



GUIDELINES FOR SURVEY ADMINISTRATION

Texas A&M University – San Antonio

THE IMPORTANCE OF SURVEYS

A survey is a systematic method of collecting data from Texas A&M University-San Antonio faculty, staff, students, or alumni. Surveys, when well-designed and properly administered, can provide meaningful information and insights to inform and guide future decisions. These guidelines establish a consistent procedure for managing surveys on campus, and allow TAMU-SA to use best practices to collect survey data. The benefits of these guidelines include improved use of new and existing data, the elimination of redundant survey efforts, better survey scheduling, improved survey instruments, and higher response rates.

RATIONALE FOR OVERSIGHT AND COORDINATION

Over the past several years there has been a significant increase in the number of surveys administered to TAMU-SA faculty, staff, and students. While web-based survey tools make it easier to conduct surveys, they also increase the potential for duplicative efforts and over-surveying, which can erode response rates and validity and create unnecessary survey burden. Additionally, TAMU-SA is often asked to disseminate surveys to our faculty, staff, and students on behalf of external groups. While these requests are important to those who make them, TAMU-SA has a responsibility to minimize over-surveying and give careful thought to the importance of, need for, and timing of the external survey requests.

PROCEDURES

Requests from External Institutions/Individuals to Distribute Surveys to Our Faculty, Staff, Students, or Alumni.

Faculty, staff, or students who receive requests from external institutions or individuals to distribute surveys to the School's faculty, staff, and students via our internal listservs must consult with the Office of the Provost prior to committing to the distribution of such requests. This allows the Office of the Provost time to discuss the request with affected individuals and determine the relative importance of distributing the external survey to our faculty, staff, and students. The Office of the Provost will then make a decision regarding whether to approve the request.

Faculty, Staff, and Students Interested in Conducting a Survey

Faculty, staff, and students at TAMU-SA who are interested in conducting a survey of faculty, staff, students, or alumni are encouraged to consult with the Office of the Provost prior to the development of a survey to determine whether data already exist that will meet your needs or whether similar efforts are ongoing or underway. As an initial point of reference, please contact the Assistant Vice President of Academic Affairs, Holly Verhasselt, at 210-784-1204 or holly.verhasselt@tamusa.tamus.edu.

Once You Are Ready to Move Forward with a Survey

1. To begin the process you must submit a brief online Survey Request Form to the Office of the Provost (*the form is available on the Office of the Provost website under Faculty Resources*). The online Survey Request Form will ask for information regarding purpose of the survey, intended population, timing of administration, and the survey questions.

All surveys developed by faculty, staff, or students for completion by faculty, staff, or students must be submitted to the Office of the Provost via the online Survey Request Form. The only exception is course evaluations, which are already coordinated centrally.

2. All survey requests will be reviewed and acted upon by the Office of the Provost within 1 week of date of receipt.

The Office of the Provost will work closely with the individuals or offices directly associated with the particular survey request to gather more information, ensure a team-based approach to decision-making, and ensure that efforts are well thought out and coordinated.

The Office of the Provost will take into consideration certain criteria and questions when reviewing survey requests and making recommendations. Following are examples of the criteria and questions that will be considered:

- *Purpose of survey* (Why is the survey being conducted?)
- *Importance and Impact* (Does the survey provide useful information for academic or institutional planning? Does the survey overburden respondents?)
- *Overlap with other surveys* (Do data already exist that will meet the needs of those interested in surveying a group? Are there ongoing efforts to collect similar data?)
- *Intended use of the data* (Who will have access to the information? Are plans in place to review the data and use it for programmatic improvement? Do you plan to disseminate findings publically and/or publish findings?)
- *Content and design of the survey questionnaire* (Is the survey well-designed? Is it of reasonable and appropriate length? Are the questions easily understood and interpreted?)
- *Population of interest* (Who is the target population? Will the entire population be surveyed, or a sample? If the former, is a sample an option that should be considered to lessen the burden on faculty, staff, or students? Does the survey overburden the target population?)
- *Timing* (When will the survey be administered? Does it overlap with other surveys of the same population? Is it conducted at a time during the academic year when survey recipients are likely to respond?)
- *Resources* (What resources will be needed to conduct the survey? Will data other than contact information be required?)
- *IRB Approval or Exemption* (Is IRB approval or exemption necessary?)

3. After seeking input into the process from others, the Office of the Provost will reach a decision regarding the survey request and will recommend that a survey:
 - Be administered as is (i.e., no revisions necessary)
 - Be reconsidered or revised accordingly to ensure it meets the above criteria
 - Have its timeline changed to prevent conflicts with other surveys that may be underway
 - Not be administered (with good reason provided)

4. When survey administration has been completed, all results and subsequent reports must be returned to the Academic Affairs Office for archiving. This will ensure that data is available to the campus community if other groups are interested in conducting the same research. It will also be available for other institutional effectiveness or accreditation uses.