

University of Baltimore

III-3.2 Policy on Institutional Surveys

Approved by President Kurt L. Schmoke on 5/3/2018

Last Reviewed: 11/16/2020

I. Purpose

Surveys are a useful method of collecting data from members of the University of Baltimore (“UB” or “University”) community, including students, alumni, faculty and staff (“University Community”), in support of evidence-based decision making. Data collected as part of a survey is a University asset that must be handled and stored securely. The University Community is increasingly asked to participate in survey activities, and it is appropriate to ensure that survey activities are prioritized and that the resulting data is leveraged in a timely manner. The University acknowledges the need for collecting survey information from various University audiences and establishes an Institutional Survey Board (“ISB”) to require the University community to follow a process for the administration and review of certain types of institutional surveys.

The University seeks to:

- protect the University Community members’ privacy;
- monitor survey frequency to avoid survey fatigue;
- ensure consistency in data collection where appropriate;
- pursue better use of existing University data, thus avoiding survey duplication;
- protect data collection and usage;
- ensure compliance with the institutional data management policy.

The ISB will not infringe upon the purpose or responsibilities of the Institutional Review Board (“IRB”). All surveys of the university community approved by the ISB are still required to be reviewed by the IRB. Both the ISB and IRB will make appropriate and reasonable efforts to assure timely responses to survey requests.

II. Definitions

“University Community” means all students, alumni, faculty and staff of the University of Baltimore.

“Institutional Review Board” is an institution's committee with the responsibility to review that institution's research projects involving human subjects, primarily to assure the protection of the safety, rights and welfare of the human subjects.

“Survey” means the gathering of information through questionnaires or interviews to make inferences about a population, program or activity.

“Institutional Survey” is a survey conducted with members of the University Community.

III. Oversight of Institutional Surveys

The University establishes an ISB that will oversee the review and approval process for Institutional Survey activity, inviting subject matter experts to participate in the review of Institutional Surveys submitted for approval, as needed or as appropriate. The ISB will develop, maintain and publish an annual Institutional

Survey plan and will be responsible for enforcing this Policy, and recommending updates, as needed or appropriate. The overall goal of the ISB is to promote survey efficiency, prevent survey fatigue of populations and to look for opportunities for consolidation.

The membership of the ISB will consist of the following:

- Vice Provost, Chair
- Assistant Provost for Institutional Research
- AVP of Human Resources
- Dean of Students
- Chair of the IRB, or designee
- Provost's staff representative to the IRB

The Provost's staff representative to the IRB fulfills a review and triage function for the IRB. In an effort to make the ISB review process as efficient and effective as possible, this same person will staff the review and triage function for the ISB.

IV. Policy Applicability

A. This Policy applies to Institutional Surveys that are administered or requested by members of the University Community; as set forth by this Policy, such Surveys will require prior approval by the Institutional Survey Board, pursuant to the standards set forth in this Policy, before being administered to some or all members of the University Community. Examples of such Institutional Surveys include:

- National Surveys offered through professional organizations that seek stakeholders' perceptions and attitudes.
- Internally developed Surveys that ask for perceptions and attitudes, opinions and perspectives.
- Program and activity-level Surveys asking for opinions about programs and services.
- National Surveys asking attitudes, opinions, and perspectives.

B. This Policy on Institutional Surveys will govern all applicable Surveys that are not mandated by law or governing state agencies such as the Maryland Higher Education Commission (MHEC) and the University System of Maryland (USM); the ISB is required to manage the accommodation of such mandated Surveys.

C. Exceptions to Policy Applicability

The following Surveys are not subject to this Policy and do not require prior approval before administration:

- University-sponsored Surveys to an external audience;
- Surveys asking for feedback from clients at the point of service (e.g., after an Auxiliary Enterprises function or program);
- Course evaluation forms;
- Surveys developed to be internal to a unit or program;
- Surveys used to collect information for logistical purposes (e.g. scheduling polls, sign-ups);
or
- Surveys done as part of a research project required for course work.

V. Survey Request, Submission and Approval

- A. Request: Institutional Surveys covered by this Policy must be submitted to a request and approval process overseen by the ISB. The ISB will publish a review and approval schedule with at least eight (8) submission opportunities during the calendar year; these will be aligned to the meeting schedules of the IRB and ISB. Units are encouraged to submit planned surveys at the beginning of each semester to support the ISB in its strategic decision making about institutional survey activities.
- B. Submission: Institutional Surveys must be registered via a survey request form and submitted for review to the ISB. The procedures for submitting a Survey for ISB approval will be published on the University website.

A submitted survey will be reviewed by the ISB based on the following criteria:

- a. The submitter has done a thorough review of existing Surveys looking for opportunities to augment existing Surveys instead of conducting a new one
 - b. Whether the purpose of the Survey is clear and explained to the prospective participants
 - c. Whether the Survey will provide information useful for planning or improving services
 - d. Whether the Survey is well-designed, of an appropriate length and follows sound Survey methods and practices such as the best practices defined by the American Association for Public Opinion Research
 - e. Whether the target population has been defined
 - f. Whether actions are being taken to ensure the confidentiality of the responses, if appropriate
 - g. Whether the timeline for conducting the Survey is optimal or conflicting with another Survey
 - h. Whether there is a plan for use of the Survey results
 - i. Whether the findings will be disseminated to appropriate University audiences
 - j. Whether the Survey information will be secured and access decisions have been determined
 - k. Whether the IRB approved the project, if required.
- C. Approval: The ISB will notify a requester within 45 days whether a Survey is approved for administration and distribution; submissions requiring a shorter review period will be considered upon request. The ISB may refer a Survey to the IRB for further review and approval if it believes IRB review is required. All surveys approved by the ISB will still be submitted to the IRB for review. Once an approved Survey has been administered, the Office of Institutional Research (“OIR”) will be provided a final copy of the completed Survey data and results with data de-identified as appropriate. OIR will be responsible for maintaining and publishing an inventory of Survey activities at the University, not including the exceptions defined in section IV.C of this Policy.
- D. Appeals: Appeals of decisions of the ISB must be made in writing to the Provost within 15 business days of notification of the decision. The Provost shall provide the ISB with the appeal within 5 business days of receipt with a request that the ISB respond to the appeal within 5 business days, if it feels a response is necessary. The review of the appeal will be made based on the materials submitted to the ISB as part of its process, the written appeal, and any response of the ISB. The Provost, at their discretion, may reach out to either the submitter or the ISB for clarification, if necessary. The decision of the Provost will be communicated to the submitter and ISB generally within 15 business days of receipt of the response of the ISB or, if no response is provided, then within 20 business days of the receipt of the appeal.

VI. Collecting and Storing Data

Survey administrators must store data securely and use data only for the designated and intended purposes in compliance with the Institutional Data Management Policy (UB III-3.1). Survey administrators must agree to adhere to University policies for handling data. To ensure data recoverability and confidentiality, data should only be stored on computer resources approved by the Chief Information Officer, and specifically not on individual computers or devices. This data must not be stored on computers or servers outside the University except with the express approval of the Chief Information Officer. This data should not be stored on personally owned devices. Additionally, a Survey may not be used to collect personally identifiable information (PII) without the express approval of the Chief Information Officer.