

ELECTRONIC SURVEY PROTOCOL
Union Institute & University
Effective February 1, 2008

In late 2007, Union Institute & University centralized use of electronic surveys within the Office for Institutional Research (OIR), which (1) provides support for developing surveys (paper or electronic) and (2) administers all e-survey projects using Zoomerang™ online survey service for which the university has contracted.

Paper Surveys

While the OIR will help, as requested, with development of paper surveys, the office does not have the staff to send out such surveys or to analyze or report on results. Accordingly, any department or program using a paper survey is responsible for coordinating the process.

Electronic Surveys

In 2007, after a task force evaluated a number of providers of electronic survey services, UI&U contracted with Zoomerang as the single provider of e-surveys for the university. All e-surveys must be coordinated through the Office of Institutional Research. The office will support the e-survey process from start to finish, from development of the survey instrument to reporting on results. This centralized survey development and administration structure ensures that:

- Surveys are written effectively to solicit information needed.
- Surveys are in compliance with Institutional Review Board policies with regard to research with human subjects.
- Surveys are disseminated and data gathered in an orderly fashion.
- Reports on survey results are maintained centrally in support of institutional effectiveness.

Question Formats / Response Types / Survey Mechanics:

The surveys are typically accessed via a link sent to potential respondents in an email. All e-surveys are anonymous, unless they include a question asking for respondent identification. The electronic survey services allow for a number of question/response formats.

- Mandatory questions (questions that must be answered before the respondent can proceed)
- Multiple-choice – responses may be selected by clicking a button or box, responses shown in a drop-down menu or as a list. (Specify whether only one response or multiple responses may be selected).
- Ranking – respondents rank items from lowest to highest.
- Scaled – responses may be selected based on a Likert or similar scale.
- True / False and Yes / No – responses may be selected by clicking a button or box.
- Open-ended / free-response – responses are keyed into a box: one-line or unlimited-response length. Note that survey responses cannot be filtered using open-ended questions.

In addition to specifying response types, determine which of the following might be used:

- Skip logic – skip logic moves respondents automatically to a later question depending on their response to a “target” question, eliminating the need to direct a respondent to “skip over” questions that do not apply. (Skip logic must be built into the survey design.)
- Filtering – filtering is ideal for surveys where multiple items are to be evaluated using a single survey, such as course evaluations. A survey where filtering will be used will begin with mandatory question that provides a drop-down menu showing the filtering items (such as course names). The filtering occurs in the analysis reporting process,

resulting in separate response reports for each course evaluated. Such surveys are typically used more than once by the same respondent.

Guidelines for Submitting Online Survey Requests

The table that follows details the process and protocol for online surveys. Note that access to the online survey services covered by this protocol are limited to university departments, academic programs, and institutional and program committees. These services are designed to support improvement of program quality and departmental service quality/effectiveness. Requests for survey support must come from an executive of the university, a dean, or director.

ONLINE SURVEY PROTOCOL	
Step 1: Submitting a Request for an Online Survey	
Lead Times	Request Content
New surveys: question/response wording developed, response types determined, survey recipients defined. 4 weeks prior to desired launch date	<p>The following items must be included in the survey request. Missing items may result in delays to the desired launch date.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The complete survey in Word format. 2. Notes about any desired response filtering¹ or skip logic questions. 3. A list of changes, if re-launching an earlier survey, sent via e-mail request referencing the original survey. 4. A brief description of the purpose/intended use of the survey. 5. A brief description of the intended survey recipients (e.g., 35 Ph.D. learners who will complete a residency on January 10). 6. A description of how the survey will be distributed—whether the invitation to participate will be sent from the requestor or from the OIR. 7. The time frame for the survey to remain open for response (e.g., 2 weeks, 3 weeks). 8. The type of data/reports provided to the requestor. Can include any or all the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Raw data (Excel) • Aggregated response report (Excel) • Simple printout of responses to open-ended questions (if applicable) • Distillation² of responses to open-ended questions
Existing surveys (administered previously by another online vendor or on paper). 3 weeks prior to desired launch date	
Re-launch of an earlier survey, with minor or no changes. 2 weeks prior to desired launch date	
NOTE: Projected survey launch dates may be extended when any of the following circumstances apply: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Survey is not in Word. • Survey is extremely long and/or complex. • The OIR has concerns about survey content and/or question format. • The requestor does not respond promptly in the survey review/approval process. 	

¹ See previous page for descriptions of skip logic and filtering.

² Distillation of responses involves OIR editing of write-in responses by paraphrasing/counting similar responses, separating multi-issue responses, and relocating responses to other survey questions.

ONLINE SURVEY PROTOCOL	
	• Other
Step 2: Developing and Reviewing the Survey	
Development	Review
The OIR enters survey questions / responses and contacts the requestor with any questions or concerns.	The OIR will provide a review draft to the requestor; typically, a printout of the survey sent as a scanned document.
The OIR may make recommendations for changes during the survey development process	The OIR will make changes based on the draft review.
Consider pilot testing the survey, in which case protocol steps 1-4 will apply. Analysis of pilot tests will focus on survey reliability/validity, not on actual responses.	The OIR will test launch the survey and provide the requestor with a link, allowing the requestor to access the survey for final review. (The test launch allows the requestor to take the survey before the official launch, testing functionality.)
The OIR will include in the survey introduction (or survey pilot test) all applicable informed consent disclosures. Participants must be informed when a survey is a pilot.	The OIR will make any additional changes requested by the requestor.
Requestor specifies how the survey is to be launched (see options in Step 3)	The OIR and requestor will agree on launch and respond by dates.
Step 3 Launching the Survey	
Action (Launching Options)	Documentation of Actions
Option 1. Invitation to participate from requestor: The requestor sends an advance email invitation to potential respondents that includes the link to the survey provided by the OIR. <u>The invitation must include a respond-by date!</u>	Requestor sends copy of email invitation to OIR.
Option 2. Notice of survey from requestor / invitation from OIR: The requestor sends a brief email notice to potential respondents, advising them of the pending invitation and encouraging their response. Notice should be sent 24-48 hours prior to official launch date). The OIR will send the invitation to participate with the link to the survey.	Requestor sends copy of email notice to OIR; OIR can use the email addresses in the notice to launch the survey.
Option 3. Invitation to participate sent by the OIR, without prior notice.	Requestor provides email addresses to the OIR. The OIR sends a copy of the email invitation to the requestor.
Step 4 Monitoring Survey Responses	
OIR	Requestor
OIR staff will, upon request, provide information	The requestor may extend the survey deadline

ONLINE SURVEY PROTOCOL	
about survey responses received.	when the response rate is low and/or send a reminder notice to survey recipients. (Reminder emails should always include the link to the survey.)
The OIR will close the survey no sooner than midnight Eastern time on the published deadline date. When a survey is closed, the OIR will send the requestor an email note and provide the number of responses received.	The requestor may elect to reopen the survey if the response rate is low, sending a second request to intended participants with a new deadline.
The OIR will not reopen a closed survey without the approval of the requestor.	
Step 5 Analyzing & Reporting—Dissemination and Records Retention	
Reporting	Dissemination of Reports
The OIR will provide reports to the requestor as indicated in the application. Raw data (Excel) 3 working days from close Automatic aggregated data (Excel). 3 working days from close Printout of open-ended comments (Excel or Word). 5 working days from close Distillation of open-ended comments (Word). 10-20 working days from close Other requested reports & reports not requested in initial application. Varies based on complexity	Requestors are responsible for distributing survey reports to all interested parties. Survey responses, raw data, and reports on results are the property of the university, not the survey requestor. Access will be determined by the OIR director, the Associate Provost for Assessment, the Provost, or the President. Survey responses, raw data, and reports will be maintained by the OIR for at least 3 years following the close of a survey.
NOTE 1. Report issue dates are targets, subject to prior OIR commitments and responsibilities	There should be limited access to responses to surveys designed to collect evaluative feedback on performance of specific faculty or staff.
NOTE 2: The OIR may remove information from survey responses that could potentially identify the participant or that could harm another individual.	