

Survey Policy

Policy on Administration of Internal and External Surveys

I. PURPOSE

This policy recognizes that the demand for survey information should be balanced with the burden surveys impose on students, faculty, and staff. To achieve this, the Office of Institutional Effectiveness (OIE) oversees a review process that manages the number of surveys members of the Goucher community are invited to take.

This policy encourages coordinated efforts and best practices in survey research to produce quality data, create opportunities for cross-collaboration and information-sharing, and promote best practices in information security and privacy.

II. SCOPE

The process aims to reduce survey fatigue and unnecessary survey proliferation and prioritize surveys that benefit the broader interests and goals of the college as well as maximize their effectiveness. Further, it promotes good survey design, sampling, and administration that conforms to methodological best practices. Finally, it also aims to ensure that the survey complies with FERPA guidelines, meets IRB requirements, and the survey research is done ethically and respects our community.

Any survey that meets at least one of the following criteria must undergo the Goucher Survey Review Process

- A sample size of at least 50 students, alumni, faculty, and/or staff
- A random sampling of Goucher students, faculty, or staff populations
- Results are generalized to the broader Goucher population of students, faculty, or staff
- Targets specific subpopulations based on characteristics such as enrollment status, gender, ethnicity, etc.
- Used for institutional measures and improvement.

The following surveys are excluded from the Goucher Survey Review Process. However, the primary survey administrator should consult the Goucher survey calendar on the OIE webpage to avoid conflicts.

- Surveys sent by Alumnae/i Office
- Academic evaluative surveys conducted by faculty, staff, or students
- Surveys conducted by students in courses solely to fulfill the requirements of a course or degree program
- Participants' event evaluations or event planning
- Polls that involve voting
- Feedback collected at point-of-service
- Course evaluations

III. DEFINITIONS

Anonymous Surveys are ones in which the responses cannot be associated with individuals unless the respondent answers the survey questions in a way that uniquely identifies them.

Campus-wide Survey is a questionnaire consisting of one or more items where the target population includes the members of the Goucher community, or a subpopulation, or sample thereof, including students, faculty, staff, administrators, and/or alumni.

Confidential is where each survey respondent receives an individualized survey link that enables survey administrators to associate the response with the respondent.

Institutional Effectiveness is a continuous cycle for planning, assessing, analyzing and improving processes, programs, and services that support the college's mission and vision.

IRB is Goucher's Office of Institutional Review Board. The Board is responsible for protecting the rights and welfare of all human subjects who participate in research studies conducted by Goucher faculty, staff, and students.

ISC is Goucher's Institutional Survey Committee. Members consist of representatives from each division as well as faculty and students. This committee is responsible for reviewing the overall survey administration schedule and policy.

Primary Survey Administrator is the person submitting the online Survey Registration Form to initiate OIE's survey review process. This person should be the key contact person for the survey, such as the principal investigator of a research study, a faculty member supervising research by students, or the head of a department or unit.

IV. ADMINISTRATION OF INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL SURVEY POLICY

The Office of Institutional Effectiveness (OIE) serves as an official data source and a major vehicle for gathering and delivering evidence of institutional success and accountability for the college. The office provides analytical services to inform planning, decision-making, student retention and success, assessment, and accreditation at a variety of organizational levels while maintaining reporting requirements for government agencies and other external organizations.

OIE serves as Goucher's survey clearinghouse. Therefore, all surveys intended for distribution to any members or prospective members of the college community (such as applicants, students, faculty, staff, board members, and alumni) must be vetted by OIE using the procedures described below. This policy extends to surveys administered by external consultants or other third parties of the college community.

Please note that approval by OIE to administer a survey is not a substitute for a review by the [Institutional Review Board \(IRB\)](#). Surveys for academic research involving human subjects must receive IRB approval. OIE survey approval is separate from the human subject protection requirements of the IRB.

Staff or faculty who wish to conduct surveys of Goucher students, alumni, employees, or external partners must have their surveys registered and on the Survey Calendar. It is done by submitting a [Survey Request Form](#), which is reviewed by the OIE and/or Institutional Survey Committee (ISC) as appropriate.

Information collected from surveys conducted by administrative offices, faculty committees, and other college committees are Goucher College's property. Upon completion, the primary survey administrator must submit survey results, data, and any reports to the OIE to be archived. Sharing results enhances institutional knowledge, informs future assessment, and helps Goucher meet OIE reporting needs. In addition, completed survey results may be available to the Goucher community.

V. RESPONSIBILITIES NECESSARY TO ADMINISTER POLICY

Goucher's survey software allows the administration of anonymized surveys after the fact to target reminder messages only to non-respondents. In this case, administrators can see which set of the survey population did and did not respond to the survey, and the responses cannot be connected with individuals.

Note that the survey policy prohibits merging demographic or other identifiable data into anonymous surveys. If a survey is referred to as anonymous, it must be the case that the respondent explicitly provides all information.

Other demographic and institutional data may be merged with survey responses for analysis. Researchers ensure that data is stored securely. In the normal course of events, unit record data is not shared with anyone outside the project, and results are not reported in a way that could identify individual respondents. The college, in extraordinary circumstances, may identify, use, and disclose the source of survey responses if it determines in good faith that it is necessary to comply with legal obligations or protect the legal rights, safety, or security of the college or members of the college community.

VI. RESPONSIBLE OFFICE

The office responsible for administering this policy is the [Office of Institutional Effectiveness](#).

VII. HISTORY

Adopted: November 2022