



## **SURVEY RESEARCH POLICY**

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Responsible Executive: Provost and Executive Vice President

Responsible Office: Institutional and Community Engagement, Institutional Effectiveness

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## **STATEMENT OF POLICY**

The application of research and administrative surveys which involve a broad sampling or census of a population at Nova Southeastern University (including, but not limited to applicants, alumni, students, faculty, and staff) requires prior approval in writing by the appropriate Responsible Executive as identified by this policy.

## **REASON FOR THIS POLICY**

Nova Southeastern University is committed to ensuring meaningful and reliable results from mission-critical administrative surveys. These surveys of faculty, staff, administration, students and alumni are essential for NSU to make informed decisions regarding its programs, policies, procedures and practices to ensure its ongoing accreditation. To secure maximum participation in these crucial information gathering efforts, the university endeavors not to over-saturate these important constituent groups with numerous requests for participation in surveys and other similar data gathering activities. Given the increasing profile and importance of survey results,

it is imperative that results be meaningful and reliable and that actions are coordinated in order to maximize response rates. With the increasing number of surveys administered, survey fatigue has become a serious concern; thus, survey coordination is critical. This policy also recognizes the importance of research surveys and includes considerations for research.

As a result, the goal of this policy is to maximize the benefits of administrative and research surveys and to ensure that a coordinated approach is taken at NSU by:

- Avoiding the collection of duplicate information;
- Reducing possible survey fatigue by limiting the number and timing of surveys to any one specific group;
- Maximizing the participation rates for critical university administrative surveys;
- Ensuring those who undertake survey research are aware of FERPA issues as well as other ethical issues;
- Ensuring that longitudinal trends in opinions can be tracked;
- Ensuring that institution-wide expertise concerning surveys are identified and drawn upon at all stages of the process;
- Encouraging the communication and sharing of survey results with the campus community;
- Support research surveys in a coordinated manner to assure quality and accuracy.

## **INDIVIDUALS AND ENTITIES AFFECTED BY THIS POLICY**

This policy applies to all administrative and research surveys which involve a broad sampling or census of a population at Nova Southeastern University (including, but not limited to applicants, alumni, students, faculty, and staff). If there is any uncertainty as to whether or not a prospective survey falls under this policy, Institutional Effectiveness (IE) should be contacted for guidance.

## **WHO SHOULD KNOW THIS POLICY**

Administration  
Academic Affairs  
Academic Centers  
Institutional Effectiveness  
Research and Technology Transfer  
Students  
Faculty

## **EXCLUSIONS**

This policy does not apply to:

- a) Surveys that involve small, specific sampling, including academic-unit specific surveys\*;

- b) Evaluation of an event by participants or feedback from clients at the point of service;
- c) Surveys required by a specific academic unit for professional accreditation requirements\*;
- d) Teaching evaluation forms.

\*These surveys fall under the purview of the unit-specific Responsible Executive (e.g. dean). For academic units, each dean shall design an appropriate review process and shall assume the role of Responsible Executive in the final approval or denial process and decision.

## WEBSITE ADDRESS FOR THIS POLICY

[Executive Policy Review Group will complete.]

## CONTACTS

Subject	Contact	Telephone	E-mail/Web Address
Policy Clarification	Vice President of Institutional Effectiveness	954-262-5392	<a href="https://www.nova.edu/ie/contactus.html">https://www.nova.edu/ie/contactus.html</a>

## DEFINITIONS

### FERPA

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) (20 U.S.C. § 1232g; 34 CFR Part 99) is a Federal law that protects the privacy of student education records. The law applies to all schools that receive funds under an applicable program of the U.S. Department of Education.

### Survey

A method for collecting quantitative information about items in a population

### Responsible Executive

The Administrator, Dean, or Director in charge of a particular area.

## RESPONSIBILITIES

NSU’s Research Survey Policy includes provision for a review of proposals in which the investigator seeks systematically to gather data from NSU constituents, as indicated above. The oversight of the review process will be the responsibility of a Survey Research Committee which will include:

- Vice President of Institutional Effectiveness (IE) – or IE designee,

- One dean,
- One institutional researcher or statistician,
- Three faculty members representing diverse academic units, and
- One Institutional Review Board (IRB) representative.

The committee's mandate is to:

- Receive and consider applications for permission to survey;
- Meet once monthly if there are proposals to review;
- Respond to petitioners within 30 days;
- Ensure good survey methodology and design;
- Maintain an account of the level of surveying imposed on the different constituencies on campus;
- Assess the effectiveness of approved surveys, once completed;
- Report annually to the Provost on survey activity.

### **Exempted Surveys:**

The following University Surveys are considered to be exempted from the approval process:

IE's Annual Student Survey (conducted in October, annually),  
 IE's Annual Alumni Survey (conducted in March, annually),  
 IE's Bi-annual Employee Survey (conducted in January, biannually),  
 IE's Annual Community Affiliate Survey (conducted in July, annually),  
 NSSE (conducted in winter semester, every third year), and  
 Student Affairs' Educational Benchmarking Inventory (conducted in February, annually).

### **PROCEDURES**

Any person or persons (e.g. NSU employees, faculty, students, staff) wishing to conduct a survey, or having responsibility for managing part of an external survey using NSU employees, students, or alumni as participants, shall make an application to the NSU Research Survey Committee for permission to proceed. The application (less than three pages) will identify:

1. The desired population to be surveyed;
2. The intended method of survey design, administration and data analysis,
3. Rationale for sample size;
4. The proposed date(s) on which the survey will be administered and any pre- or post-mailings encouraging survey participation;
5. A description of any planned incentive program for respondents;
6. The purpose of the survey and how the information will be used;
7. The strategic or research context of the survey;
8. How the data will be stored;

9. How the results will be communicated.

The committee will consider, among other things,

1. Alignment with NSU's strategic plan and priorities including research and scholarship.
2. Design of the survey including timing, scope and mode of delivery.
3. Extent to which other surveys supply (or could supply) the required data.
4. Extent of survey burden on target groups with the University.
5. Government requirements.
6. Accreditation requirements.
7. Impact of survey and any previous surveys of this kind.

The committee is to be advisory to the Provost. The Provost will have final approval authority and responsibility. The Committee will review all submissions, make recommendations and provide rationale for their recommendations. They may send requests back for further information or clarification or approvals.

Permission for a survey should be sent first to the Survey Committee, prior to submission to the IRB. The Survey Committee may provide important insights and/or suggestions to strengthen the survey research design. The IRB has the final authority with regard to human subjects.

## **RELATED DOCUMENTS, FORMS AND TOOLS**

Not Applicable

## **HISTORY AND UPDATES**

Date Approved: August 1, 2014

Date of Promulgation: September 9, 2014

## **APPENDIX**

Not Applicable