors must submit their research project application to the IRB for approval prior to initiating the research. Retrospective IRB approval is not permitted.

D. IE will review the survey against the following questions before making a final decision on approval. The approval process for internal community members may be an iterative, collaborative process in which IE can help the surveyor reach their goals.

    1. Is the purpose of the survey clear, and is the purpose explained to the prospective participants?

    2. Is the appropriate audience being targeted with this survey?

    3. Is there existing data available that will allow the survey to be avoided?

    4. Can the data needs be combined with other planned surveys?

    5. What is the optimal timing to ensure the survey does not interfere with other University surveys?

    6. 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?

    7. Will the results be reported and stored in a manner to ensure the confidentiality of respondents?

    8. If the survey requests health information, educational records, or other sensitive data, will appropriate safeguards be utilized to protect the survey responses?

    9. Has the IRB approved the project, if required?

    10. Has the survey received the appropriate departmental approval (e.g., dean, department chair, vice president, Alumni Relations, etc.)

E. [Surveys](#) may require departmental level permission if the [Surveyor](#) would like to target specific populations of the University community. The need for departmental level permission will be determined by IE who will initiate the approval process. Departmental level approvers are encouraged to consult with Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging when questions arise regarding demographic questions. Departmental survey authorities include but are not limited to:

    i. Athletics - Athletic Director

    ii. Academics/Faculty - Provost

    iii. Alumni – VP for Advancement

    iv. Employees – AVP for Human Resources

    v. Students – VP for Student Affairs

F. Department level permission as described in E is not required for Faculty Council to survey the faculty or for Staff Council to survey staff employees; however, Student Government surveys of the student body will continue to receive permission from Student Engagement. In all cases, these surveys should still be approved by IE through the process described in B through D above.

G. In all instances, surveys from internal University community members should be administered through the University's Qualtrics subscription, unless a specific exception is granted by IE.

H. Internal University community members and/or external researchers must comply with all applicable laws, rules and regulations in connection with the use, storage, maintenance, transfer and/or other disposition of the collected data. Internal University community members and/or external researchers must comply with University information technology resources and sensitive data and data security policies.

I. If requested, IE will keep survey questions confidential prior to the survey's launch, and not distribute them or share them with others, unless necessary for departmental permission or on a need-to-know basis.

J. **Appeal:** Decisions about survey requests from external researchers are final. Internal community members may appeal to the Provost

K. **Sanctions**: Failure to get prior approval for survey administration will result in the survey being shut down until it can be evaluated or in other appropriate actions consistent with other applicable policies.

EXCLUSIONS

The following types of surveys/evaluations are not covered by this policy and its requirements:

A. Surveys/evaluations sent only to persons who have used the services of an office or attended a specific program/event/class AND for which the researcher already has the email contact AND for which no survey invitations are sent to non-users or non-participants AND which are not utilized for a research purpose. *Examples:* course evaluations, job candidate evaluations, event evaluations, service quality surveys, point of service surveys.

B. The Psych Pool, although anyone utilizing the psych pool still needs to follow the psych pool process through the IRB.

C. External surveys requesting aggregate data about the institution. Examples: *US News and World Report, Peterson's, Princeton Review*

D. Informal on-campus polls, such as those posted on bulletin boards

E. Institutional elections and voting

DEFINITIONS

A. **Survey**: For the purpose of this policy, a survey is a systematic investigation of the opinions or experiences of a group of people based on a series of questions presented either in writing (including electronically) or in person. However, see **Exclusions** for further clarification.

B. **Surveyor**: A University faculty, staff or student or external party wishing to survey students, alumni or employees of the University.
C. **Internal community members**: Anyone currently employed or enrolled at the University (i.e., faculty, staff, or students).
D. **External researchers**: Anyone not currently employed or enrolled at the University (e.g., alumni, doctoral students from other institutions conducting research, etc.).
E. **Research**: a systematic investigation, including research development, testing and evaluation, designed to develop or contribute to generalizable knowledge.
F. **Human subject research**: A human subject is a living individual about whom a researcher conducting research obtains (1) data through intervention or interaction with the individual, or (2) identifiable private information about a human subject, which includes a subject's opinion on a given topic. Intervention includes both physical procedures by which data are gathered and manipulations of the subject or the subject's environment that are performed for research purposes. Interaction includes communication or interpersonal contact between the researcher and subject. To be considered human subject research, the private information that is collected must be individually identifiable (i.e., the identity of the subject is or may readily be ascertained by the investigator or associated with the information through coding).
G. **Psych Pool**: A group of undergraduate students willing to participate in psychology department research.

CROSS REFERENCES

A. University Policies
   1. Sensitive Data and Security Policy
   2. Information Technology Resources Policy
   3. Research Policies

This policy will next be reviewed *five years* from the approval date/date of last review.