

CONDUCTING UNIVERSITY SURVEYS

POLICY STATEMENT

Advance approval must be obtained from the Survey Review Committee for all survey projects intending to contact 1,000 or more Northern Arizona University Community Members for the purpose of inviting survey participation. All such surveys must be conducted in accordance with the standards and requirements set forth in this policy. Institutional Review Board approval is also necessary prior to conducting human research projects. Both approvals may be sought concurrently. Tribal consultation is mandatory for surveys that target populations from a federally recognized Native American sovereign nation.

REASON FOR THIS POLICY

Standards for the administration of survey projects help to maximize survey productivity, minimize survey repetition and fatigue, and protect the privacy rights of survey participants.

ENTITIES AFFECTED BY THIS POLICY

- Any unit wishing to survey University Community Members or Native American tribal members
- Data Governance Committee
- Office of Native American Initiatives
- Survey Review Committee

WHO SHOULD KNOW THIS POLICY

- Anyone wishing to survey University Community Members or Native American tribal members
- Deans (or designees) who approve qualifying student survey projects
- Faculty sponsors of qualifying student survey projects
- University data stewards or administrators

DEFINITIONS

Data Governance Trustees: the Chief of Staff, Provost, Chief Information Officer; Vice President for Finance, Institutional Planning and Analysis; Vice President of Research; Vice President of Enrollment Management and Student Affairs; and the Chief Institutional Data Officer.

Survey: any questionnaire or similar instrument, however administered or distributed (including but not limited to by paper, electronic mail, or other electronic means such as a listserv), designed to collect data or personal information for the purpose of examining the characteristics of, or making inferences about, a human population.

Survey Review Committee: a group appointed by the Data Governance Trustees charged with reviewing and approving proposals to contact 1,000 or more University Community Members for the purpose of completing a survey, regardless of the number of survey responses expected or received. The Chief Institutional Data Officer chairs the committee and serves as its primary point of contact.

University Community Members: for purposes of this policy, Northern Arizona University prospective, current, or former students, or faculty, staff, or alumni.

POLICY

A. Advance Approval

The Survey Review Committee must approve in advance all proposals to contact 1,000 or more University Community Members for the purpose of inviting survey participation. Applicants will use the “Application to Conduct University Survey Projects” procedure to request review and approval of such survey proposals at least six weeks in advance of anticipated survey administration dates to ensure sufficient time to process the application. Preference will be given to survey proposals initiated by the University in furtherance of its accreditation requirements or contractual obligations. The Survey Review Committee maintains a publicly accessible survey project calendar (search for “NAU Survey Calendar” in Outlook shared calendars).

B. Compliance

Survey administrators are responsible for knowing and employing appropriate survey and data collection protocols applicable to their projects, and must properly safeguard survey data and protect the privacy rights of survey participants. Survey administrators, and faculty sponsors or advisors of student-administered survey projects, are responsible for, and must ensure that, their projects fully comply with all applicable federal and state laws, regulations, executive orders, and Arizona Board of Regents and University policies.

C. Exemptions

Surveys (including student-led surveys) where fewer than 1,000 University Community Members are contacted, and University-initiated course evaluations, do not require Survey Review Committee review or approval. Advance approval by the Institutional Review Board remains mandatory for all human research projects.

D. Survey Incentives

Survey administrators may offer incentives to encourage survey participation, to the extent that such incentives comply with applicable law and policy, including Comptroller Policy 401-03, *Prohibited Transactions*, Institutional Review Board research compliance guidance, and Arizona law regarding raffles or prize drawings.

E. Survey Result Reporting Requirements

After completion, survey administrators will submit a summary of their project to the Survey Review Committee. This information will include the project’s purpose, the population surveyed, the response rate, key results and findings, any recommendations for applying the results, and any application of the findings already in place.

F. Student Survey Projects

Students seeking to contact 1,000 or more University Community Members for the purpose of inviting survey participation must obtain sponsorship by a faculty mentor with relevant subject matter expertise and approval by the appropriate dean (or designee) prior to initiating the Survey Review Committee survey approval process. These surveys must demonstrate the likelihood of benefiting the University and/or advancing an academic discipline’s field of knowledge.

G. Human Research Protection Program

Individuals conducting surveys must adhere to all applicable Human Research Protection Program policies and requirements. Projects that involve human research require advance approval by the Institutional Review Board. Submissions are processed in the order they are received. The approval timeline varies depending on the category of review, quality and completeness of a submission, revisions required, and the number of pending project reviews. In general, investigators should submit an application at least 30-45 days prior to collecting data. Visit the [Human Research Protection Program website](#) for more information.

H. Tribal Consultation

All survey projects that seek to contact Native American tribal members for the purpose of inviting survey participation must comply with [Arizona Board of Regents Policy 1-118](#) regarding tribal consultations, and must

be approved in advance in writing by the Office of Native American Initiatives. See the [tribal consultation flowchart](#) for more information about this process.

I. Limitations

The Survey Review Committee may restrict the number of surveys administered to the same University Community Member population within a given timeframe. All surveys must be administered to the smallest sample size necessary to meet project objectives. Surveys may not be administered to students, faculty, or staff during the last two weeks of the fall and spring semesters, and a maximum of three survey participation reminder notices may be sent, unless the Survey Review Committee grants special permission.

RESPONSIBILITIES

Data Governance Trustees: appoint members of the Survey Review Committee and ensure that it appropriately reviews and approves survey projects in compliance with the standards and requirements of this policy and the University's institutional interests; promotes the collection of high quality data.

Faculty Sponsors: work with students to ensure that student-led surveys contacting 1,000 or more University Community Members adhere to this policy; facilitate approval of student surveys by the appropriate dean and the Survey Review Committee; ensure that students fulfill the survey result reporting requirements.

Student Survey Administrators: obtain faculty sponsorship and dean approval for qualifying survey projects; adhere to the requirements of this policy when executing their projects; implement appropriate protocols for data security and privacy protection; prepare and submit survey result reports to the Survey Review Committee.

Survey Administrators: obtain advance approval for surveys in accordance with this policy; ensure that their survey projects comply with all applicable guidance; implement appropriate protocols for data security and privacy protection, prepare and submit survey result reports to the Survey Review Committee.

Survey Review Committee: develops and applies a consistent rubric to evaluate and approve survey project proposals to contact 1,000 or more University Community Members; prevents excessive or repetitive surveying of University Community Members; works to ensure compliance with this policy.

PROCEDURES

[Submit an Application to Conduct a University Survey](#)

RELATED INFORMATION

Forms or Tools

[Tribal Consultation Approval Flowchart](#)

Cross-References

[Comptroller's Policy 401-03](#)

Sources

[Arizona Board of Regents Policy 1-118](#)

APPENDIX

NAU Survey Project Calendar (search for "NAU Survey Calendar" in Outlook shared calendars)