

Procedures for Administering Surveys to APU Populations

Prepared by the Office of Institutional Research and Assessment

Introduction

In an effort to ensure high standards for survey research and to protect the Azusa Pacific University (APU) population from over sampling, the following set of standards and procedures developed by the Office of Institutional Research and Assessment, and approved by the Office of the President, have been adopted. The Office of Institutional Research and Assessment (OIRA), within the Center for Teaching, Learning, and Assessment (CTLA), operates in tandem with the [Institutional Review Board](#) (IRB), ensuring the highest quality and standards of practice in survey research at APU by providing guidelines and support for those involved in survey research.

Most proposed survey research (web-based or paper) that involves a sample population from APU requires approval from OIRA and must conform to the following procedures. Exceptions to this requirement may include

- surveys generated through course work or small-scale student research projects,
- surveys intended for small (less than 50), isolated segments of the APU population or
- surveys designed to solicit feedback from faculty or students within a program or unit.

All other surveys wishing to solicit responses from representative samples across an APU group or groups should work with OIRA. If a survey request is approved through all formal channels (including IRB), the principal investigator will be provided with a sample from which to seek participants and an official OIRA approval statement to be included in all survey-related communication

Six Procedures for Survey Research

1. Proposal to the OIRA with initial review of survey (5-day turnaround)
2. Review by the IRB (If required)
3. Research documentation
4. Determine sample and schedule survey
5. Collect data
6. Analyze and report data

Procedures for Survey Research

The following six procedures have been designed to expedite the survey research process. If the research project is well designed and documentation is complete, the OIRA approval, sampling, and scheduling can take less than 5 days from the proposal date.

1. **Submit research proposal to OIRA prior to submitting to IRB:** OIRA contact information: Survey Coordinator, Reyna Guzman at 626-815-5798, rguzman@apu.edu.
 - a. Required proposal items (These items become part of the IRB application; therefore, the researcher may elect to submit the anticipated IRB application and supporting documentation to the OIRA in place of these proposal items.)
 - i. Purpose statement: A brief statement of purpose for the proposed research including research questions
 - ii. Approvals: Department chair/director, Dean, instructor, etc.
 - iii. Instrument: A copy of the survey
 - iv. Sampling plan: Population, sample size, rationale for inclusion or exclusion, and collection method
 - v. Research outcomes: A description of what will be done with the findings (e.g., published research, internal reporting, class assignment, thesis/dissertation, etc.)
 - vi. If a survey research proposal is sent to the IRB prior to the OIRA:
 1. If time permits, the IRB administrator will suggest that the principal investigator submit the proposal to the OIRA first.
 2. If time is short and the monthly IRB review of research proposals is imminent, the IRB administrator will forward the research proposal to the OIRA for a quick review of the instrument for quality.
 3. If the survey instrument will not require significant revision before receiving OIRA approval, the OIRA will immediately notify the IRB administrator so that the proposal may be reviewed by the IRB prior to being approved and scheduled by the OIRA.
 4. If the survey research is approved by the IRB, it must then be submitted to the OIRA for quality review and scheduling.
 - b. Within 5 days OIRA will provide (with feedback from a Survey Research Advisory Committee)
 - i. Feedback based on quality (well-constructed items) and benefit to APU
 - ii. Guidance on whether or not the project requires a review by the IRB¹
 - iii. Revision recommendations (if needed) prior to IRB review

¹ Surveys typically requiring IRB approval include dissertation and thesis research or research to be published. Surveys typically not requiring IRB approval include alumni surveys, program assessment surveys, satisfaction, and other feedback surveys. The responsibility of the IRB is to ensure that the proposed research adheres to the Federal Policy for the Protection of Human Subjects. See <http://www.hhs.gov/ohrp/> (Regulations 45 CFR 46). It is the responsibility of the SRAC to ensure that the proposed research is well designed and that the campus population is not over sampled.

2. **Submit proposal to the [Institutional Review Board \(IRB\)](#) (If required)**
3. **Provide additional documentation:** After the research is approved by the IRB, submit the following additional documentation to the OIRA:
 - a. Evidence of IRB approval (if applicable)
 - b. Revised instrument and sampling plan
 - c. Communication documents (e.g., a copy of the informed consent and any invitation letters/email messages to be used in communicating with survey participants)
4. **Discuss sample size and schedule survey:** Together with the Survey Coordinator, review the survey master calendar and discuss options for the data collection period.
 - a. Determine the size of the sample and the area of the APU campus population from which the sample will be drawn. (See sensitivity to over-sampling in the Priorities for High-Quality Survey Research document [[hyperlink](#)] for more information on sample size.)
 - b. A two or three week window will be scheduled in which to collect data
 - c. An OIRA approval statement will be provided and must be included in all survey-related communication (Example included in the Priorities for High-Quality Survey Research document [[hyperlink](#)])
5. **Collect data:**
 - a. The OIRA will facilitate data collection for program assessments, alumni surveys, department satisfaction, and other institutional feedback surveys. Other cases may involve third-party data collection services (e.g., the Cooperative Institutional Research Program [CIRP]).
 - b. The principal investigator is responsible for collecting data when the survey is for student research. OIRA data collection services for other types of research are considered on a case-by-case basis.
 - c. To protect the privacy of the APU population, the OIRA will not provide individual contact information to the researcher for data collection (under most circumstances). If the primary investigator does not have the contact information of those whom they wish to survey, the following are three ways in which the OIRA may assist with contacting the sample:
 - i. Sending an email to the sample that includes a hyperlink to the primary investigator's web-based data collection system, from which the raw data may be downloaded
 - ii. Sending an email to the sample that includes a hyperlink to the OIRA's web-based data collection system, from which the OIRA will download the raw data and send it to the researcher
 - iii. Assisting a third-party data collection system (e.g., CIRP, SSI, etc.) with contacting the sample under investigation on behalf of the primary investigator

6. Analyze and report data:

- a. Raw data from surveys facilitated by the OIRA will be made available to the primary investigator in accordance with the explicit or implied consent of the participants. For example, if the participants are informed that their responses will in no way be connected with their identity, then the data provided to the primary investigator will be stripped of all identifying information, such as name, email, IP address, etc.
- b. If an incentive in the form of a drawing is promised to the participant, the OIRA collects the participants contact information separately from the survey data. At the close of the survey, the OIRA selects the “winners” of any incentive drawings from the separately collected data and provides the primary investigator with the winner’s contact information.
- c. For program or departmental assessment surveys, the OIRA will typically provide analyses in the form of descriptive statistics. If possible or upon request, the OIRA may be able to provide more sophisticated inferential statistical analyses.