

# POLICY FOR CONDUCTING SURVEYS AT PEPPERDINE UNIVERSITY

With the regional accreditors and federal government requiring demonstration of evidence-based decision making, increasing numbers of Pepperdine University departments are surveying the University community. In response to this, the University has established a policy and procedure for conducting surveys within the University community. For the purpose of this document the “community” will be defined as **all students, alumni, staff, and faculty**. The need for a policy is threefold: to protect the community members’ privacy, to monitor survey frequency to avoid survey fatigue, and to ensure the safety of data collection and usage. When conducting surveys, data policies established by the information technology department must also be followed. These include, but are not limited to: [Information Classification and Protection Policy](#); [Records Management Policy](#); and [Standard for Granting Access Rights to Administrative Systems](#).

## **Policy**

Generally, the dean of the respective school where the survey is intended to be administered must be informed in advance. However, there are times when permission is not required. This is when a survey:

- a. is used to collect data strictly for internal uses and occurs in one’s own department and involves fewer than 100 people;
- b. asks for feedback from clients at the point of service (e.g., after a function or program);
- c. is a course evaluation form; or
- d. is used to collect information for administrative purposes (e.g. scheduling).

All requests to gather University data for **external use** must go through the [Institutional Review Board](#) (IRB), **as well as** the dean of the respective school. The dean will notify the Office of Institutional Effectiveness (OIE) of key survey dates, and OIE will keep a comprehensive list of approved surveys so the community will have access to the list and the anticipated delivery date of each survey.

## **IRB Approval**

This policy does not replace the necessary approval from the Human Subjects Committee/IRB. Depending on one’s school, one can apply through the Seaver College or the graduate school IRB representatives. The primary goal of the University IRB is to protect the welfare and dignity of human subjects. A secondary goal of the IRB is to assist investigators in conducting ethical research that complies with applicable regulations.

## **Collecting and Storing Data**

Survey administrators must store data securely and use data only for the designated and intended purposes. Survey administrators must agree to adhere to University policies for handling data. Data containing participant names, identifying information, e-mail addresses, or other confidential information must be saved in an encrypted format on computers or drives that belong to the University, and these data should be disposed of when the survey is completed. These data must not be stored on computers or servers outside the University.

## **What Is a Survey?**

For the purpose of this policy, a survey is defined as the gathering of information through questionnaires, interviews, or focus groups to make inferences about a population. This policy applies to surveys that are administered by Pepperdine personnel.

## **Types of Surveys**

There are many types of surveys used for data collection. Examples include:

1. National surveys offered through professional organizations that seek students’ perceptions and attitudes.
2. Internally developed “homegrown” surveys that ask for students’ perceptions and attitudes.
3. Program- and activity-level surveys asking for students’ opinions about programs.

4. Surveys conducted to evaluate or compare programs, practices, curricula, methods, or outcomes for use solely by the institution.
5. Institutional surveys asking staff and faculty to report their attitudes, opinions, and perspectives (e.g., climate surveys).

### ***Survey Request Form***

To register a survey, one must complete a survey request form (below) and e-mail it to the dean of the relevant school. Please allow one to two weeks for a response to one's request.

Survey approval from the dean will occur through a faculty/staff committee, similar to the IRB committee. Approval of a survey request will be based on the criteria established below in the "survey approval" section and the schedule of other planned University surveys.

### ***Survey Approval***

Survey requests will be reviewed based on the following criteria:

- a. Is the purpose of the survey clear, and is it explained to the prospective participants?
- b. Does the survey provide information useful for planning or improving services?
- c. 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?
- d. What is the target population? Will the entire population or a sample be surveyed?
- e. What actions are being taken to ensure the confidentiality of the responses?
- f. When will the survey be conducted? What is the optimal timing to ensure it does not interfere with other University surveys and activities?
- g. How will the results be used?
- h. Will the findings be disseminated to appropriate University audiences? Who will have access to the information and will it help them make better decisions as a result?
- i. Has the IRB approved the project, if required?
- j. Can the proposed survey be combined with other planned surveys?
- k. Does the survey follow the University's policy for collecting and managing data?

### ***Survey Calendar***

Many of the University's longitudinal surveys occur annually at the end of the spring term, so surveyors are encouraged to consider surveying during other times of the year.

The University will attempt to curtail student participation in surveys to two times per semester and request that the surveys take no more than 45 minutes to complete. For this to occur, applicants may be asked to survey samples of the population. Please see **Appendix A** for an example of the University survey calendar and consult the <http://services.pepperdine.edu/oie/resources/university-survey-calendar.aspx> for the most current version. After receiving approval, the dean's administrative staff will [e-mail OIE](#) with their approved survey schedule dates.

Those who administer surveys are expected to follow these guidelines closely, understanding their obligation to protect participants' confidentiality and to comply with all legal and professional obligations, as noted in the [University's Code of Ethics](#).

## PEPPERDINE UNIVERSITY SURVEY REQUEST FORM

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

SCHOOL/PROGRAM: \_\_\_\_\_

Please indicate whether you are:      FACULTY      STAFF      STUDENT

### APPLICATION CHECKLIST:

*The following items must be contained in your application. Please be sure to complete all components of this form before you submit it to the dean of your respective school.*

***Please note, this form should be submitted at least one-two weeks before the survey can be administered.***

1. Please describe the survey project, including the purpose and intended use of results.
2. Include the current draft of the survey and all invitation and cover letters.
3. Indicate the desired population to be surveyed and the intended method of survey administration (i.e., e-mail, mail, or another method).
4. Indicate your desired timeline for administering the survey: the proposed date(s) on which the survey will be administered and any pre- or post-mailings encouraging survey participation.
5. Describe any planned incentive program for respondents.
6. Include one of the following two items:
  - A. Evidence that the person administering the survey has received approval from the IRB. IRB committee approval is required if the findings from the survey are used for any purposes other than internal review, i.e., if findings from the survey will be used for research purposes. Research is defined by the federal government as, “a systematic investigation, including research development, testing, and evaluation, designed to develop or contribute to generalizable knowledge” (45 C.F.R. § 46.102(d) (2012)). Generally, the results of research are reported through outside publications or presented in a forum that includes individuals outside of the University.
  - B. A statement indicating that the person administering the survey will use survey findings only for internal purposes, i.e., the findings of the survey are not for research purposes, as defined above, and will not be presented or published in any public forum.

## APPENDIX A

### *Sample Pepperdine University Survey Calendar*

*Calendar draft: January 27, 2014*

| <b>2013-2014</b>  |  |   |
|---|--|---|
| <b>Fall</b>   | <b>Spring</b>  | <b>Summer</b>   |
| <b>MBA Lifecycle:</b><br>Exit survey for Graziadio students | <b>MBA Lifecycle:</b><br>Exit survey for Graziadio students                      | <b>MBA Lifecycle:</b><br>Exit survey for Graziadio students |
|   | <b>Graziadio/OIE Survey:</b><br>Graziadio students                               | <b>BCSSE:</b><br>Incoming Seaver freshmen                   |
|   | <b>NSSE:</b><br>Seaver freshmen  |   |
|   | <b>CSS:</b><br>Seaver seniors  |   |
|   | <b>HEDS Alumni Survey:</b><br>Graduate and undergraduate alumni (2 cohorts only) |   |
|   | <b>HERI Faculty Survey</b><br>All Pepperdine faculty                             |   |
|   | <b>Noel-Levitz:</b><br>SPP and GSEP students                                     |   |
|   | <b>LSSSE:</b><br>School of Law students  |   |
| <b>2014-2015</b>  |  |   |
| <b>Fall</b>   | <b>Spring</b>  | <b>Summer</b>   |
|   | <b>YFCY:</b><br>Seaver freshmen  | <b>TFS:</b><br>Incoming Seaver freshmen                     |
|   | <b>GMAC:</b><br>Graziadio students   |   |
|   | <b>Graziadio/OIE Survey:</b><br>Graziadio students                               |   |
|   | <b>HEDS Alumni Survey:</b><br>Graduate and undergraduate alumni (2 cohorts only) |   |
|   | <b>Noel-Levitz:</b><br>SPP and GSEP students                                     |   |
|   | <b>LSSSE:</b><br>School of Law students  |   |
|   | <b>NCHA:</b><br>Seaver students  |   |
|   | <b>SES or DLE: (tentative)</b><br>Seaver juniors                                 |   |