# Scripps College Survey Administration, Use, and Reporting Guidelines (Abbreviated)

**Overview**

If your survey will be part of research that may be reported outside of the university (e.g., to academic journals or professional associations) you must receive Scripps College Institutional Review Board approval (for more information, please visit http://www.scrippscollege.edu/academics/irb). For surveys that do not require IRB approval, below are a set of guidelines to ensure that your survey considers the protection of participants' privacy, the questionnaire quality, and the reliability and validity of data. Scripps may already have a survey developed and/or data collected that might answer your research question(s). Please contact the Office of Assessment and Institutional Research (assessir@scrippscollege.edu) to identify possible surveys or data that may be made available to you.

**Survey Administration**

1. Surveys can be administered in person (e.g., hard copy) or online (e.g., Survey Monkey, Qualtrics). The survey administrator should consider whether the benefits of the survey outweigh the potential risks to the participants.
2. Obtain appropriate **informed consent** to participate:
    a. Ensure participation is voluntary and has the ability to opt out at any time.
    b. Obtain minor participant's legal guardian's consent.
    c. Be mindful to avoid coercion or the appearance of coercion.
3. Provide the following in the introduction page:
    a. Who is conducting the survey (e.g., person or department)?
    b. Include purpose of the survey, benefits and risks of participation, topics covered, compensation (e.g. gift card), and an estimate of how long the survey may take.
    c. Indicate whether respondents' responses will be *anonymous*, *confidential*, or *identifiable* and how the data will be used.
        i. Anonymous surveys **do not** collect any identifying information (e.g., name, student ID, email address) about the participant and results are reported only in aggregate form.
        ii. Confidential surveys **do** collect identifying information and will link respondents to their responses, but the identifying information is protected and only reported in aggregate form. There are limits to confidentiality such as cases of child sexual abuse, illegal activity, or other situations when the survey administrator is a mandatory reporter.
        iii. Identifiable surveys **do** collect identifying information and will link respondents to their responses, and may identify respondent responses in report with participant consent.
    d. Contact information for the survey administrator in the event of questions or problems.

**Data Access, Collection, and Storage**

1. Survey administrators should be the only ones who have access to the "raw" survey data files and must protect the privacy of respondents by securely collecting and storing the data in locked cabinets (e.g. hard copy surveys) or password protected (e.g. online/electronic devices).

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2. If you share survey data beyond what the consent form of the survey indicated, the appropriate VP that oversees the population surveyed should be notified to obtain permission for the data release; all identifying information should be stripped from the data before it is released.

**Reporting Survey Data**

1. Unless individual survey respondents have given their consent, data reports **should not** disclose confidential or personally identifiable information about respondents.
2. Consider alternative reporting when you have a small number of responses for any particular question to protect the identity of survey respondents (e.g. Classics Major = 3, instead Humanities Major = 15). When there is not an alternative way to mask low response numbers, do not report results with fewer than five respondents and replace number with an asterisk (*) or hashtag (#).
3. When reporting out qualitative data, mask survey respondents' identity or someone else they may name to protect their reputation, employability, or safety.
4. Designate your report appropriately (e.g. confidential, internal use only).

**Some practical tips:**

1. Shorter is generally better.
2. Avoid administering survey during busy times: midterms, finals, or the end of school year.
3. Keep the language simple. Avoid using jargon. Avoid double-barreled questions (e.g. "The professor arrived for class well-prepared and on-time").
4. The strengths and weaknesses of open-ended and closed response options.
   a. Open-ended questions pose a question that allows for respondents to openly write out a response, which offers unfiltered remarks. However, they typically take much more time to process and summarize, comparisons across respondents are more difficult, and responses can provide more opportunities for respondents to identify themselves or others, jeopardizing privacy.
   b. Close-ended questions provide responses that respondents can select from that you deem appropriate. An example question asks, "Please indicate how helpful you found the workshop: Not at all Helpful, Somewhat Helpful, Helpful, Very Helpful". Close-ended questions are easier to summarize (e.g., 70% of respondents indicated that the workshop was Very Helpful) and can provide more opportunity for direct comparison (e.g., between one workshop to another or between the same workshop offered this year versus last year). However, close-ended questions can limit the information that respondents give you. When applicable, you may mitigate this issue by providing an "Other" comment box for respondents to elaborate their responses.
5. Remember to add a "thank you for participating" page and a statement that says "please click done to submit your responses"!

**For the complete guidelines, please visit https://www.scrippscollege.edu/assessir/.**