

# Guidelines for Administering Online Surveys Involving Students, Faculty and Staff at Chapman University

---

## **RATIONALE/PURPOSE FOR GUIDELINES**

Over the past few years, there has been a significant increase in the number of online surveys administered across campus. While email addresses provide a convenient, low-cost way to inform the campus community about online surveys, care needs to be taken to ensure that students, faculty, and staff are not overwhelmed by the volume of requests and that proper use of Chapman University email addresses is being followed. Otherwise, students, faculty, and staff will become less willing to respond to any request for information, and survey response rates will continue to fall. Currently, student survey response rates for online institutional surveys have been averaging in the 20% range, which is less than optimal.

Given the importance of obtaining meaningful and reliable results, the Provost requested campus-wide coordination of and guidance for administering online surveys on campus. A Survey Policy Group, composed of faculty, staff, and administrators, formed to investigate this issue and develop a set of policies or guidelines to address these concerns. These guidelines were reviewed and approved by Senior Staff on February 5, 2013.

The Survey Guidelines are designed to assist Chapman University employees who need to gather survey responses from students, faculty, or staff as part of their unit's responsibilities. Chapman's guidelines for administering online surveys are intended to accomplish the following five goals:

- Improve survey response rates of all surveys.
- Reduce survey fatigue among the campus community.
- Avoid the duplication of efforts across campus.
- Protect the privacy of enrolled students.
- Encourage good practices in survey research.

## **SCOPE OF THE GUIDELINES**

A survey is defined as a paper or web-based/online instrument composed of multiple questions designed to elicit information from a respondent. The guidelines outline important steps that should be taken by Chapman University employees who plan to administer a web-based/online survey to enrolled students (undergraduate, graduate, law, or professional students at Chapman University), as well as staff and faculty. *These guidelines apply to all web-based/online administrative surveys that target 100 individuals or more at one time.* [Note: A combination of three types of populations, which pushes the sample size to over 100—e.g., 50 undergraduate, 40 graduate, 20 law—does not need to be scheduled on the calendar as long as

100 students or fewer are contacted from each group.] The only exceptions to the guidelines are:

- Surveys distributed to a faculty member's class(s).
- Forms that collect feedback or evaluation data from campus events.
- Teaching evaluations forms.

Following the guidelines in this document does not exempt faculty and staff from obtaining IRB approval when necessary. Likewise, obtaining IRB approval does not exempt faculty and staff from following the guidelines below if the research involves administering an online survey to a broad sampling of the population at Chapman University.

### **SURVEY COORDINATION**

A [Master Calendar of Survey Activity](#) is maintained by the Institutional Research and Decision Support (IRADS) Office and Chapman University employees will need to schedule survey projects on the master calendar when conducting surveys that meet the guidelines above. To help faculty and staff plan for their survey in advance and to avoid overlap between other administrative surveys during the academic year, the master calendar is publicly available to the Chapman University community via the IRADS SharePoint site.

### **SURVEY GUIDELINES**

#### ***Step 1 - Review Chapman's Institutional Review Board (IRB) Website***

Before getting started on a survey project, please review the information on the [IRB website](#) and determine if your survey research project will need IRB approval. If so, obtain IRB approval before moving forward with any plans to administer the survey. (Note: If you plan to publish your results or present the results of your survey at a national conference or anywhere outside of Chapman University, you will need IRB approval.)

Investigators wishing to conduct research with human research participants through Chapman University must complete the appropriate Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative (CITI) programs prior to submitting an application to the IRB. The CITI training modules provide research ethics education to the Chapman research community. You should complete the appropriate module: **Social & Behavioral Research**. Detailed instructions on how to register for CITI and how to complete the appropriate CITI training modules can be found here: [CITI Training Instructions](#). You must [register for the CITI Program](#) using Chapman University as your institutional affiliation. If you are currently a member of CITI through another institution, you must add Chapman as an additional organization.

#### ***Step 2 - Review Policies on Student Privacy and Proper Use of Chapman University Email Addresses***

If your survey involves students, please make sure you understand students' rights under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), as well as the proper use of Chapman University email addresses, before launching your survey. Chapman University email addresses are not be used for any purposes other than Chapman-related business.

- [FERPA](#): Privacy Rights
- [IS&T](#): Email Usage Guidelines

### ***Step 3 – Check Master Calendar of Survey Activity***

Check the [Master Calendar of Survey Activity](#) to see if there are any other surveys scheduled to be administered to the population you wish to survey during your preferred time. Overlap of surveys on the calendar is permissible, but efforts will be made by IRADS to avoid any overlap between similar populations. In the event of overlapping surveys, IRADS will contact all relevant parties to discuss possible solutions, such as combining surveys and/or moving survey administration dates.

### ***Step 4 – Request to Be Placed on the Master Calendar of Survey Activity***

Requests to be placed on the [Master Calendar of Survey Activity](#) will be made to IRADS using a [request form](#). The form will ask you to specify the exact date you wish to launch the survey and the dates of any follow-up reminder emails. Please submit this form 2-3 weeks prior to the commencement of data collection in order to ensure timely approval.

### ***Step 5 – Approval from IRADS***

After a survey request is submitted to IRADS, an approval notification about the survey's placement on the Master Calendar will be sent via email within two weeks. Data collection can then begin during the timeframe approved by IRADS.

### ***Step 6 – Familiarize Yourself with Good Practices in Survey Research***

The Institutional Research and Decision Support Office is available by appointment to offer assistance in constructing an effective survey instrument. If you wish to consult with someone in the IRADS office, please email [irads@chapman.edu](mailto:irads@chapman.edu). There are several resources that can help you execute a successful survey. For your convenience, a resource document titled, [Survey Research: Getting Started](#), can be found in the IRADS SharePoint site.

## **SURVEY TOOL**

Chapman University has a university-wide subscription with [Qualtrics](#), an online survey software tool for creating and deploying surveys and analyzing survey responses. It is free to Chapman University faculty, staff, and administrators for academic, administrative, and research-related purposes. If you plan to create a survey using Qualtrics, please review the [Qualtrics Proper Use Guidelines for Chapman University](#).

[Revised: April 2020, IRADS]