

SURVEYS

Surveys are the systematic process of collecting, aggregating, and analyzing the responses to questions posed to individuals on questionnaires. Often the term is used interchangeably to describe questionnaires, which technically only refer to the set of written questions provided to individuals.

Survey development is both an art and a science. To do it well takes careful thought, patience, and technical expertise. Often, a commercially available survey that has been tested may be preferable to creating your own from scratch. However, if you do decide create a new one there are numerous factors to consider before beginning a survey project. Here are just some of the questions you will want to think about before beginning:

- What are my research objectives?
- Who is the target population?
- Do I want survey the entire population or is a sample sufficient?
- What type of measurement error am I comfortable with?
- What types of questions do I want to ask?
- What type of responses do I want (quantitative or qualitative)?
- How will I collect the data (online, in-person, phone, paper)
- Will I need to code my responses?
- How will I present the results?
- Do I need IRB approval?
- Do I have time to pilot test?

Assessment and Surveys

Surveys are considered indirect evidence of student learning. This not to say that that they are not valuable and valid tools for assessing student perceptions and for gathering other useful feedback, but surveys by themselves do not provide convincing evidence of student learning. Like grades, job placement rates, income, etc., surveys are proxies used to indicate that students are probably learning, but the evidence they provide is less convincing or clear. Students may think that they learned or say that they did on a survey, but this does not mean that their perceptions are correct.

Surveys are most useful when they are used to complement direct evidence of student learning. Test results, student papers and the like may tell you what students learned and how well they learned it, but results from a survey can give you information about how a student feels about what they are learning. They can also provide valuable feedback on how the program or course can be altered, which can then be used to enhance pedagogy, curriculum, and ultimately learning.

For administrative programs, where student learning is not necessarily one of the goals or is harder to measure directly, surveys are an excellent way for gathering feedback from stakeholders. They can be used for measuring how individuals feel about existing programs or services or they can be used to gather ideas for new ways of providing services to individuals.

Survey Software

SNAP Surveys – Snap Surveys is the College’s approved survey software that allows users to create simple or very complex questionnaires. Snap is available to all faculty and staff. To install Snap on a PC (it does not currently work on ios operating systems) please contact the Lehman College [Help Desk](#) or call at x1111. Snap also requires a server account which is used to upload completed questionnaires and to retrieve responses. Please email [Raymond Galinski](#) or [Fan Lin](#) if you need a new server account.

Qualtrics – Qualtrics is a sophisticated survey tool used widely in higher education and commercially. Licenses are currently available to faculty and staff in the School of Natural and Social Sciences only. Unlike Snap, Qualtrics is cloud-based, which means access does not require the installation of software on a computer. However, to activate a Qualtrics questionnaire and to retrieve your results, you will need a server account. Please contact [John Dono](#) for more information.

Commercial Products – Numerous other commercial products are also available to meet your survey needs. The costs of the products varies widely based on the types of questionnaires you want to create. Some of these products will also allow you to create questionnaires for free, but in most cases there are restrictions on the length and types of questions you can create without paying for a subscription.

Additional Resources

Dillman, D. A. (2007). *Mail and internet surveys: The tailored design method (2nd ed.)*.

Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons.

Groves, R. M., Fowler, F. J., Couper, M. P., Lepkowski, J. M., Singer, E., Tourangeau, R.

(2009). *Survey methodology (2nd ed.)*. Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons.

[QAS-99](#) - The Question Appraisal System (QAS-99) is a method for identifying and fixing miscommunication and other types of problems with questions. Use QAS-99 before formal field te