



Policies and Procedures INFORMATION MANAGEMENT & TECHNOLOGY

Survey Policy

1. PREAMBLE:

The University of Lethbridge will coordinate surveys on campus in order to ensure meaningful and reliable results.

University applicants, students, faculty, staff, former students, and alumni are increasingly being asked to participate in surveys to gather data for administrative, planning, and reporting purposes. This increasing need for surveys is a result of the growing desire, internally and externally, to understand student and/or employee experiences and to measure outcomes. Surveys need to be well designed and administered in an efficient manner. This includes ensuring that surveys are timed to avoid survey fatigue by not overburdening a target population. Further, surveys that are not well coordinated may represent an inefficient use of University resources. All of these factors mean that survey coordination is essential (see section 3 below for survey definition).

2. PURPOSE:

The purpose of this policy is to coordinate University surveys and to maximize their benefits by:

- Avoiding the collection of duplicate information;
- Minimizing survey fatigue;
- Maximizing participation rates;
- Protecting the privacy of survey participants;
- Promoting the dissemination of survey results;
- Ensuring good survey methodology and design; and
- Ensuring those who undertake survey research are aware of the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (FOIP Act), Tri-Council Policy Statement on Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans, Human Subject Research Committee (HSRC) approvals, and University policies related to confidentiality.

AUTHORITY:	RESPONSIBILITY:	EFFECTIVE DATE:	RELATED POLICIES:
Board of Governors	Provost and Vice-President (Academic)	October 11, 2012	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Confidentiality of Student Records• Human Subject Research Policy• Records Management Policy

3. **DEFINITION**

Survey: a tool that collects information from any broad sampling or census of a population to systematically collect, analyze, and summarize data.

4. **SCOPE:**

If there is any uncertainty as to whether a survey falls under this policy, Institutional Analysis should be contacted for guidance. In the event that a survey simultaneously falls under sections 4.1 and 4.2, the survey is deemed to be covered by this policy and will require review by the Survey Management Committee (see sections 5 and 6 below).

4.1 Surveys covered by this policy

This policy applies to any broad sampling or census of a population at the University (including applicants, former students, and alumni) addressing the internal operations of the University or topic directly related to the internal operations of the University. A survey may be addressed to any part of the University community. This policy also applies to surveys managed by outside agencies but addressed to campus groups.

Examples of surveys covered by this policy are:

- Surveys that address all faculty, staff, and/or students within the university;
- Surveys that are aimed at a broad subset of the population (e.g. first-year student population); or
- Surveys covering a variety of topics (e.g. use and satisfaction with various university services).

4.2 Surveys not covered by this policy

Surveys of a small scale and/or focused intent are not covered by this policy. Such surveys may include:

- Part of assigned coursework or degree requirements;
- Focus groups;
- Evaluation of a specific program or service by the Faculty or unit offering the program or service for the purpose of quality assurance review;
- Evaluation of services offered on Calgary and Edmonton campus by administrators of those campuses;
- Evaluation of an event by participants or feedback from customers/users of a service, when it is conducted by those providing the event or service;
- Teaching evaluation forms;
- Surveys by the Executive of an employee group (e.g. AUPE, APO, Exempt, or ULFA) of its members; or
- Survey pilots or pre-tests that are used to evaluate whether the survey questions are measuring the construct that was intended.

5. SURVEY MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE:**5.1 Membership on the Survey Management Committee**

The management of University surveys is the responsibility of the Survey Management Committee.

The Committee will be made up of:

- Vice-Provost and Associate Vice-President (Academic), or designate
- Associate Vice-President (Students), or designate
- HSRC Chair, or designate
- Manager, Institutional Analysis, or designate
- Representative, Students' Union
- Representative, Graduate Students' Association

Resource Persons:

- FOIP Coordinator, or designate
- Blended Learning Coordinator (CRDC), or designate
- Chief Information Officer (CIO), or designate
- Manager, Internal Communications, or designate

5.2 Responsibilities of the Survey Management Committee

The Survey Management Committee will convene as needed. Responsibilities of the Committee will include:

- Recommend policy and process improvements related to surveys.
- Receive and consider applications for permission to survey.
- Refer survey applicants, as required, to the FOIP Coordinator, Tri-Council Policy Statement on Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans, HSRC and/or University policies related to confidentiality.
- Maintain an account of the level of surveying imposed on different constituencies of campus.
- Assess the effectiveness of approved surveys once completed.

5.3 Quorum

Quorum for the Survey Management Committee will be four (4) members. If the Committee fails to meet quorum when an application is before it, the decision will be made by any two of the Vice-Provost and Associate Vice-President (Academic), the HSRC Chair, and the Manager of Institutional Analysis.

6. PROCESS AND PROCEDURES:

All surveys must be approved by the Survey Management Committee unless approved as an Existing Survey in the Appendix under this policy.

6.1 Consultation

Any person or group wishing to conduct a survey will consult with Institutional Analysis prior to application to consider:

- If there is other data available that would address the purpose of the survey;
- Whether the data collection could be combined with other planned surveys;
- Any approvals required by the HSRC;
- Any FOIP Act, Tri-Council Policy Statement on Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans or confidentiality policy issues; and
- The optimal timing of the survey to avoid interference with other University surveys and to minimize survey fatigue.

6.2 Application

If the person or group and Institutional Analysis determine an application is required, a written application will be made to the Survey Management Committee at least one (1) month prior to the requested survey release date.

The application will identify:

- The name of the group conducting or managing the survey;
- How the survey aligns with the University's Strategic Plan and priorities;
- The purpose of the survey (topic, objectives, issues to be addressed, etc.);
- The target population and intended sample size;
- What data will be collected;
- How the survey will be administered and the approach to be used;
- How survey participants will be approached (e.g. direct request, online notice);
- Planned timelines;
- Frequency of the survey (will it be a one-time survey or administered on a cycle?);
- The personal information to be collected and how this information will be used, disclosed, and protected; and
- How the data will be used, how the results will be communicated, and how the data will be retained.

In addition to the application in the prescribed form, the person or group must submit a final copy of the survey.

Institutional Analysis may consult with applicant(s) regarding possible changes to the proposed survey to ensure that the survey meets the requirements and intent of this policy. Any agreed upon changes will be submitted with the application to the Survey Management Committee for approval.

6.3 Decision

The Survey Management Committee will assess applications to conduct surveys based on the following criteria:

- Relevance to the University of Lethbridge Strategic Plan and priorities;
- Adherence and alignment with the FOIP Act, Tri-Council Policy Statement on Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans, HSRC approvals, and University policies related to confidentiality;
- Extent to which other surveys supply (or could supply) the required data;
- Existing survey burden on target group(s) within the University;
- Design of the survey including timing, scope, and mode of delivery; and
- Government and institutional reporting requirements.

The Committee may add conditions to an approval related to the timing of the survey, the size of sample, or the personal information to be collected.

Approval to proceed will be granted based on a majority (50% + 1) of Survey Management Committee members present. The groups conducting or managing the survey will be notified of the decision of the Committee within two (2) weeks of the application date. Where an application is denied, applicants will receive written feedback outlining the reason(s) for this decision.

Approval of a survey under this policy does not replace any requirements under any other policy of the University of Lethbridge or any policy or regulation of any organization (e.g. Tri-Council granting agency) or level of government related to the survey.

6.4 Expedited Review

Where a survey requires approval under this policy and from the HSRC, HSRC approval should be obtained first. This includes surveys being conducted for academic research purposes. Through its approval, HSRC will identify surveys which fall within the scope of this policy and thus need to be submitted to the Survey Management Committee for an expedited review.

Once approval has been given by the HSRC, the person or group conducting the survey will submit an application with a final copy of the survey, as approved by HSRC.

The Survey Management Committee will consider:

- Relevance to the University of Lethbridge Strategic Plan and priorities;
- Extent to which there are other sources for the required data;
- Existing survey burden on target group(s) within the University;
- Timing of the survey; and
- Government and institutional reporting requirements.

The Survey Management Committee will issue a decision in an expedited review within one (1) week of receipt of the complete application.

6.5 Appeal

A group may appeal a decision of the Survey Management Committee where the procedures outlined in this policy are not followed. A decision of the Survey Management Committee may not be appealed on substantive grounds.

The Provost and Vice-President (Academic) will issue a final binding decision on any appeals under this policy.

6.6 Reapplication

A person or group whose application to conduct a survey is denied may not reapply to conduct the same survey unless the new application is substantively different from the denied application. This includes addressing any reasons for denial included in the original decision.

6.7 Non-Compliance

A group that conducts a survey covered by the policy without obtaining appropriate approval from the Survey Management Committee will be required to cease all survey collection and analysis and submit an application to the Survey Management Committee. Any data collected prior to ceasing survey collection and analysis cannot be used by the group. If the application is approved, the group may be required to wait a period of up to four (4) months (timing to be determined by the Survey Management Committee based on overall survey scheduling considerations) before resuming survey collection and analysis.

Appendix

EXISTING SURVEYS:

The following University surveys are considered to be approved:

- Canadian University Survey Consortium (CUSC)
- National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE)
- Alberta Enterprise and Advanced Education Graduate Outcomes Survey
- Statistics Canada's National Graduate Survey
- Canadian University Report – Globe and Mail
- University & College Applicant Study – Academica Group
- Acceptance Declined Survey – Academica Group
- LibQUAL+
- Information Technology User Satisfaction Survey
- Student Learning Environment Survey
- Facilities Customer Satisfaction Annual Review
- Employee Wellness Survey
- Student Perceptions of Online Testing
- People Plan Survey
- Healthy Minds Survey
- Healthy Bodies Survey
- National College Health Assessment
- Canadian Graduate and Professional Student Survey
- National Baccalaureate Graduate Outcomes Survey
- From Learning to Work

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