UC Policy Library

Student Community Online Survey Policy

Last Modified	September 2020
Review Date	September 2021
Approval Authority	Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic)
Contact Officer	Senior Research Analyst, Learning Evaluation & Academic Development – Office of the Deputy Vice Chancellor (Academic)

Introduction

This policy outlines the conditions under which members of the student community may receive requests to participate in online surveys, and the application processes and procedures for the scheduling of online surveys.

Definitions

Online Survey – a means of survey data collection using structured or semi-structured instruments undertaken online.

Qualtrics – external software provider contracted by the University to facilitate the design and delivery of online surveys.

Significant membership group

Includes **but is not limited to** the following examples:

- All students;

- Year groups of the Student Community, for example first year;

- All students in a demographic group (e.g., all women, or all Māori);

- All students within a programme (e.g., all engineering students);

- All students engaging a particular University service (e.g., accommodation, IT); and

- Where the intended distribution is greater than 200 individuals in total (e.g., 50 students in 4 courses).

Student community – individuals who have applied to enrol at the University; currently enrolled students; graduands and graduates.

Survey Administrator – any individual or group of people conducting an online survey for the purposes of, but not limited to, research, teaching, quality assurance, and process improvement and/or marketing.

Survey blackout period – window of time occurring twice a year when the University course and teaching surveys are running during which other surveys cannot run.

Survey Calendar – the list and schedule of University approved surveys.

UC Survey Unit – members of the Learning Evaluation & Academic Development team who are responsible for scheduling surveys, the collection of strategic institutional data, and maintaining the survey calendar.

University Community – for the purposes of this policy, "University Community" is defined as the set of all current student and staff members.

Policy Scope

This policy applies to online surveys that target significant membership groups of the student community. This includes, but is not limited to:

- Internal quality assurance surveys (e.g., surveys conducted for quality audit purposes, or by individual programmes, departments, schools, faculties and/or colleges in respect of ensuring continuous improvement in the quality of learning and teaching);

- Surveys conducted for educational research and academic development purposes, beyond the scope of a single class;

- Surveys where data is collected with the intention of publication;

- Surveys commissioned or sponsored by internal organisational units such as Student Services and Communications;

- Internally sponsored market research surveys (e.g., surveys conducted with students and/or prospective students in relation to consumer behaviour and intent);

- Internal management surveys of student or alumni attitudes and opinions (e.g., satisfaction surveys, climate surveys); and

- Ad hoc institutional research-instigated surveys.

This policy also applies to both internal survey administrators and external parties intending to conduct or request an online survey across a large cohort of the student community.

The following types of surveys are generally considered **outside the scope of this policy**:

- Standard course and teaching Surveys which are covered by the *Teaching and Course Surveys Policy, Procedures and Principles (PDF, 448KB).*

- Any survey conducted through an online forum utilising an online survey tool to gather the opinions of a current occurrence of a class of students for the sole purpose of

---

improving teaching and learning, so long as data is not collected for or used the purpose of publication.

Policy Statements

This policy supports

- the strategic goals of UC by protecting the supply of quality information,

- the protection against survey fatigue of particular groups,

- the minimisation of overlap in data collected,

- compliance with ethics guidelines and privacy laws, and

- security of survey data through the use of the University's Qualtrics licence software.

The University's licenced Qualtrics survey software **must** be used for all online survey dissemination and data collection. This is a requirement for all staff and student research and/or projects where surveying (outside the remit of data collection for the sole purpose of improving teaching and learning) of the University's student community occurs.

All online surveys whether conducted by or on behalf of the University, and whether they fall within the scope of this policy or not, must adhere to the legislated requirements and obligations relating to privacy, ethics and information and records management

Recruitment and survey dissemination

The contact details of members of the student community are categorised as "personal information" under New Zealand's privacy legislation (see *clause 3.1, Privacy Policy (PDF, 761KB)*.

Adherence to the following actions are required in order to reduce the likelihood of a breach occurring:

- Collection, storage, and use of personal information **must** be done so in accordance with the University's *Privacy Policy (PDF, 761KB) (see sections 1 and 2),* and guidance from the *Information and Records Management Team (University Information and Records Management website)*.

- Contact details of students **must not** be shared between staff members. Sharing contact details may amount to misuse of personal information (see *clause 4.7 Privacy Policy (PDF, 761KB))*.

- Staff may email surveys to students only if they are

  o currently enrolled within their own courses, and

  o surveys are only for the sole purpose of gaining feedback on the teaching and learning within the course.

For more information on Course and Teaching Surveys, see the *Teaching and Course Surveys Policy, Procedures and Principles (PDF, 448KB)*.

- Where the scope of a project includes collection of information outside the remit of the teaching and learning within a current occurrence of a course, appropriate ethics approval is required alongside survey approval from the Office of the Deputy Vice Chancellor (Academic) (DVC (A)).

- Staff **cannot** directly email the student community an invitation to participate in a research project (including participation in students' projects under a staff member's supervision) **without either**

    o **the consent from the Office of the DVC (A)**, or

    o **the student expressly consenting to be contacted about participating in research.**

- Each survey requires its own specific consent.

    Agreement to participate in one research project **does not** constitute agreement to be contacted about subsequent research projects, unless this consent is explicitly given by the participant.

If necessary and deemed appropriate, the University's Survey Unit will distribute an approved survey via email to members of the student community to maintain privacy.

Ethics

Online surveys undertaken for the purpose of academic research must have an ethics committee approval. Evidence of survey approval from the UC Survey Unit will need to be provided to the ethics committee upon application.

Approval from the *Human Ethics Committee (HEC) (University Human Ethics website)* or *Educational Research Human ethics Committee (ERHC) (University Human Ethics website)* may also be required as part of the approval process for specific types of surveys. While internal research may not require ethics approval, any research leading to publication may require an ethics application.

For further information on ethics approval requirements and processes refer to the following:

- *Human Ethics website (University Human Ethics website)*.

- *Human Ethics Policy – Research Involving Human Participants (PDF, 379KB)*.

Criteria for inclusion within the Survey Calendar

All projects that survey a significant membership group of the student community must be added to the Survey calendar.

All online surveys **must avoid** the survey blackout period. These can be found on the 2020 *Survey Calendar (University Qualtrics Survey Support website).*

Online surveys of all student populations (census style surveys) will only be considered in *very exceptional* circumstances, or where mandated by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic).

Any person seeking exemption to a condition must contact the *UC Survey Unit, Learning Evaluation & Academic Development*.

To assist you in determining whether the survey meets the criteria for inclusion, applicants must use *this tool (University Qualtrics Survey Support website).* Submissions will be reviewed by the UC Survey Unit. Use of this form alone however, does not immediately grant approval.

External Parties

Online surveys undertaken by an external party must be agreed to and commissioned by, or on behalf of, the University.

The Office of the DVC (A) strongly recommends that it be provided with the raw data collected by any external party as part of the agreement to survey the University's student community.

Surveys drawing on University contact information databases that are conducted on behalf of external parties including other universities; government departments or agencies; and other external individuals or entities such as the University of Canterbury Students' Association (UCSA), wishing to access members of the University community must have survey approval from the Office of the DVC (A).

Breach

This policy prevents the risk of breach of legislative obligations occurring by providing instruction on surveys. Non-compliance with this policy may result in a breach of legislative obligations such as those under the *Privacy Act 1993 (New Zealand Legislation website)*. Breaches of the *Privacy Act 1993 (New Zealand Legislation website)* carry penalties which can be severe and may have undesirable impacts on the University.

If the UC Survey Unit discovers a breach of this policy, the Information Records Management Team will immediately be informed and **disciplinary action may be taken by the University** against members of the University community who breach this policy. Non-compliance with this policy may also result in your Qualtrics account being suspended.

Related Documents and Information

Legislation

- [Privacy Act 1993 (New Zealand Legislation website)](#)
- [Public Records Act 2005 (New Zealand Legislation website)](#)

UC Policy Library

- [Animal Ethics Committee Code of Ethical Conduct (PDF, 146KB)](#)
- [Emails to Enrolled Students Policy and Guidelines (PDF, 420KB)](#)
- [Human Ethics Policy – Research Involving Human Participants (PDF, 379KB)](#)
- [Intellectual Property Policy (PDF, 502KB)](#)
- [Privacy Policy (PDF, 761KB)](#)
- [Teaching and Course Surveys Policy, Procedures and Principles (PDF, 448KB)](#)

UC Website and Intranet

- [Information and Records Management Team (University Information and Records Management website)](#).
- [Survey Calendar (University website)](#)
- [Qualtrics Survey Support (University Qualtrics Survey Support website)](#)

Document History and Version Control Table			
Version	**Action**	**Approval Authority**	**Action Date**
For document history and versioning prior to 2013 contact ucpolicy@canterbury.ac.nz			
1.00	Creation of original document and upload to UCPL	Chair, SMT	Jul 2013
1.01	Updated hyperlinks	Policy Unit	Nov 2013
2.00	Scheduled review by Contact Officer	Policy Unit	May 2015
2.01	AA updated from Chair, SMT to Vice-Chancellor.	Policy Unit	May 2015
2.02	Scheduled review date moved to June 2017 to align with regulations review.	DVC(A)	Jun 2016
3.00	Scheduled Review, major changes, policy re-write and name changed from *Survey Policy and Application Procedures for Online Student Surveys.*	AVC(A)	April 2019
3.01	Review date pushed out for 6 months, hyperlinks updated.	Policy Unit	Mar 2020
4.00	Scheduled review by Contact Officer, changes to substantive content, additional clarifications added.	DVC (A)	Sep 2020

This policy remains in force until it is updated.