

Utah Tech University Policy

125: Email Recruitment of Survey Participants



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I. Purpose

1.1 This policy provides that Utah Tech University (“the University”)’s Office of Institutional Effectiveness (OIE) is the University’s central clearinghouse for participant recruitment of emailed Surveys to ensure more intentional and distributed sampling of the University Community. It also includes provisions protecting the confidentiality of Survey respondents.

1.1.1 Surveys are important, cost-effective tools for collecting information to help maintain and assure the University’s educational quality, enhance institutional effectiveness, improve Student, Faculty and Staff satisfaction, inform University stakeholders, and contribute to general knowledge. When the same populations are surveyed repeatedly, response rates decline and the accuracy of Survey results become questionable. Intentional recruitment of selected University populations reduces the number of Surveys distributed to the same individuals, resulting in improved response rates, effectiveness of each Survey, and more effective use of available resources.

II. Scope

2.1 This policy applies to any Survey administered by a Surveyor who recruits Survey participants via email as part of their administrative duties, research projects, or as part of a thesis, capstone, or class assignment. A Survey originated by a Surveyor external to the University who wishes to recruit University Participants via email is also subject to the conditions of this policy.

- 2.2 This policy does not change the oversight of human subjects of research required by the Institutional Review Board (IRB). See Policy 607 for the process to obtain IRB approval or exemption for a Survey and for information on mandated training for all human subjects' researchers.
 - 2.2.1 If IRB approval is required, the IRB approval letter must be attached to the OIE Survey request form. The requested Email sample will not be provided until the IRB process is completed.
- 2.3 This policy excludes the following types of Email Recruitment for Survey Participants:
 - 2.3.1 Surveys sent by voluntary associations to their own members; for example, a registered student organization/club may poll its own members; this includes internal and external associations;
 - 2.3.2 Surveys sent out to all members of a voluntary email list;
 - 2.3.3 Student evaluations of course instruction;
 - 2.3.4 Institutional Surveys coordinated through the OIE (e.g., Great Colleges to Work For, or the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE), or Institutional Surveys mandated by the Utah Board of Higher Education (UBHE) and coordinated through the OIE (e.g., Healthy Minds Survey);
 - 2.3.5 Faculty-driven course Surveys designed to assess teaching and learning;
 - 2.3.6 Feedback or evaluation Surveys conducted immediately following an event or point of service (e.g., following a workshop conducted by the Center for Teaching and Learning or following the Undergraduate Research Symposium);
 - 2.3.7 Feedback Surveys regarding enrollment activity, enrollment status, and graduation;
 - 2.3.8 Surveys that are part of Faculty-assigned coursework that does not extend out of the course or surveys less than 100 individuals;
 - 2.3.9 Surveys given to others that are not University Community Members; and
 - 2.3.10 Surveys of employee performance (e.g., performance evaluations as outlined in policy, evaluation Surveys of supervisors, etc.).

- 2.4 If the Survey does not clearly meet the exceptions listed under Section 2.3, the Surveyor must contact the OIE to determine if it falls within the stated exception.

III. Definitions

- 3.1 **Email Recruitment:** Sending Emails to individuals who might participate in a Survey.
- 3.2 **Faculty:** Any person hired by the University to teach, conduct scholarship or creative or innovative activity, provide academic-related service, or any combination of those assignments, or who is otherwise considered by the University to be a member of its faculty, including full and part-time instructors at all levels.
- 3.3 **Prospective Student:** A Student seeking a certificate or degree, who has completed all admission application steps under University Policy 501, and who has been accepted for admission based on the University's current admissions policy.
- 3.4 **Staff:** For purposes of this policy, includes all Executive Staff, Exempt Staff, Non-exempt Staff, and Part-Time Staff as defined by Policy 301, and Part-Time Employees covered under Policy 310.
- 3.5 **Student:** An individual enrolled in a class at the University.
- 3.6 **Survey:** A research tool (e.g., questionnaire, request for feedback) that includes at least one open-ended or close-ended question and employs an oral or written method for answering the question(s) to gain specific information about either a particular group or a representative sample of a particular group.
- 3.7 **Surveyor:** A University Community Member or an external group/entity administering a Survey to a University Community Member as part of the Surveyor's administrative duties, a research/innovative/creative project, or a thesis, capstone, or course assignment.
- 3.8 **Survey Proposal:** An OIE form completed by a Surveyor for review and approval by the OIE following the procedures outlined in Section VI.
- 3.9 **University Community Member:** A Student, Prospective Student, Faculty, or Staff of the University.

IV. Policy

- 4.1 Requirement for submission of a Survey Proposal to OIE: Each Surveyor seeking to recruit for a Survey via email to a University Community Member must follow the procedures outlined in Section VI, unless the Survey is excluded under Section 2.3.
- 4.2 Monitoring: For transparency and to avoid duplication of effort, the OIE will publish online a record of approved Surveys using Email Recruitment, which shall include the Surveyor, the purpose of each Survey, the targeted recruitment sample, and the Survey dates. Any exceptions made to this policy will also be noted. The OIE and Surveyor will mutually determine when the information will be listed in the online record of approved Surveys.
- 4.3 Exceptions: Based on good cause, an exception to a provision of this policy may be granted by the OIE Director or designee.
- 4.4 Sampling vs. “full population” Surveys: Rarely does a Survey require distribution to a full population to obtain valid results. Examples of a full population include all Students, all juniors, all Faculty members, all academic professionals in one college, or all female Staff employees. Surveys should be distributed to a representative sample of the desired population using the sampling strategy selected by the Surveyor in alignment with their research question. The OIE will work with the Surveyor to create such samples for Surveys. OIE involvement in Surveys is limited to implementing sampling methodology and tracking respondents.
- 4.5 Restrictions on Recruitment Sample Selection
 - 4.5.1 A Student who has notified the Registrar that the Student wishes to suppress all directory information under the provisions of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) will not be included in a sample that is provided to or used by a Surveyor.
 - 4.5.2 Persons under the age of 18 will not be included in the Email Recruitment sample unless approved by the IRB and noted in the IRB approval letter.
- 4.6 Confidentiality
 - 4.6.1 Samples based on non-directory information: When a recruitment sample is drawn based on non-directory information for Students

(see FERPA) the identities of the persons sampled may not be provided to the Surveyor.

- 4.6.2 Ensuring the confidentiality of Survey respondents: A Surveyor must ensure the confidentiality of Survey respondents. When a Surveyor indicates that responses will be confidential (e.g. by aggregating responses), a respondent's written comments may be used for reporting purposes if measures are taken to keep the respondent confidential to the greatest extent possible. In addition, the Surveyor must ensure that all records are adequately secured, and access is limited to a small number of persons who understand the confidentiality requirements.
- 4.6.3 Anonymity: An anonymous Survey requires that the Surveyor have no way to link the respondent with the Survey response. Security logs maintained by most modern computers make it almost impossible to guarantee anonymity. Unless extraordinary measures are taken to eliminate electronic traces, a Surveyor should not promise anonymity.
- 4.7 Other use of Survey samples or lists: Lists of emails or other contact information provided to Surveyors by the OIE may be used only for the one OIE-approved Survey unless a follow-up Survey is approved by the IRB or OIE, or if the respondent agrees to be contacted again. Any other use is strictly forbidden. Email lists may not be shared, and the Email lists must be destroyed by the Surveyor within one month of the ending date listed on the Survey Request Form.
- 4.8 Timing of Survey: A Surveyor should avoid surveying groups before or during final exam week, and during times when other key Surveys are being administered (e.g., during Student Surveys of courses). Surveys may be denied by the OIE based on conflicts with other Surveys or other key dates as described above.
- 4.9 Use of external contractor or service to collect Survey responses
 - 4.9.1 Participation in Surveys managed by an external contractor: With IRB approval and within the requirements of this policy, a University department, division or administrator may collaborate with an external contractor to administer a Survey to individual University Students, Faculty members, or Staff. No non-directory information may be provided to the external agency.

4.9.2 Use of external web survey service: University Faculty, Staff, and Students should exercise caution when considering the use of a non-University website to design and administer a Survey and use University-licensed software as noted below.

4.9.2.1 Student Surveyors are strongly encouraged to use the University's licensed software, for which OIE holds a University-wide license.

4.9.2.2 Faculty and Staff Surveyors are required to use the University's licensed software for which OIE holds a University-wide license.

V. References

5.1 Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) Website:
<https://registration.utahtech.edu/ferpa/>

5.2 Institutional Effectiveness Website: <https://ir.utahtech.edu/>

5.3 Institutional Review Board (IRB) Website:
<https://academics.utahtech.edu/irb/>

5.4 University Policy 120: Institutional Data Governance

5.5 University Policy 301: Personnel Definitions and Classifications

5.6 University Policy 310: Part-time Employment

5.7 University Policy 501: Undergraduate Admissions to the University

5.8 University Policy 607: Institutional Review Board (IRB)

5.9 University Policy 631: Faculty Categories

VI. Procedures

6.1 Submission of Survey Proposal for Approval: Each Surveyor seeking to obtain an Email Recruitment sample for a Survey to a University Community Member must submit a Survey Request Form to the OIE on the Surveys Website at least fifteen (15) University Business Days prior to when the Surveyor seeks to recruit for the Survey.

6.2 As part of the review process, the OIE will review each University Survey Proposal to ensure University Community Members are not asked to respond to more than three (3) Surveys per semester.

- 6.3 Within seven (7) University Business Days of the Surveyor's submission of the Survey Proposal, the OIE will notify the Surveyor of the approval or denial of the Survey Proposal. If the Survey Proposal is approved, OIE will provide the recruitment sample within twelve (12) University business days of the Survey Proposal submission.
- 6.4 Appeal of Survey Proposal Denial: A Surveyor may appeal the OIE's decision to deny approval of the Surveyor's Survey Proposal to the Institutional Data Governance Committee (IDGC) by emailing the chair of IDGC as noted on the Data Governance Website (see Policy 120 for more information about the IDGC):
- 6.4.1 A Surveyor seeking to appeal the OIE's decision must submit a written statement of appeal outlining areas of concern and information that may have been overlooked by OIE, at least five (5) University Business Days prior to when the Surveyor seeks to recruit for the Survey and at least three (3) University Business Days prior to when the IDGC has their next meeting as shown on the Data Governance website.
- 6.4.2 IDGC will review the statement of appeal and determine by a majority vote whether to uphold or overturn the OIE's decision. Within three (3) University Business Days of the Surveyor's appeal being reviewed by the IDGC, the IDGC chair will notify the Surveyor in writing of its decision to uphold or overturn the OIE's denial of the Survey Proposal.
- 6.4.3 If the IDGC overturns the OIE's denial of a Survey Proposal, the OIE will provide the recruitment sample to the Surveyor within twelve (12) University business days of the IDGC's decision.

VII. Addenda – N/A

Policy Owner: University President

Policy Steward: Executive Director of Institutional Effectiveness

History:

Approved 3/10/23

Revised 0/0/00