Name:	**Survey Policy**
Policy Number:	12-006
Approving Authority:	President
Approved:	November 4, 2021
Responsible Office:	Office of the President
Responsibility:	Director of Institutional Data Analysis & Planning
Revision Date(s):	Not Applicable
Supersedes:	Not Applicable
Next Required Review:	November 2024

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1. Preamble

1.1 Saint Mary's University conducts or participates in numerous surveys to gather data from and about applicants, students, alumni, faculty, staff, and community. The increasing need for data to better understand the experiences and expectations of university members and external stakeholders means that we will increasingly rely on surveys to inform institutional decisions and actions and to measure outcomes.

The university participates in several high profile external surveys, and it is essential that the results of these surveys are reliable and meaningful. Internally, many areas of the university want to conduct surveys to inform decisions. Too many surveys can result in diminished effectiveness if community members are faced with too many requests. This Policy is intended to coordinate university surveys to maximize their benefits.

2. Purpose

2.1 The objective of this Policy is to maximize the benefits from surveys on campus and about the University. This will be done by:

- Promoting good survey methodology and design
- Communicating the survey results with the university community
- Avoiding collection of duplicate information
- Optimizing the timing and scope of survey dissemination to avoid survey fatigue
- Obtaining feedback on processes, policies, and university activities to improve key aspects of the university
- Ensuring that the requirements of privacy legislation are met and that standards applicable to the ethical use of data are respected.

3. Jurisdiction/Scope

3.1 This Policy applies to all members of the university community and to all internal and external surveys of members of the university community ("University Surveys"). For clarity, the university community includes all applicants, students, alumni, faculty, staff, donors, volunteers, and users of university services, amenities, programs, and events,

and all intended recipients of surveys that purport to be from the university or about the university.

3.2 University Surveys include any broad sampling of a group or groups at the university (including applicants or alumni) that involves direct requests to individuals for information or opinion. University Surveys also include any broad sampling of the external community regarding a potential need for, use, or assessment of university services. University Surveys may be addressed to any part of the university community and may address topics including academic, research, personnel, management, programs, and public interest issues. Surveys related to academic research are subject to this Policy and may also be subject to other University policies applicable to academic research. However, research surveys are generally not disseminated through direct requests via administrative channels by the university (e.g., newsletters and direct mailings from the university). The University Survey Committee may be a resource to those wishing to use a survey for research purposes and provide advice on alternate methods of distribution. University Surveys may also include surveys managed by third parties but addressed to university groups, and on-campus surveys that are a part of research projects. University Surveys do not include surveys that are of small scale and focused intent such as surveys that are part of assigned work in a non-thesis course, focus groups, polls taken within a course or presentation, evaluations of an event or service by participants or users, teaching evaluations, or surveys by a labour union of its own members.

3.3 The following University Surveys are approved:

- Canadian University Survey Consortium (CUSC)
- National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE)
- International Survey Barometer (ISB)
- Educause Core Data Service Survey (CDS)
- MPHEC Graduate Outcome Survey
- Sobey Graduate Outcome Survey
- Academica Acceptance Declined Survey (ADS)
- National College Health Assessment Survey (NCHA)
- Welcome Weeks Survey
- Regularly scheduled Student Feedback Surveys currently developed through AVPs Academic and Enrolment Management and Student Affairs and Service

3.4 If you are unsure if your survey falls under the scope of this Policy, please contact Tracey MacDonald, Director of Institutional Data Analysis and Planning for clarification at tracey.macdonald@smu.ca

4. Policy

4.1 The coordination and oversight of University Surveys is the responsibility of the University Survey Committee.

4.2 The University Survey Committee includes the following individuals or their designates:

- Associate Vice-President Academic and Enrolment Management
- Director of Institutional Data Analysis & Planning, who shall chair the Committee

- Associate Vice-President Student Affairs and Services
- A Communications Officer appointed by the Vice President Advancement
- An Institutional Researcher appointed by the Vice President Academic & Research
- Faculty member with REB Committee experience appointed by the Dean of Graduate Studies and Research

4.3 The mandate of the University Survey Committee is to:

- Recommend policy and process improvements related to University Surveys
- Receive and consider applications for permission to conduct a University Survey and determine the timeliness of the survey.
- Refer University Survey applications as required to the Research Ethics Committee and/or the University Secretary
- Maintain records on the level and types of surveys disseminated to groups
- Assess the effectiveness of approved surveys once completed
- Report annually to the Executive Management Group on survey activity

4.4 Individuals or groups wanting to conduct a survey or have a role in managing data derived from a survey must consider whether the survey is a University Survey as defined in this Policy. A University Survey requires prior approval of the University Survey Committee, based on an application submitted in accordance with the Survey Procedures.

4.5 Decisions of the University Survey Committee are final and binding.

5. Related Policies, Procedures & Documents

5.1 Survey Procedures (See attached Appendix A)

Related Procedures: Survey Procedures

Related Documents: Survey Application Form

APPENDIX A – SURVEY PROCEDURES

Individuals or groups wanting to conduct a survey or having responsibility for managing the data that comes from a survey or all or part of an external survey, should consider whether it is a University Survey as defined in the university's Survey Policy. If yes, an application should be sent to the University Survey Committee for permission to proceed. The application must be made on the prescribed form and must identify the following:

1. The source and strategic or research context of the survey
2. Issues to be addressed or data to be collected
3. The targeted group or groups
4. The approach to be used to distribute the survey
5. How the data results will be communicated
6. How the data will be collected and stored
7. Timing of when the survey is desired to be distributed

The assessment criteria for University Surveys will include:

- Alignment with the University's strategic plan and priorities
- Design of the survey, including timing, scope, and mode of delivery
- Extent to which other surveys supply the required data
- Extent of survey burden on target groups
- Government requirements, including FOIPOP legislation
- Impact of survey and any previous surveys of this kind
- Privacy concerns and ethical use of data

Guidance on making an application under the University Survey Policy is available from:

Director of Institutional Data Analysis & Planning, Tracey MacDonald: tracey.macdonald@smu.ca

REQUEST FOR APPROVAL OF THE UNIVERSITY SURVEY COMMITTEE

Please complete this request for approval and submit it to the University Survey Committee c/o the Director of Institutional Data Analysis & Planning: E-mail: tracey.macdonald@smu.ca.

You should fill out this request for approval if you are interested in conducting a survey of a population at Saint Mary's University (including applicants and alumni) that involves direct requests to individuals for information or opinion.

In completing this form, keep in mind the following criteria by which this application will be assessed:

- Alignment with institutional priorities.
- Design of the survey, including timing, scope, and mode of delivery.
- Extent to which other surveys supply (or could supply) the required data.
- Extent of survey burden on target groups within the university.
- Government requirements.
- Impact of survey and/or impact of previous surveys of this kind

If you are attaching additional information, please be sure to clearly identify the relevance of the information to this application.

1. Name of group conducting or managing the survey, as well as contact information for the project lead at the university. If the survey is part of a larger survey conducted across institutions, provide information on who will be managing it internally, as well as the source of the survey externally.

2. Explain whether this survey contributes to University priorities, and if so, how.

3. Identify the issues that will be addressed by the survey.

4. Identify the additional resources at the University this survey will require assistance from:

5. Identify the target population for this survey.

6. Describe the survey's sampling approach.
7. Identify the planned timelines for the survey administration, analysis, and dissemination.
8. Identify the planned mode of contact and delivery (mail, web, e-mail)
9. State what specific data will be collected, what tools will be used to collect it and where it will be stored. Please attach a draft survey questionnaire if available.
10. Explain how the data will be used, who the results will be shared with and how those results will be shared.
11. If this survey has been done before, please explain how the results were used.
11. Other comments (if any).

Date of Application:

Applicant Name:

Applicant Signature: