



1.0.008 Surveys

Effective date:	August 15, 2023
Last revision date:	October 21, 2025
Approvals:	Executive Educational Council (EEC)
Responsible office:	Academics
Policy contact:	Assistant Director of Institutional Effectiveness and Data Visualization

I. PURPOSE and SCOPE

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that survey activity on campus is well coordinated and well executed. The process aims to:

- Reduce survey fatigue and unnecessary survey proliferation.
- Coordinate the timing of the surveys to maximize their effectiveness.
- Promote good survey design, sampling, and administration that conforms to methodological best practices.
- Provide guidance to support ethical survey research at MSOE that respects our community members' time and attention.
- Prioritize surveys that benefit the broader interests and goals of the University as a whole.

This process is distinct from the [MSOE Institutional Review Board \(IRB\)](#), whose primary role (per Title 45, Part 46 of the Code of Federal Regulations) is to safeguard the rights and welfare of all human subjects recruited to participate in research studies conducted by MSOE faculty, staff, and students designed to contribute to generalizable knowledge. Academic research studies employing surveys of MSOE students, faculty, and staff must be reviewed and approved by the appropriate IRB.

This policy applies to students, faculty, staff members, and groups/committees hoping to collect survey data from the MSOE community for the MSOE community. MSOE students wishing to survey MSOE students, faculty, and/or staff must submit a request in collaboration with a sponsoring faculty member or advisor. Additionally, any research survey originating from outside MSOE that intends to recruit MSOE faculty, staff, or students as research participants through mass distribution or similar must be relayed to the IRB to verify whether further IRB oversight is required. For example, if a department chair or program director receives an email message from an external primary investigator (PI) requesting they distribute the email recruitment messaging to all students in their department or program, the recipient of that request should forward the entire message and all attachments to IRB@msoe.edu.

This policy does not apply to:

- Surveys conducted by university staff to conduct voting for departmental or university awards or recognition.

- Faculty administering surveys or polls within a single classroom, course, program, or department for the purpose of evaluating teaching effectiveness, instructional techniques, or related pedagogical practices for professional development and performance evaluation.
- Feedback or evaluation forms for events, workshops, seminars, or other programming if conducted among attendees/participants at the conclusion of or soon after the event, workshop, seminar, or programming.
- Other types of data collection efforts, including web-based questionnaires/polls function as registration/RSVPs for events or activities, web-based elections, and administrative data collection (e.g., requesting contact information).
- Surveys that are assigned to students as academic work for a course or degree requirements.
- Surveys that originate outside of MSOE seeking to recruit MSOE faculty, students or staff as research participants via mass distribution or similar through one point of contact. Such requests should be sent directly to MSOE IRB.

MSOE community members receiving requests for individual participation in surveys may decide for themselves whether to participate.

II. RELATED POLICIES

Qualtrics Use and Best Practices, Course Evaluations, Research with Human Participants

III. DEFINITIONS:

Survey: A multi-question instrument intended to be available for multiple days and filled out asynchronously with the purpose of data gathering and processing for aggregate information and analysis.

Human Subjects Research: Human subjects are defined (45 CFR 46.102(f)) as “a living individual about whom an investigator conducting research obtains data through intervention or interaction with the individual or the collection of identifiable private information.”

Poll: Synchronous instrument for gathering feedback that is not designed for statistical analysis.

IV. POLICY STATEMENT

MSOE provides faculty and staff with access to Qualtrics survey software to use for purposes of institutional effectiveness. The Assistant Director of Institutional Effectiveness, as the administrator to the system, reserves the right to view any surveys. Survey design and analysis must comply with corresponding FERPA and IRB regulations.

Anyone seeking to survey 100 or more MSOE community members must seek approval from the Office of Academics to administer the survey. Applicants are strongly encouraged to submit their applications at least one month in advance of the proposed survey launch

date. Please allow five business days to receive a response from the date of application submission. The online application form can be accessed by [clicking here](#).

- All surveys must be conducted using the Qualtrics software, which is the official survey tool for the University.
 - All conducted research must comply with the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA).
 - For approved institutional effectiveness survey proposals, unless approval is granted to distribute the survey via university-wide email lists, the Office of Academics will provide the list of email addresses required for the survey.
 - All surveys involving alumni populations must be vetted by the Office of University Advancement to ensure that the survey does not conflict with activities related to alumni outreach.
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V. PROCEDURE

A. Access:

1. To request a Qualtrics account, contact the Assistant Director of Institutional Effectiveness and Data Visualization. Account access will be provided along with some resources for working with Qualtrics.
2. Training on using Qualtrics is not mandatory, and users are responsible for designing and distributing their own surveys. However, the Office of Academics will provide guidance, feedback and resources as requested by the survey administrator.
3. Each survey requires approval from the Assistant Director of Institutional Effectiveness and Data Visualization or designee. At this stage the survey will be reviewed, and feedback may be provided regarding timing or survey design.

B. Approval:

The Office of Academics will review the survey requests based on the following primary criteria:

1. Is the purpose of the survey clear, and is it explained to the prospective participants?
 2. Is there other data available that will allow the survey to be avoided?
 3. Can the data needs be combined with other surveys planned?
 4. What is the optimal timing to ensure it does not interfere with other University surveys?
 5. 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?
 6. Will the results be reported and stored in a manner to ensure the confidentiality of respondents?
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7. Has the IRB approved the project, if required?
8. Has the survey been approved by the appropriate stakeholders involved (e.g., dean, department chair, VP, Alumni Relations, etc.)

C. Collecting and Storing Data

Survey administrators must store data securely and use data only for the designated and intended purposes. Data containing participant names, identifying information, email addresses or other confidential information must be saved in an encrypted format on computers or drives that belong to the university, and this data should be disposed of when the survey is completed. This data must not be stored on computers or servers outside the University.

D. Survey Approval Form

To have your survey approved, you must complete the survey approval form. The form should not take much time and will help improve the quality of surveys. Once submitted, your form will be reviewed, and you will be contacted by a member of the Office of Academics within five business days. Access the form [here](#).

E. Survey Calendar

1. Once approved, all surveys will be automatically added to the survey calendar (linked below). Please note that the survey calendar is populated by the survey title, survey description, and name of administrator from the survey approval form. The survey calendar can be accessed [here](#).
2. To prevent overlap with student course evaluations, no surveys will be approved for administration to current students from 12:00 a.m. on Monday of week 14 to 11:59 p.m. on Sunday of finals week.

F. Contact Information

The Office of Academics is available to assist individuals or groups in developing survey proposals for review and approval, as well as help with any questions related to the Qualtrics survey tool. Please contact Ian Dahlinghaus at dahlinghaus@msoe.edu or 414-277-7192 with any questions.

VI. EXCEPTIONS

Use of Qualtrics beyond institutional assessment must be approved by the Associate VP of Academic Success and Institutional Effectiveness.

VII. APPENDICES

None

VIII. ASSOCIATED LEGISLATION/REGULATIONS/ACCREDITATION STANDARD

Higher Learning Commission (HLC) Core Component 4.C

[FERPA](#)

[HIPAA](#)

45 CFR 46 Protection of Human Subjects

This section to be completed by the Records Manager:

Due date for review

Biennially or as needed

Public Location

MSOE Policy Library

Version History

- **2025, October 21:** Minor wording clarifications, added definition of human subject research, made changes to purpose and scope to clarify IRB role. Added stipulation for external surveys and individual participation, moved examples that are not covered by the policy to the purpose and scope.
- **2024, November 19:** Added blackout restriction during course evaluation periods
- **2023, September 19:** Added clarifying definitions, examples, and exceptions.
- **2023, August 15:** Initial approval

Records Manager

Assistant VP of Curriculum & Knowledge Management